Meaning is Use:

Civic Initiatives and Europeanisation from below in Bulgaria

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PhD Thesis

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To my parents, Mariya and Vasil

For the joy of life they have given me

'So, you want another story?'

'Uhh... perhaps in English. In Japanese a story would have an element of invention *in it. We don't want any invention. We want the "straight facts", as you say in English.'*

Isn't telling a story about something – using words, English or Japanese - already something of an invention? Isn't just looking upon this world already something of an invention?

'Uhh...'

'The world isn't just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something into it, no? Doesn't that make life a story?

Jan Martel, The Life of Pi

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Благодаря ви, че ме подкрепяхте безусловно през всички трудности.

My brother, Ivan, has been a vital support, not only in financial terms, but mostly through cheering me up with surprising calls playing Russian Gypsy romances and singing Soviet songs from our childhood. I dedicate this piece of work to my parents, Mariya and Vasil and extend my eternal gratitude to my husband Dermot (who has been of unwavering support) and our son Miro. Dermot and Miro, thank you guys, for everything!

Summary

The research poses the question of how civic initiatives are constituted by and constitutive for the process of Europeanization in Bulgaria. Europeanization as a process, overlapping with democratization, was initiated in Bulgaria with EU support to build democracy and pluralism after the demise of Communism in 1989. The EU's favoured mechanisms through which liberal democracy was to be embedded, although successful in establishing formal democratic institutions, could not substantially reach citizens and furnish the social base of democracy. The efforts to develop active civil society in Bulgaria remained limited to establishing an NGO sector, which could not truly reflect the meaning of civil society as constituted by actively engaged citizens mobilizing in defence of the common good. This situation was compounded by the continuation of a historically passive political culture in Bulgaria. The research explores the causal link between civic initiatives and Europe implied in the research question through adopting discourse as the key vehicle for developing the theoretical and analytical frameworks. Premised on the poststructuralist emphasis on meaning, Europeanization is theorized as a process of signification whereby

democratic norms are fluid and dependent on the experience of people affected by them. The discourse of civic initiatives in Bulgaria is constituted by the liberal democratic norms of action (liberty) and multitude (equality), which they articulate in the hues of Dewey's understanding of democracy as a way of life. As socially grounded practices they construct an alternative language of democracy around the tropes of moving and multiplying people, which point to a vision of social change captured by the domain of sociality. Unlike the hegemonic discourse of economic liberalism, the agency of civic initiatives draws on the socially grounded knowledge and creativity of individuals to realize the vision of sociality. Analysed as creative democracy they enact the democratic script in practice. In building social and cultural capital in Bulgaria they are engaged in nurturing social relations of cooperation, trust and participation thus constituting multiple spaces of civil society.

Chapter I: Introduction

"Bulgarian society does not remember any other 'order' but that of the totalitarian state. ...The idea that there could be a different type of order, based on personal responsibility and civic participation, is still a little alien to us. But if we are not ready to invest our efforts in the construction of this type of modern state, then we deserve the state in which we currently live."

(Penchev, 2015: 58)

1.1. The social phenomenon of civic initiatives

Some years ago, an initiative that spread slowly but gradually throughout Bulgaria with the seemingly odd name of "hanging coffees", grabbed my attention. Starting with a person buying two coffees but consuming only one, thus letting the second one *hang,* it evolved with other *hanging* goods and services. There was *hanging* bread and milk, but also dental services and even yoga classes. My curiosity spurred questions such as What is it?, Who is doing it? and How did it come into being?. The 'why' question was not so important as I was quite aware of the level of poverty among a

significant portion of the Bulgarian population and the idea of giving a hand to some people - be it as small as getting a coffee (a day's highlight for some) - did not surprise me. The puzzle that this initiative posed for me was of a different kind. A citizen-led initiative, which was not a realisation of some state policy enacted by local authorities, was unusual within the Bulgarian social sphere. Moreover, it was not a one-off sporadic event but was carried out and sustained by the citizenry for quite some time. The "Hanging Coffee Initiative" acquires greater significance when considered against the background of scholarship on civic agency in Bulgaria. Thus, it has been argued that Bulgaria represents a case of an existing, even an alarming civic deficit (Dimitrova, 2002).

Citizen alienation (Kabakchieva, 2012) and pronounced social apathy (Krastev, 2014) have marked the Bulgarian socio-political space historically. A recent sociological research project conducted by Slavov et al. (2010) points to the fragmentation of social relations with the expression 'Bulgarians beyond society'. These insights are congruent with research on social institutions and on civil society in Central and East European (CEE) countries, which emphasises the

general weakness of social ties and collective activities (Howard, 2003, 2011; Wagner, 2006, Cohen and Arato, 1999*).*

Led by my curiosity, I found out that "hanging coffees" did not begin in Bulgaria but were an idea imported from Europe (Agence France - Press, 2013). It had been going on for quite some time in southern European countries such as Spain and Italy. As a matter of fact the initiative originated in Naples as "*caffé sospeso*" (suspended or pending coffee, bought for another person anonymously) (Zhuk, 2012). The Hanging coffees initiative didn't last very long in Bulgaria, but it opened a mental window for me to look around and notice many other initiatives, which have been taking place. In fact, civic initiatives have been burgeoning. While civic activism could count as everyday activism in any other European country, in Bulgaria similar activities have seemed extraordinary, due to what scholars suggest is a 'civic deficit'. I therefore decided to embark on a research project to investigate the appearance and role of some key civic initiatives in the Bulgarian social sphere.

This study seeks to address the question of *how civic initiatives are constituted by and, in turn, constitutive for the process of*

Europeanization in Bulgaria. Thus framed, the research question is a broad enquiry, therefore its answer is sought through the following sub-questions: a) *what is the meaning of Europeanization?* Answering this is a starting point for introducing discourse as the theoretical logic and analytical path to establishing the link between the Bulgarian social context and Europe. b) *What is the discourse of civic initiatives and how it is constructed?* This question pertains to the constituted aspect of civic initiatives and aims to explore the script of the discourse and to disclose how it articulates the cultural codes of liberal democracy; c) *How civic initiatives contribute to the development of civil society?* In brief, this dissertation critically addresses the constitutive dimension of civic initiatives and, in turn, explores how civic initiatives modify social relations and constitute acts of democratic sociality.

In order to proceed further I now address the preliminary questions of why I focus on civic initiatives on the one hand, and why I seek to question the linkages with Europeanization, on the other. Implicit in this inquiry is the observation which Alexander Wendt (1999) makes about the nature of every research question involving two interlinked aspects, namely a theoretical one and a domain-specific

one. The first query deals with the quest to understand civic initiatives as a social phenomenon. It involves a theoretical exploration of the role of civic activism in the social world aiming to understand how civic initiatives work. The second question is connected to the domain-specific dimension of social action. The link between civic initiatives and Europeanization in Bulgaria is examined through questioning the role of civic agency for the establishment of democracy and, in particular, for the constitution of civil society. These two preliminary questions are addressed in this chapter as a way of introducing the rationale behind the research project and setting the context for the overall inquiry. They will be explored in further detail in subsequent chapters of the study in order to answer the research question. However, before that it is necessary to ask ourselves what is the role of civic initiatives in the social world and why they constitute an interesting area for inquiry.

1.1.1. Meaning and Symbolism of Social Interactions

The social significance of civic initiatives resides in their contribution to constitution of the social world through meaning and its symbolic and political implications. In terms of understanding and providing

explanations of the social world, civic initiatives can be considered a form of social action. The latter is a central category in sociology, which, together with order, "represent the true presuppositions of sociological debate' (Alexander, 1982: 65). Social action touches on issues such as individual subjects and order, i.e., social structure, accounts for change (Lemert, 2013) and the production of history (Giddens in Elliot, 1999). These problems were cast in different vocabularies in classical sociological thought, inevitably reflecting the vision of the social world that particular theorists proposed. Some gave pre-eminence to the social order and understood social action as determined by it. The priority of structure over action is obvious in the classic works of Durkheim[1] in which society often appears as a force external to the agent, exercising constraints over individual action. Similarly, Parsons'[2] work reflects Durkheim's functionalism in viewing individuals as fully moulded by powerful structures within which they are embedded.

Other scholars have highlighted the emergence of a social world of interacting individuals. For example, Berger & Luckmann (1966) and

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[1] For example, in Suicide: A Study in Sociology (1952), Durkheim suggests a model of how society operates where powerful structures are dominant and responsible for orchestrating the conduct of human individuals within the social organism.

[2] Parsons in The structure of Social System (1964) analyses the intrusion of systemic factors into domains of social activity and demonstrates how action and interaction are structured by broader social forces.

Schutz (1967) conceive of social agency as constitutive of the social world. For these thinkers the social world is not simply "there", it is created by individuals; hence it is endogenous to social actors. "Social order therefore exists *only* as a product of human activity" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966 in Lemert, 2013: 292). Furthermore, reality as an activity of creative subjects underpins the assumption of a social world made up of practices. Action includes different activities; it presupposes interaction[3] and practices. Practices are constituted throughout social life; in the domains of the economy and politics, but also in the domain of culture, including everyday life (Mouzelis, 1990 in Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1992). Calhoun (1991: 97) stresses that human society depends on the capacity to coordinate action. This insight is revealing when approaching the social world as one in a constant process of reassessment and reformulation by social actors who continually modify it.

Implicit in these theoretical positions is Max Weber's sociological theory of action which rejects the deterministic flavour of functionalism and stresses the importance of social action to understand society. Weber, while maintaining the belief that society

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[3] Turner (1988) highlights interaction over emphasis on action as more appropriate to the relatedness of individuals in certain manner or of social relationships.

affects the individual[4], placed strong emphasis on the meaning of social action. According to him, social relationships can be seen in terms of different types of action (Sztompka, 1994: 30) and social action is not a replicated behaviour but instead involves a process of meaning giving. In "Economy and Society" (1978: 4), Weber defines action that is social as actions to which the "acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behaviour" - be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is "social" insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behaviour of "the other" and is thereby oriented in its course.

The second point in Weber's sociological theory is that if social action carries meaning, then the way to inquiry into the social world is through focusing on investigating meaning, which Weber argued entails interpretation (*Verstehen)*. The Weberian position on the significance of social action for the constitution of a social world through meaning is one I have adopted in this dissertation. Civic initiatives are therefore taken to be meaningful social actions which my study sets out to interpret in order to discover their implications for society.

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[4] In Economy and Society (1922/1978) Weber discusses four specific types of social action encouraged by society, namely instrumentally rational, value- rational, affectual, and traditional.

The emphasis on the interactions between people as shaping society, and hence on social action as a process which contains meaning, invites further sociological reflections on action. These concern the symbolism of action and its political implications. Scholars within symbolic interactionism[5] emphasize that meaning production is conveyed through symbols and hence connected with cognitive frameworks. The work of Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902, 1909) argue that meaning is created in interaction and gestures, particularly vocal gestures (language). They emphasize the role played by symbolic systems in creating both the human and the social.

Consequently, scholars within symbolic interactionism share the "perspective on social structure as fluid and stable at the same time, an emergent process that functions simultaneously as an antecedent and an outcome of social interaction"[6]. Furthermore, society emerges as a "universe of interferentially overlapping fields, coalescing around symbols and meanings" (Shalin, 1986: 18). In the same vein Castoriadis (1987) places great emphasis on the function of the

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[5] Interactionist writers as Cooley (1909), Blumer (1969), Goffman (1958) although different are united in contrasting their views to those of functionalist thinkers**.**

[6] The structuralist element in interactionism is viewed through the prism of pragmatic philosophy.

'imaginary' in the constitution of society, while Alexander (2006: 3) argues that "societies are not governed by power alone and are not fuelled by the pursuit of self-interest" but contain utopian elements in the transcendental language of values. Within the cultural sociological theory that Alexander develops, meaning is not tied to structure, but has its own interior logic, which is tied to cultural relativity. Alexander's emphasis on the "symbolic resources" that people apply in interactions echoes Berger and Luckmann's position on language as a system of symbols and cognition - mediated by social processes - that is crucial to the way actions are produced and repeated.

The significance of symbolic resources for mobilisation of people has been further elaborated in social movement theory. Ralph Turner relates social change to the values, symbols, images and ideologies which take root in the minds of people, their leaders and the social movements which congeal around them (in Etzioni and Etzioni - Halevy, 1973: 491). Theorists such as Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989; 1989) view social movements as laboratories in which peoples' self-understanding is transformed through participation in social action. The crucial role of language, symbolic challenges and discourse is accentuated in this process.

My thesis is cognizant on the insights generated by social movement theory with regard to the emphasis it places on the symbolism of social action. However, the thesis is focused primarily on the constituted and constitutive nature of civic initiatives within the ambit of political discourse theory and its understanding of the social world as discursive. According to the theoretical premises of political discourse theory, discourse is an ontological horizon containing symbolic as well as material connotations. Consequently, civic initiatives, as a form of social action are symbolically constituted as much as materially constituted.

The thesis does not claim that civic initiatives represent a form of social movement. Instead, relying on political discourse theory, my argument is that civic action as endowed with meaning is intrinsically linked with politics. The emphasis on the political dimension of social action is where its symbolism resides. Politics, Alexander argues, "as the domain of power, contains deep symbolic structure" (Alexander, 2006: 48). Political Discourse Theory, therefore, directs the enquiry towards the political implications of their agency. The symbolic dimension complements the first insight on civic action as carrier of meaning and guides the research towards unpacking the tacit, implicit cultural codes in the action of civic

initiatives in order to disclose how these enclose political dynamics.

My thesis also focuses on the political significance of civic initiatives by extending the investigation of the symbolic resources of civic initiatives to interrogating how they are bound to the cultural codes of democracy. These are incorporated in the notion of civil society as the metaphor of western liberal democracy (Seckingelgin, 2002). Given the manifold connotations and interpretations of civil society, my thesis adopts a perspective emphasizing its form as configurations of social relations and a mode of dynamics of contestation. Civil society is the repository of democratic political culture; thus it is a space constituting social capital and enacting the political and social meaning of democratic participation in practice. Civic initiatives are thus interrogated with regard to their democratic commitment in view of their potential to a) foster social ties of trust and b) mobilize social actors to participate in social and political life. The next section situates the research question within Bulgaria's transition to democracy after 1990 and the impact of the process on society. It highlights the role of Europe for democratization in Bulgaria after the fall of communism in 1989 and gives an overview on democracy building in Bulgaria. While these aspects are dealt with in depth in Chapter III and Chapter IV, here the aim is simply to

highlight some crucial obstacles presented by the specificities of Bulgaria's democratization for the constitution of civic agency. In this way it sets the context for my research on civic initiatives as a case study of Europeanization.

1.2. The symbolic resources of civic initiatives: the democratic script of the process of Europeanisation in Bulgaria

Democracy building in Eastern Europe was based on political structures (parliament institutions, bureaucratic administration, etc.) and political practices borrowed from Western democracies (Linz and Stepan, 1996). In the context of Eastern Europe this was conflated with the concept of transition, which evoked institutional transformation, i.e. formal democratization but also societal transformation. Transition was, however, increasingly replaced with the term consolidation and the notion of "complex social processes with uncertain outcomes" (Giordana and Kostova, 2002: 74). This section situates the research in the context of democracy building. It elaborates on the gaps of formal democratization in Bulgaria and stresses the importance of the social roots of democracy, in particular, for democratic consolidation to take place.

1.2.1. The specificities of Bulgaria's democratisation: "transposition implementation gap"

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, Bulgaria, together with the former communist countries of the CEE, embarked upon a transition to democracy (Offe, 1991). The years that followed, referred to in the political science literature as democratisation (a transition to democracy), brought important political and extraordinary economic changes to those countries. These were advanced by the EU's enthusiastic support (Sedelmeier, 2005; Pridham, 2005; Vahudova, 2004) and involved transition to a free market economic model, as well as putting in place democratic political institutions, including elected parliaments and independent judiciaries (Pridham et al., 1994; Berglund and Aarebrot, 1997). The different countries of the CEE followed different trajectories of democratisation. These were partly determined by their socio-historical specificities but also by the nature of the prior communist régime in the country (Gill, 2000; Tomini, 2014). As Berglund and Aarebrot (1997: 112) emphasise, "strictly speaking, the new democracies in Eastern Europe are all unique".

In Bulgaria, the post-communist political élite officially embraced the

political model of democracy. In the words of the political analyst Ognyan Minchev (2015): "Bulgarians had Europe as their first choice and adopted the core values of democracy and the market economy". This process was not without difficulties. Tomini (2014), observing the slow democratisation of Bulgaria (in comparison to the other CEE countries) highlights the transition from a socialist to a market economy during the 1990s as the main drawback in the country's transition to democracy. Nevertheless, the "return to Europe" became the most important aim of Bulgarian foreign policy since the fall of communism (Dimitrov, 2001: 93). Thus, the Bulgarian élite engaged in rapid democratic consolidation through institutionalisation (Daskalov, 1998; Dimitrov, 2001; Morlino, 2011; Tomini, 2014). The democratic constitutional framework was put in place with the adoption of a new Constitution on 12 July 1991 (the first among the newly established post-communist democracies of Central and Eastern Europe to come into force) and over the years guaranteed the stability of institutions in Bulgaria, despite the political and economic turbulence of the 1990s and 2000s (Ganev, 2001; Tomini, 2014). As Ganev pointed out, this strategy "injected a welcome amount of stability and predictability into a turbulent and volatile environment" (Ganev, 2001: 192).

Furthermore, the effort of Bulgarian post-communist leaders to succeed in European membership was demonstrated by their endeavours to comply with the EU normative framework. The EU Enlargement Policy has incorporated significant normative emphasis, reflected in the values enshrined in Article 2 TEU as O'Brennan's (2006) research demonstrates. The normative content of "the Copenhagen Criteria was underpinned by different modes of accession conditionality and significant levels of EU subvention, thus combining to produce 'transformative effects' in Candidate States which, over time, enable convergence with EU rules and ultimately membership of the bloc" (O'Brennan, 2018). The Bulgarian political élite responded "readily" to the EU's conditions (Ganev, 2013). The political actions taken in line with the re-constitution of state institutions bear witness to the acknowledgement of the political élite of the normative force of democratic procedures and culminated in Bulgaria joining the European Union (EU) in 2007. The ordering of political life through institutionalisation of the system has been considered to be an indication of the end of the democratic consolidation (Vachudova, 2005; Cameron, 2007). Linde (2009: 2) argued that "the inclusion of ten post-communist countries into the European Union is probably the best indicator of democratic

consolidation in these countries".

However, normative adherence to the institutionalisation of democratic procedures does not suffice for democratic consolidation to take place. Prominent scholars of democratisation, such as Linz (Linz and Stepan 1996a, 1996b) and O'Donnell (O'Donnell 1996a, 1996b), while recognising the role of formative structures in shaping political life, have questioned their impact. O'Donnell (1996) points out that the focus on the formal rules ignores the importance of informal rules. Thus, the process of democratic consolidation has been seen as 'multi-dimensional or multi-level' and "may take minimally a decade and maximally two or more decades' as Pridham asserts (2001: 4-5). It involves significant institutionalisation but also the participation of political actors: "democracy is neither a divine gift nor a side effect of societal factors: it is the work of political actors" (Schedler, 2001: 70). Tomini (2014)' s reassessment of democratic consolidation in Bulgaria shows that even though the consolidation of democracy in Bulgaria was achieved relatively faster than other countries in the region, several elements show that this consolidated democracy had many weaknesses or problems in its qualities. As argued by Ganev, "Bulgaria emerged as a consolidated democracy chronically incapable of coping with its

social problems or improving the level of economic prosperity"
(Ganev, 2001: 201). Tomini (2014: 885) highlights several factors
behind this claim. He points to a) the continued lack of 'performance
legitimacy' that emerged from opinion polls on the functioning of
democracy; b) the popularity of governments that collapsed every
time a few months before the elections; initial high expectations
followed by immediate disillusionment; c) the high volatility of
parties and the emergence of political parties that scored electoral
success in a short time, yet were unable to consolidate, and d) the
debate about the possibility of constitutional review to solve the
problem of institutional ineffectiveness starting at the end of the
1990s.

Scholars studying the EU's role in the democratisation process
pinpoint an additional set of problems hampering the embedding of
democratic principles in the consciousness of the system. "The
strong accent of rule adoption" (Tomini, 2014: 884) of the Bulgarian
government's readiness to implement legislative changes under the
driving force of the EU was accompanied by "significant gaps"
(O'Brennan, 2018). These refer to the discrepancy between the
transposition of policy and its actual implementation.
Schimmelfennig, et al. (2015: 19) point to the existence of gaps

between "institutions on paper and practices on the ground", which Dimitrova (2010) qualifies as "Potemkin implementation" or a "world of dead letters". These phenomena speak of the weakness of the quality of the democratic process characterised by stagnation and "backsliding" from commitments entered into via accession conditionality (O'Brennan, 2018; Börzel, 2014: 15-21; Dimitrov et al., 2016) thus creating an "imitation of successful Europeanisation" (Dimitrov et al., 2016: 19). Consequently, the EU may have had a significant impact in Bulgaria in rebuilding the 'weak', discredited and inefficient institutions of the post-communist period as Dimitrova (2004: 3) points out, but as Ganev's shrewd analysis demonstrates, "when conditionality faded, the EU vanished like a short term anaesthetic" (Ganev, 2013: 26). Observers of Bulgaria's reality on the eve of joining the EU, in 2006, comment on the country being far from EU institutional norms (Trojanov, 2006). Krastev (2008) states, "Bulgaria is the newest, poorest and probably the worst-governed member of the EU. Its economy is growing, its politics is collapsing, and its public is totally frustrated".

1.2.2. State capture and the paralysis of state reaction to corruption

Three decades of democratisation in Bulgaria has raised many thorny questions. Bulgaria did not undergo a transition of violent conflict that convulsed the former Yugoslavia for example. Yet, as Pridham et al. predicted in 1994, the EU's endeavours to build democracy in Eastern Europe was beset with monumental problems. The EU has faced many challenges in implementing its normative agenda in Bulgaria and the task of Europeanisation encountered various hurdles in a range of domains of social life. Top of the list of the problems that the EU had to address in Bulgaria was the high level of corruption. In effect, unprecedented corruption marked Bulgaria's transition. According to Spirova (2010: 415) corruption has been one of the major problems in Bulgaria's development since 1989. Despite the efforts of successive governments (the Videnov cabinet of 1996-7, the Kostov government of 1997-2001) to curb corruption, its persistence was the key hindrance to Bulgaria's entry into the EU. Bulgaria started EU negotiations in 1998.

In 2007, when Bulgaria joined the EU, the EU Commission acknowledged that the country still had serious progress to make in the fields of judicial reform, corruption and organised crime. In order to assist in remedying these shortcomings the Commission set up the

Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). Its efficiency, however, represents "a 'mixed picture' because of its positive achievements and some important flaws which conduce to the modest fulfilment of its own explicit goal" (Dimitrov et al., 2016: 8). Dimitrov (2014), in earlier research, suggests that the ineffectiveness derives from the specificity of the political approach embodied in the CVM and that the latter was obstructed by the structural characteristics of the Bulgarian socio-political environment leading to a lack of real progress in the fight against corruption. Dimitrov et al. (2016)'s research highlights local political resistance against reform, demonstrated by the government's lack of incentive to alter existing power arrangements. The EU recommendations in the guise of "technical-procedural changes" (2016: 20) achieved few results in redistributing power in Bulgaria. The author stresses political corruption and the nepotistic redistribution of resources it entails as being the main hindrance to EU funding benefits reaching the ordinary citizen. Thus, in 30 years of transition, corruption has stubbornly persisted as an issue. It appears as a benchmark in the CVM reports of the Commission and still continues to be the worrying narrative. In the most recent 2017 CVM report the high level of corruption is benchmark four and it

states:

"*The fight against corruption was highlighted in the January CVM report as the area where least progress had been made in Bulgaria over the ten years of the CVM, including in the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy that was adopted in 2015 and the related efforts to pass comprehensive reform of the legislative framework and set up a unified anti-corruption agency.*"

Other independent organisations monitoring corruption confirm the Commission's findings. For instance, *Freedom House's* "Nations in Transition" (NiT) 2018 Report argues that corruption remained a serious problem in Bulgaria on all levels in 2017. In an October resolution, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) concluded that corruption is widespread and poses a major challenge to the rule of law.[7] Corruption and rule of law failings have been the main obstacle to Bulgaria's joining the EU Schengen Zone of passport-free travel despite the country meeting the technical criteria - and corruption has been identified as the most problematic factor for doing business in the country[8].

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[7] Resolution 2188 (2017)1 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights: "New threats to the rule of law in Council of Europe member States: selected examples," October 11, 2017 (in the report)
[8] Schwab, K. et al. (2016)

The table on national democratic governance in the NiT (2018) report demonstrates the "export" of corruption per years. In the scale between 1 and 7, the table shows the gradual increase of corruption between 2009 and 2018. According to their studies, Bulgaria has consistently ranked among the most corrupted countries on its Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). In the 2017 data Bulgaria scores 43 out of 100 points, which ranks the country 71 out of 180 countries included in the index. Bulgaria thus assumes equal position with South Africa, Burkina Faso and Vanuatu. It is a score that places Bulgaria away from new European states, such as Romania, which ranks 48; Croatia: 49, Slovakia: 50; Czech Republic: 57; Poland: 60, and Slovenia: 61.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25

In addition, the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators place Bulgaria's "Control of Corruption" in the 51.4 percentile and an estimate of -0.2, which suggests a slight improvement over the

previous year, but much worse than the 2004 and 2005 scores[9].

Thus, the Nit (2018) report assesses the state of democracy in

Bulgaria as 'semi-consolidated' and rates the democracy at 3.39,

which is a decline from 3.36 to 3.39[10].

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
National Democratic Governance	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.75	3.75
Democracy Score	3.04	3.04	3.07	3.14	3.18	3.25	3.29	3.25	3.36	3.39

Corruption in Bulgaria is endemic to political practice and to the

state administrative apparatus. As O'Brennan (2013) astutely

observes, "In Bulgaria it is impossible to know where organised

crime ends, and legitimate business begins. The nexus between the

two is characterised by complex bureaucratic structures, opaque

corporate accounting and a maze of offshore accounts". This

situation has been made possible because of the hand-in-glove

enmeshment of business with state governance. Krastev (2008), in

an Open Democracy piece comments, "the existence of corruption is

problematic in itself, but what is worse in Bulgaria is the "suspicion

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[9] World Bank in the NiT Report
[10] The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest.

that the government and the presidents are part of it". Scholars have accounted for the paralysis of the state and its inability to cope with corruption with the term "state capture" (Karklins, 2005). Accordingly, state capture "subverts a state's regulatory capacity as networks of entrepreneurs and 'mass political parties'"(Innes, 2014), "compromise key structures of governance" (Ganev, 2007; Hellman, 1998), and at a policy level the influence of informal veto players limits adherence to formal rules and procedures (Dimitrova, 2010). O'Brennan's (2018) analysis of the concern of the Commission with the scale of state capture, corruption and of organised crime's grip on society and the state in the region of the western Balkans, comments that "reform of the judiciary and public administration are critical to addressing corruption and are singled out for immediate and sustained attention". In the 2018 Country Report on Bulgaria the Commission reiterates: "the independence, quality and efficiency of the judicial system must be ensured" (COM, 2018: 3). The NiT report portrays endemic corruption in Bulgaria and its presence at all levels of governance. The report states: "According to the European Commission (October 2017) Special Eurobarometer on Corruption report, 12% of Bulgarians have experienced or witnessed acts of corruption - among the highest percentage in the EU - while

87% believe there is corruption in national public institutions, a rise of 5 percentage points compared to the previous year". Further, the report found that 86% of Bulgarians agree on the need for bribery and the use of connections to obtain public services, while 83% believe that high-level cases of corruption are not pursued sufficiently. While people strongly condemned corruption and advocate strong anticorruption measures, they don't know where to report corruption while they are being forced to participate in petty corruption in their daily lives. The survey shows that 10% of Bulgarians gave bribes during the last year for better access to medical care, 5% to avoid police sanctions (mainly traffic violations), and 3% to receive an administrative service.

Bulgarian scholars writing about the post-communist period trace the genesis of this socio-political phenomenon to the early years of the transition from the one-party régime to a pluralist model of governance. According to political scientist Ognyan Minchev, the inability of a state to apply effective anti-corruption measures stems from the cosy relationship between oligarchic capitalism and state bodies after the collapse of communism. Minchev argues that democratisation in Bulgaria took a peculiar form as "communisation". The term suggests a communist élite that saw the

writing on the wall and that adapted to the new realpolitik, resulting in a "ruthless oligarchic capitalism". The existence of oligarchy does not straightforwardly amount to denial of pluralistic politics (Winters, 2011). The concentrated wealth in the hands of individuals empower them in ways that produce distinct kinds of oligarchic politics that are not captured within a generalistic pluralistic framework. Wealth, as the basis of their power, makes them unusually resistant to dispersion and equalisation. Winters (2011: 4) argues that "the unusual aspect of oligarchic politics is that massive fortunes produce both particular political challenges – the need to defend wealth – and the unique power resources for pursuing that defence". Minchev's analysis reflects this theoretical consideration by showing how oligarchy in Bulgaria, in the pursuit of wealth defence, had taken control of state functions: "Oligarchy in Bulgaria does not hide backstage, rather it's fully centre stage. Forget about the phrase 'behind the curtains'; today's oligarchy is so arrogant that it no longer feels the need to hide but dictates all actions from onstage."

In addition, Minchev also stresses the impunity of oligarchic politics: "oligarchs would hardly give up power or allow themselves be controlled by the parliament. Disputes over who is good, and who is

bad, who is capable and who is not, are memories from the past and are no longer of any use. Given the current political infrastructure, whoever enters the parliament in Bulgaria, you or me, would have to obey the oligarchy or leave. And this situation will continue until the changes I have talked about come to pass." (Minchev, 2015: 100)

Likewise, Kirilova (2001) suggests that the unofficial goal of the transition period was "the old communists to become current capitalists", while Trojanov (2006) accounts for the appearance of Bulgaria's mafia as a product of the country's totalitarian past. According to him "the *nomenklatura* created a parallel shadow economy in order to deal in weapons, drugs and all manner of wares- and most importantly, to earn foreign exchange". Von Beyme (1996) comments on this infiltration of communist élite into the new market economy as a characteristic of the fourth wave of democratisation, i.e., the collapse of the Soviet régime. The transition of state property to private property as conducive to widespread corruption is illustrated in Ganev's (2013) analysis of the unwillingness of the Bulgarian political élite to implement decisive measures to curtail corruption. Ganev shares the same view on the mutation of the political élite into new capitalists but adds an explanation on the nature and modus operandi of these changes. Ganev (2013: 30-31)

labels as 'cronyism' the distribution of assets belonging to the state among "strategically located members of the nomenklatura" after the collapse of the communist régime.

Cronyism, unlike the alternative "strategies of self-enrichment" known as "competitive rent-seeking" shrinks the actors involved in the act of corruption to relatives of the corrupted politician, thus discouraging foreign agents from competing. In the long term, competitive rent-seeking promotes efficiency and facilitates the rise of relatively accountable governance and efficient markets. Cronyism, instead, avoids the complexities of financial operations and of the skills required for them. In this way cronyism "precipitates the decline and ultimate collapse of the entire system" (Ganev, 2013: 29).

Corruption presents serious obstacles to the democratic process. It promotes formal or rather pro-formal democracy rather than genuine pluralism. The extreme material inequality produces extreme political inequality (Winters, 2011: 4). It does so not by virtue of claims on absolute equality of personal capacities, but because these individuals share no power resources in common. O' Brennan (2018) stresses the "striking" role of corruption in the failure to build pluralist institutions throughout the region of the

western Balkans. Ganev's analysis of cronyistic corruption practices conjures up the concept of state hooliganism to describe Bulgaria's élites' formal compliance to democratic norms while informally ignoring EU rules. According to him, 'hooliganism' implies arbitrary behaviour; while formally adhering to EU rules the Bulgarian political élite are simultaneously engaging in acts of deviancy in order to achieve desirable ends. This behavioural pattern-characteristic of Bulgaria's ruling élite-gained prevalence in the post-accession period when EU membership became a reality. Post-accession hooliganism entailed a worsening of corruption and a reversal of previous progress in the consolidation of certain democratic practices.

While the post–communist years antecedent to the accession were able to create and maintain functional institutional configurations, after 2007 these were subject to deterioration. Ganev (2013) accounts for the tendency towards destabilisation as the subversion of stable normative frameworks, the revamping of formal rules, and the abandonment of informal practices. These trends, according to the author, support the notion of democratic backsliding that scholars use to describe the "gradual process of democratic regression"(Hanley and Vahudova, 2018: 278) as a set of

circumstances in the Central and Eastern European countries indicating a crisis of liberalism (Rupnik, 2018). While in Bulgaria it is difficult to argue for straightforward democratic backsliding, Ganev proposes the notion of 'soft decisionism' as covering the idea of an erosion of democratic practices. Soft decisionism relates to "a particular form of governing, which has done visible damage to the armature of democratic governance and has empowered oligarchic and illiberal forces" (Ganev, 2018: 92). The "normalcy of Bulgarian democracy" is the official rhetoric that maintains 'democratic' developments in Bulgaria, accompanied by the concealment of worrisome trends in democratic setbacks, such as jeopardising the right to free speech and associations and abasement of the rule of law. The governance of GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria), currently the largest party led by Mr. Borisov, has been colonising media space, and most importantly, the judicial system, thus embedding corrupt practices and economic illiberalism therein. Thus, while Bulgaria exhibits a high-quality electoral process, capturing the state through corruption results in empowering certain élites and affects Bulgarian democracy through informal networks uniting politicians and businessmen (Dimitova, 2018).

The widespread unalloyed corruption circumvented the EU's ability to reconfigure the domestic political arena and shape democratic interactive patterns. The development of a formal or rather pro-formal democracy prevented the "deeper institutionalisation of relations" which inevitably results in a 'Europeanisation' of politics and policies in member states (O'Brennan, 2018). Instead it led to a "rhetorical commitment to EU rule transfer but Bulgaria's élites continue to govern through informal clientelist networks" (O'Brennan, 2018). This situation has been reflected in scholars' work on the EU's marginal impact on democratic consolidation in Bulgaria (Tomini, 2014: 884) and of Europeanisation as "largely shallow, giving rise to formalistic, short-term and technocratic reforms rather than sustainable and transformative domestic change" (Börzel, 2011: 13).

1.2.3. State capture and the paralysis of civic agency

Democratisation also entails a significant restructuring of post-communist society along democratic lines. The European liberal democratic model, together with building democratic state institutions (e.g. a pluralist party system, administrative apparatus,

etc.) also envisages the presence of a public to support and uphold its rule. Successful democratisation thus requires the emergence of a political constituency for democracy, namely "a critical mass of citizens who, regardless of their personal political ideologies or party affiliation, value democracy as an important end in its own right and are willing to advocate it" (Grant, 2015). Adoption of democratic values by citizens is crucial to defend nascent institutions if democracy is to take hold and endure (Tilly, 1995). The EU's concerns with the social roots of democracy are embedded in the notion of civil society as a marker of liberal democracy. Forming an active civil society is an essential element for substantiating democracy (Sartori, 1962). In addition, the EU's valorisation of the social dimension of democracy is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (2000) and implemented and monitored by the European Pillar of Social rights and the European Fundamental Rights Agency[11], as well as being enshrined in the Copenhagen criteria.

The stalling, or even reversal of the democratisation process at the level of institutions reverberates into the wider social system. State capture cuts off the social ingredient indispensable for genuine

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[11] Falkner (2016) observes the development of the European social policy through the Maastricht (1992), the Amsterdam (1999), Nice (2003) and Lisbon (2009) Treaties as part of the evolution of the EU's social dimension.

democracy to take place. Civil society advanced with the process of democratisation in Bulgaria, yet it hasn't been able to truly embed civic agency and thus substantiate social projects. Kirilova (2001) comments on the arrival of civil society into the Bulgarian socio-political context during the transition period, "in orienting the state to the liberal-democratic model of development, Bulgarian politicians and political analysts introduced the notion of 'civil society'". However, establishing civic society is far more complex than integrating it as a concept in political language. Carving civil society into the texture of the social is more efficient when conjoined with institutional support.

The limited support of the Bulgarian state for organisations working on human rights, anti-discrimination issues and poor performance in the European pillar of social rights point to significant contradictions in the government's political rhetoric and political acts. The successive CVM reports remark on the institutional gaps in fostering civil society. The NiT (2018) report states that the Bulgarian state does not adequately fund civil society organisations (CSOs) working on human rights issues and identifies three main challenges to the development of CSOs in Bulgaria. These are: lack of funding, party and political influence on CSOs, and an unfavourable media

environment. The EU Commission Country Report (2018) highlights the number of challenges that Bulgaria faces on indicators of the social scoreboard supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights. The two major themes accentuated in the report are the high level of social inequality and the increasing tendency towards social exclusion.

The Bulgarian transition was accompanied by extraordinary and protracted economic hardship. The following words of the former minister Yordan Sokolov give a glimpse of the economic markers of the Bulgarian transition to democracy:

"*the truth is that in Bulgaria the transition from communism to democracy was far slower and more painful that in the rest of the ex-socialist countries. Even today we are falling behind in the areas of healthcare and public administration. Pension reform is also excruciating. There has been permanent talk in the judicial system, but the EU reports become more and more negative. Bulgaria remains the poorest country in the EU*" (Sokolov, 2015: 116)

The Commission's 2018 evaluation of the progress on social rights resonates with Sokolov's words from 2015. The report, while recognising that "some progress" has been made in improving the

coverage and adequacy of the minimum wage, emphasises the persistence of high levels of poverty, income inequalities and inadequate social protection[12]. The report contains data pointing out that in 2016, 40% of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion; thus the rate of severe material deprivation (31.9%) is four times higher than the EU average, and the average compensation of employees per hour worked is one-fifth the EU average[13]. Against this background the report also highlights that income inequality is among the highest in the EU and has been increasing steadily since the crisis. Thus in 2016 the richest 20% of households' share of total income was almost eight times that of the poorest 20%. Contributing to the high level of poverty is inadequate social protection, where state spending on social protection is well below the EU average. Graph 4.3.7 in the report illustrates the level of poverty in Bulgaria in comparison to the EU average; while Graph 4.3.8. shows the poverty line along age groups.

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[12] The report states that "after being frozen for 9 years, the guaranteed minimum income (GMI), which determines the level of social benefits, is seeing an increase in 2018 of BGN 10 (to BGN 75 or EUR 38), but its adequacy remains among the lowest in the EU

Graph 4.3.7
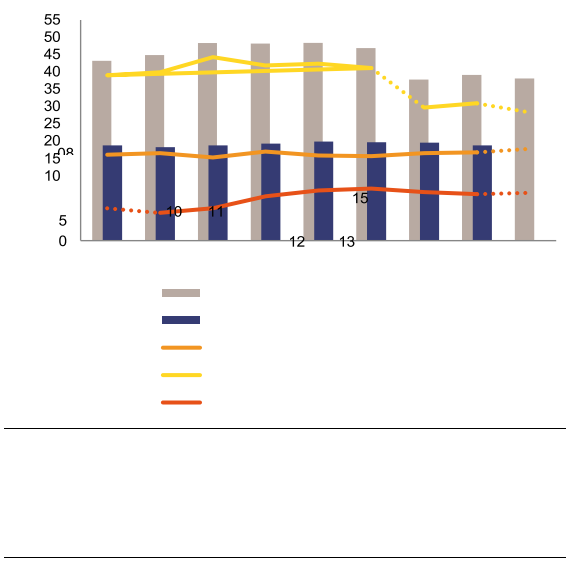
Graph 4.3.8
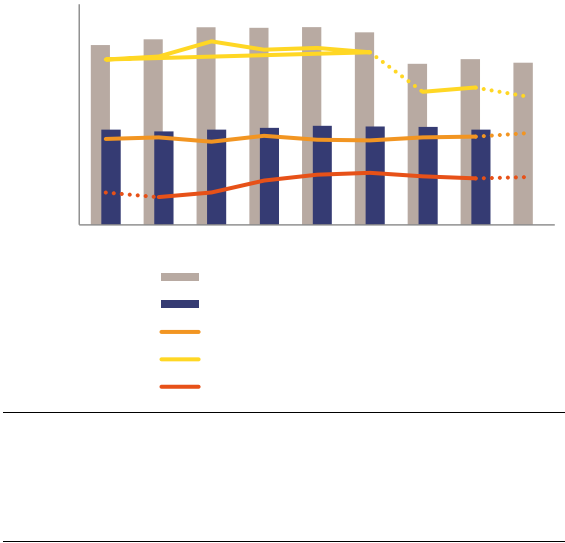
High poverty and rising social inequality entail other social concerns presented in the report. These are the high level of migration and the social exclusion of young people and those of Roma ethnicity

particularly. Since 1989 Bulgaria has been experiencing a significantly high rate of emigration. The report suggests the wage gap between Bulgaria and the main destination countries as the major reason for emigration. This may bring about significant demographic challenges. According to the report "The population is expected to shrink by as much as 22% by 2050 (Graph 4.3.1) due to net migration, low birth rates and relatively high mortality. This is one of the highest projected drops in the EU (Eurostat, 2017). Most Bulgarians living abroad are of working age, further exacerbating adverse population change". This evidence demonstrates the social loss Bulgaria suffers due to what the British Royal Society called the migration of skilled and talented population "brain gain" in the 60s. (One Europe, 2014). The loss of human capital has become palpable in the European continent with regard to the economic crisis of 2007/8 and according to some authors this issue constitutes the main crisis for Europe (Pelletier, 2011). Bulgaria is one of the countries in Eastern Europe (together with Romania) heavily affected by brain loss and the phenomenon, as observed in the EU Commission 2018 report, further accentuates the issues of human capital (labour force) and an aging population (demographics).

Graph 4.3.1.
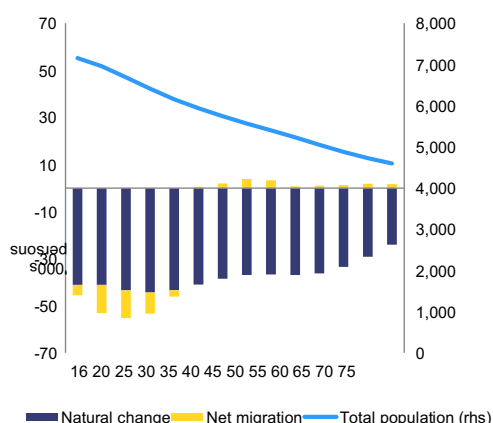
The concerns about social exclusion are connected with the high
levels of inactivity among young people and the Roma. The report
states: "Young people do not yet fully share the benefits of an
improving labour market. Regardless of a slight fall in the rate of
young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), to
18.2% in 2016, it is still among the highest in the EU and significantly
above the EU average of 11.6%. Over half of those not in
employment, education or training were low-skilled and the rate of
young Roma who report not to be in work or education remains very
high (65%), in particular for girls. Roma and students with lower
socio-economic status have difficulties in accessing quality, inclusive
education." The issues raised in the Commission's report are
significant evidence of the social implications of state capture. Under
the condition of state capture, state actions and institutions serve
predominantly to defend the economic interests of the Bulgarian

oligarchy, and only partially the cause of the common good (or societal, citizen interests).

State capture constitutes a particular threat for the development of civic agency. "As a post–communist society Bulgaria suffers not just from an incompetent and corrupt government but also from a lack of administrative capacity and civic energy" (Krastev, 2008). Krastev uses the words "amoral familism" of the political anthropologist Edward Banfiled to depict the symptoms of Bulgarian society. With this term he points to the behavioural pattern "that maximises the material, short-term advantage of the nuclear family, assuming that all others will do likewise". Thus Bulgarian society has repeatedly failed in its efforts to pursue public interest and self-organisation.

The economic hardship that Bulgarian society has undergone under the transition did not in any way contribute to an implanting of the principles of liberal democracy in society. In the conditions of economic poverty (high taxes and low income) adopted by the state, official ideology proclaiming individual liberty as the essential principle of social order couldn't take root. The measures of restricting state functions and stimulating individual entrepreneurship did not have a significant stimulating effect on citizen participation. Furthermore, in facilitating high economic

inequality, state capture has induced a negative impact on the social structure of Bulgarian society. According to Bezev (2014), in social stratification we can observe social inequality in the polar extremes of excess wealth and grinding poverty. This divide happens on many levels which results in the sharp capsulation between different parts of society, their closure and lack of connection between themselves. Consequently, this has prevented the formation of a middle class and hence the definition of common interest among different social groups. Thus, rather than stimulating citizen self-organisation under the democratic régime, the transition period characterized by state capture led to further fragmentation of social ties. The severe economic hardship took its social cost in the tragic self-immolation of 6 individuals as acts of an "extreme form of political protest, demonstrative of the lack of hope felt by so many in desperate economic circumstances" (O'Brennan, 2013).

Furthermore, the state, which continuously disregards the "rules of the game" by working at the behest of favoured particular groups, jeopardises the NGO sector. Favouring the power of capital has also had a detrimental effect on ordinary people's forming of civil society organisations (CSO) and the non-governmental (NGO) sectors these

constitute. Organisations are dependent on external funding, [14] and in the main, these are EU funds. The EU financial model allocates the state (central and local authorities) the main role in distributing EU resources through the mechanism of public bids (CSD,2010). In this way it has rendered organisations extremely dependent on the central budget and party patronage at the local level (NiT, 2018) and hence at risk of corrupt practices. CSOs have been used as cover for illegitimate appropriation of EU funds by state and local authority officials. Associations with ineffective financial controls and lack of transparency have undermined the role, prestige and mission of the third sector (CSD, 2010). This in turn results in the co-opting of civil society or "turning civil society into part of the system" (Kirilova, 2001).

Finally, the performance of the political régime, be it in political, social or economic terms has led to dissatisfaction with democracy. The insecurity and social deprivation of the post-communist era became *the* Bulgarian experience of democracy. While for the scholars of enlargement the experience of Bulgaria before and after accession can be expressed through the narrative "lessons learned"

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[14] NIT (2018) report based on a recent study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) argues that the state does not adequately fund CSOs working on human rights issues. Instead most of the funding is directed predominantly towards sports organisations through the Ministry of Sport.

(O'Brennan, 2018), for the ordinary Bulgarian citizen it resulted in disenchantment with democracy and growing melancholy for the communist past. Thus, in Bulgaria, democracy has gone hand-in-hand with mass nostalgia for the communist era. As Botchev observes:

"*what is at odds with the Bulgarian case is that there are still many citizens who share the personal view that (believe that) a communist society is preferable to a democratic one. But the fact that these people do not just exist, but that they are in the majority in Bulgaria is absolutely dreadful. Statistics have consistently showed that only a minority believe that they live better now under democratic conditions, than they did in the depths of communism.*" (Botchev, 2015: 59)

Bulgarian society, although formally democratic, still wallows in nostalgia for Todor Zhivkov's socialism. The majority of people would agree with the argument of the anonymous internet forum writer, who wrote: "What has the EU dun for me, which todor jhivkov wouldn't have done anyway? (in Penchev, 2015: 57).

The detrimental effect of the communist legacy compounded with the post-communist situation of state capture on the constitution of civic agency is reflected in Stoichovska's (2013) twelve factors underpinning the persistence of the weakness of Bulgarian civil

society. These are: 1) weak citizen participation; 2) the unpopularity of civil society organisation, or citizen's lack of knowledge of the 'third sector' and its role; 3) the incongruity between the agenda of the organisations and individuals' interests; 4) lack of information about the activities of NGOs; 5) NGOs' involvement with political rather than social, economic and professional functions; 6) NGOs' weak structure; 7) the lack of networks; 8) weak influence on society; 9) a weak interaction with state, media and private sector; 10) strong financial dependence on external funding; 11) a lack of transparency; 12) a lack of experience and tradition. Thus Dawson (2014) contends on the basis of the limited scope of civic activism in Bulgaria that there is little evidence for democratic credentials in the public sphere in Bulgaria.

Democratisation, however, is to be understood as a long-term process. Similarly, civil society, as Dahrendorf observes, can take decades to develop. This study initiates research on civic initiatives and their link with the process of Europeanisation from this point. It acknowledges democratisation and Europeanisation in Bulgaria as only partial. In its endeavour to contribute to a fuller understanding of the social dynamics implicit in the "twin process of democratisation and Europeanisation (Àgh, 2015) the project

engages with Dimitrova and Buzogany's (2014) work arguing that the coalition of domestic non-state actors and the EU could compensate for some aspects of state weakness in Bulgaria. The authors are particularly concerned with the EU's impact on policy making and argue for the necessity of domestic actors (at the state or social level) to make use of the EU's 'new rules'. The present project focuses on the role of citizens as carriers and transmitters of the EU rules, and hence conveyors of Europeanisation. Chapter II will set out the definition of the process as rule transfer and the parameters of change it involves.

The research interrogates civic initiatives'' constitution of civic agency, drawing on scholarship highlighting the EU's symbolic or imaginative resourcefulness. The EU's potential impact on the 'waking up' of civic agency in Bulgaria has been suggested by analysts with regard to the protests that took place in Bulgaria in 2013. For instance, Bechev (2013) observed that: "entrenched habits die hard, old hopes are dashed and corruption is endemic. Corrupt élites have adapted to life in the EU, and funds from Brussels have bankrolled state capture". The picture Bechev draws reiterates the points on state capture and Ganev's post-accession 'hooliganism'.

However, particularly interesting for the social focus of this study is the novel element he brings in his analysis.

Bechev speculates about the awakening of a Bulgarian civic spirit as stirred by the political imagination of the EU. The latter, either through its fundamental values and principles or through direct actions, has had a tremendous impact to "empower civic spirit and the aspiration for a more dignified future". The protests as a testimony to a growing protest culture are also evaluated by other scholars. Ivancheva (2013) contends that the protests demonstrate Bulgarian citizens gaining confidence in their demands. The two key demands of the protest, i.e., "revision of the transition" and "change of the system" had been previously absent from media and the public space. They are thus a testimony to Bulgarian citizens asking for transparency and control for the first time. Similarly, O'Brennan (2013) observes the "anti-politics rebellion" of the Bulgarian people against the government in the protests of June 2013. What he calls "the ferment from below" embodies "the twin themes of justice and equality" and is an expression of the extreme dissatisfaction of Bulgarians with "corrupt and parasitical élites".

1.3. Overview

This introductory chapter presented the research questions and elaborated on the logic of researching civic initiatives as a case study of Europeanization. My research aims to investigate the phenomenon of civic initiatives within the context of Europeanization of Bulgarian society as a form of social action carrying potential for substantiating civil society and hence for the consolidation of liberal democracy. It sheds light on the contextual conditions of doing a case study by outlining the specificities of Bulgaria's democratic transition, the role of the EU, and the particulars of the current democratic configuration. The notion of "state capture" points to the tarnishing of democracy by corruption, thus leading to formal democracy rather than genuine pluralism. The context, therefore, sets up a frame for questioning the social roots of democracy and hence the role of civic initiatives in the development of civic agency.

The domain specific dimension of the research question envisions the present study making a contribution to the existing knowledge on Europeanization. The study examines civic initiatives as a case study of Europeanization in Bulgaria, and thus sheds light on the process in the context of Bulgaria. This has not been studied

extensively by scholars to date. In addition, with its focus on social actors, the research adds to the under-researched aspect of the social constituency of democracy, as noted by scholars such as Àgh (2015) Eder (2009), and Boyte (2011). The political challenge that corruption presents to democratic governance in Bulgaria at the level of institutions has been well captured by political scientists. The societal dynamics, however, have not been an object of much scholarly work[15]. The focus on the social relations and the dynamics that these contain places this study also in the field of sociological investigations. In doing so it also makes a contribution to the so-called 'sociological turn' in EU studies as deployed for example in the work of Favell (2007), Guirodon, and Saurugger, etc.

My research also seeks to make a theoretical contribution. This is provided through the theorization of the process of Europeanization as a discursive one. Discourse as a theoretical lens and an analytical logic opens up space for new thinking about Europe, in ways which challenge grand narratives about the liberal politics of democracy and civil society. My PhD is thus situated within scholarship which primarily emphasizes the importance of a discursive approach. It is

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[15] This is not to disregard the important work of Bulgarian scholars, such as Kabakchieva, Pamporov, Kurjelovski among others. While their research touches on aspects of civic agency and Europe, it is not explicitly linked to the process of Europeanization and its societal dynamics.

concerned centrally with the diverse possibilities of meaning as mediated by the idea of Europe, as well as on the power dynamics underpinning social life. The value of taking this discursive approach to a case study of Europeanization in Bulgaria, is that the research can then raise questions around the imbrication of the political project of democracy with capitalism and its economic priorities; also on the contextual articulations of this nexus; and the issue of change as an ever-present possibility. These are all relevant and pertinent intellectual quandaries for academics concerned with our current social condition. Further, the theoretical aspect of my research adds to the literature, which stresses the reflexive and contingent nature of social phenomena, and hence to constitutive social analysis. At the level of theoretical analysis, then the case study makes possible the reconstruction of landscapes of meaning in the causal link between the EU and the domestic context, which would remain hidden in an objective causal account based on rationalist /positivist premises.

The main argument advanced is that civic initiatives are engaged in democratic politics through the (re)construction of social relations. Against the state economic liberal discourse of democracy their activities enact the egalitarian trust of democratic politics. This

argument is erected around two claims, which emerged from my data analysis. Firstly, it is claimed that the ordinary projects and seemingly apolitical activities of civic initiatives are, indeed, political acts. They are constituted by and through the European liberal democratic discourse, which they articulate contextually.

The contextualized discourse uncovered in this research is best described as a "happy life" discourse, which challenges the extant hegemonic economic liberal democratic discourse in Bulgaria. It is argued here that the meaning of "happy life" communicates and constitutes a new vocabulary of democracy in the Bulgarian social space, which coheres with new liberal conception of democracy as a collective commitment to a social ideal. Dewey's understanding of creative democracy as a way of life, and the concepts of citizen participation and pluralism it builds upon, is employed here to analyse the knowledge claims underpinning this contextualized discourse of a 'happy life'.

This thesis argues that the creative democracy of civic initiatives in Bulgaria is a poetic project, an imaginative opening, an ethical possibility, a shared responsibility and a practice of hope that opens a path to achieving a better kind of life. It is, we might say, a project for a 'happy life'! Therefore, it relies on an additional and supporting

argument derived from an analytical framework that supports the idea that that civic initiatives perform democracy. My analysis points to how the performance of democracy accentuates the constitutive nature of affect and passion for democratic politics. The alternative language of civic initiatives is constructed around the discursive tropes of movement and the multiplying of people's support that points to the vision of social change envisioned in the domain of social relations. This is the second claim that supports the main argument, namely that, as socially grounded practices they need to actually create the public to sustain liberal democratic norms of action (liberty) and multitude (equality).

This line of argument complements Dewey's conception of creative democracy as a collective commitment demanding engagement in social issues and other theorists' critical accounts of classical liberalism. The creative work of civic initiatives to reconstruct social relations encounters a number of problems clustering around social cooperation. The analysis of the dynamics of construction and deconstruction harnessed in the discourse of social change draws on the theoretical gaze and concepts of scholars whose work focuses on the citizen dimension of democracy. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts on symbolic violence, cultural and social capital are brought to bear

on different bundles of evidence to address the powerlessness of Bulgarian citizen to gather together. The connection between the social (human relationships) and the individual (human personality) stressed in Dewey's account of participatory democracy is further pursued by drawing on Nussbaum (2000) and Sen (1999)'s insights on education as indispensable for democracy, which they develop through the capabilities approach. Creating *Homo Civicus*, as the discursive trope of active citizens requires a significant reconsideration of the education of democratically competent citizens and of the democratic practice of the redistribution of resources. The analysis of the discourse of civic initiatives, together with providing an account of their challenging of the reproduction of powerlessness through fostering democratic knowledge and skills also leads us to stress the link between democracy and equality. Scholarly work on the sources of marginalization and its role in the production of inequality are brought to bear to illuminate the social meaning that the discourse of civic initiatives conveys. Hence, the analysis employs Goffman's ideas on stigma and stereotype, Fraser (2000, 2005, 2009) and Patteman's (1989) critique of liberalism for overlooking economic and social inequality, along with Newman (2005) and Young's (1990, 2000) work on egalitarian politics.

This plane of analysis relies on the interpretation of a large amount of data gathered on the powerlessness of the Bulgarian citizen and investigates the role and agency of civic initiatives in redressing symbols of powerlessness through so-called 'technologies of empowerment'. My analysis of the political dynamics deployed in the discourse of civic initiatives brings together key theoretical points succinctly expressed by Elzbieta's (2009) term of performative democracy. Performative democracy provides the key to an understanding of democratic politics that this study is based on.

My argument combines Derrida's philosophy of the contingency of meaning (thus always deferred and liable to contestation) with Mouffe's (2005) challenging of rationalist democratic politics and its Kantian reliance on the primacy of reason (as articulated in the work of Locke, Rawls, Habermas). This logic permeates the theoretization of European project of liberal democracy as discursively constructed in language, hence socially articulated, multiple and *aporetic,* as well as the notion of 'civil society' itself. The concept of performative democracy challenges grand narratives of civil society, such as model of a single public sphere and invites a differentiated view on civil society in terms of forms and modalities of agency. Calhoun's (2002) and Eder's (2009) emphasis on cultural creativity as a form of civil

society, together with Butler's work on performativity and body politics as spaces of visibility, and Dewey's highlighting of acts performed by agents have been crucial concepts for analysing the manifold and various activities of civic initiatives as 'workshops of democracy'. They jointly provide a frame that visualizes the creative democracy of civic initiatives as a poetic project towards achieving a better kind of life to be lived. It is, I would, argue a project of a 'happy life'!

1.4. Thesis Outline/Road map

The study answers the question through three parts corresponding to the three sub-questions that substantiate the main research question. Part I focuses on the process of Europeanization. The four consecutive chapters explore different facets of the concept united around the definition provided by a political science approach given it is the main discipline of EU studies.

Chapter II introduces the parameters of the concept of Europeanization as defined by mainstream political science through the notions of impact, causality and mechanisms of change. It also elaborates on the sociological perspective. Political science

establishes the parameters of the EU impact, or what is changing in three broad domains, i.e. policies, politics, and polity. The chapter accentuates the relevance of ontological assumptions scholars subscribe to and their epistemological premises for further conceptual refinement of the nature of the impact, the flow of causality, and the mechanisms via which change is induced. It argues that these fluctuate within the rationalist and constructivist views on the nature of the EU. The main political science approach underpinned by rational theory and positivist assumptions conceptualizes the "transformative impact" of the EU as top-down, i.e. at the level of institutions. It thus defines the impact in terms of a policy transfer as a particular knowledge of the EU rules and inquires how these rules are used in the development of rules in the political context of its member states. Within constructivism, the resourcefulness of the EU expands to include norms and values and the role of social agents in the process of construction. Constructivist insights are reflected in the new institutionalist current of political science and have predominantly informed sociological inquiries of the process. Sociology, with the focus on social relations as the constraining and enabling factor for Europeanisation brings in the bottom-up focus. The chapter sets the tone of inquiry within the

premises of sociology. It thus discusses Europeanisation as a social process and its impact in terms of changes in social relations.

Chapter III expands on the conceptual meaning of Europeanization with regard to the EU Eastern enlargement. It develops the argument of the uneven and deep nature of Europeanization in Central and Eastern European states, premised on conceptualizing the EU impact in a post-communist context as democratization, and the mechanism of political conditionality the EU employed as its main democratization strategy in CEE. The chapter exposes the limitations of the EU approach to promote democracy. It argues that the overreliance on formal transposition of rules and policies limited democracy to the institutional domain. This move, while succeeding in the establishment of the official democratic institutions of CEE states, failed to reach their citizens. However, the social dimension of democracy rendered with the notions of political culture and civil society are crucial for consolidation of democracy. Further, they are essential elements in the EU self-understanding of liberal democracy. This chapter offers a theoretical view on the civil dimension of the EU as well as the way it is integrated in the EU Commission's approach to civil society.

Chapter IV centres on the cultural tropes of Europeanisation conveyed by the domestic context of Bulgaria. The discussion contextualizes the research question in the domain specific literature thus addressing the specificities of civil society in Bulgaria and the passivity of the Bulgarian social milieu these denote. The chapter evaluates the institutional approach of the EU Commission to develop civil society in Bulgaria as "Bulgarians beyond society" against the imprint of the historical legacies of (50 years) of Communist regime and (500 years) of Ottoman rule. While the latter has been instrumental for instilling a dependency mentality in the Bulgarian social consciousness, it was conducive for the development of the middle class. The former with the comprehensive penetration of society by the state, de-mobilized the political element in citizen interaction. It thus entailed the withdrawal of the citizens in the private domain and the corruption of social ties. The chapter thus argues that the EU impact of democratization is taking shape as a hybridization between overlapping layers of cultural strata. The project sets to inquire into the role of civic initiatives in this *sui generis* mode of democratization for the development of ties of sociality to support an active civil society.

Part II focuses on the concept of discourse and its implications for researching Europeanization. The four chapters in this section shed light on the theoretical positions implicated in the notion (chapter V); their relevance for doing social research (chapter VI); their applicability to Europeanization and civic initiatives as objects of research (chapter VII); and the practical steps taken to capture the discourse of civic initiatives and operationalize the link with the European liberal democratic script (chapter VIII).

Chapter V initiates the discussion by outlining main points inferred in the notion of discourse. It further elaborates on the specific meaning of the concept as theorized by Political Discourse Theory as the approach adopted by the study. Discourse is theorized following political discourse theory, thus drawing on Wittgenstein's notion of language games and Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of systems of signification in which meaning is negotiated. Discourse then captures the social world, which within the premises of post-structural intellectual tradition implies positing meaning as a central trope in researching the social world. The latter predicated upon the relational nature of language, and hence on the impossibility of complete closure of meaning is always in flux. Moreover, the discursive nature of the social world is impregnated with political

dynamics as these contingencies are unquenchable sources of social antagonisms. Power then permeates discourse and structures the social world. As each discourse is not a complete and closed totality that offers a final vocabulary to capture the entirety of the social world, it is thus constantly being transformed through contact with other discourses. The struggles to fix a meaning and to construct a predominant understanding (hegemonic discourse) occurs through articulations, which partially fix meaning around certain nodal points. Articulations modify and alter the identity of actors and the discourses they contest.

Chapter VI elaborates on the implications of the discursive nature of social world for doing social research. The key claim it makes is that discursive nature of the social world entails its coming into being through practice. The argument about practices as constituted and constitutive of the social world is erected around the nature of meaning. Rendered with Wittgenstein's expression "meaning is use", discourse as language games integrates the key claim of radical constructivism that knowledge is to be sought in action. Practices as the sites of constitution of meaning are containers of knowledge. Practices are constitutive for the social world because they enable people to connect, to hang together though understanding and

intelligibility. Researching social world then involves engaging in non-positivist, i.e. interpretivist mode of inquiry. Discourse analysis entails constitutive causal conceptualization, which aims at disclosing "landscapes of meaning" and proceeds through interpretation and explanation of the social and political phenomena it investigates. Discourse analysis has a critical dimension, thus exploring the politics of language. Political discourse analysis therefore focuses on the dynamics of construction of particular problems in specific historical contexts.

Chapter VII presents an attempt to theorize Europeanization on the premises of discourse. It develops the argument of Europeanization as discursive process (i.e. a process of signification) through three moves, corresponding to the properties of meaning formation. First, based on the interactive nature of meaning production, Europeanization is theorized following Diez (199) as linguistic structuration. This view captures the causality implied in the process as structure and agency as circular. Unlike structuration theory, however, discourse sees structure as permeable rather than fixed, and as informing action, rather than guiding it. The thin difference resides in the logic of conformity the later insinuates. The view of circular causality resonates with Wendt's notion of constitutive

causality. Second, meaning is inherently playful, thus located in multiple discourses. Europeanization here is theorized as discursive formation whereby it displays the multifaceted nature of the European liberal discourse. It also integrates the local context, actors and the articulations these forge. Third, meaning is predicated upon contestation. Implicit here is the enmeshment of power, passion and action in constituting the social world. Europe permeated with difference stands for the impossibility to eradicate conflict. This line of argument theorizes Europe with the metaphor *embodiment of the political* and hence Europeanization as essentially political process. This means that it is socially embedded; and that pluralism accommodates antagonisms in an agonistic way.

Chapter VIII integrates the claim about the discursive nature of the social world and the processes of Europeanization with questions about how to study them. It elaborates on the research design as a qualitative case study, the methods of data collection and analysis. Discourse analysis is conducted in three phases: thematic analysis, semiotic analysis and explanation, i.e. theorization. The first two phases pertain to the descriptive approach taken here to data, wherein the aim is to disclose surface meanings and to capture the discourse of civic initiatives. Explanation relates to the critical aspect

of interpretation, hence to problematization of established meaning with the aim to reconstruct deeper layers of social meaning. Explanation as interpretation of the social dimension of meaning communicated in the discourse of civic initiatives is conducted with regard to disclosing the democratic script of the discourse of civic initiatives and making intelligible the dynamics of the social relations it constructs. Linguistic categories were re-inserted into theory in order to speculate about civic initiatives as an empirical case of Europeanisation. The identified semantics were linked to the abstract concept of liberal democracy. The chapter also sheds light on the participants in the research, the researcher's fieldwork and *modus operandi*.

Part III presents the findings of the research. It argues that the democratic scripts of civic initiatives construct and reconstruct social relations along the lines of equality and diversity. The conclusion chapter answers the research question by elaborating on the main points uncovered in the case study.

Chapter IX captures the democratic imagination of civic initiatives. It outlines the semantics of the discourse that informs their practices as *social change*. It thus presents the construction of the discourse

via semiotic analysis of the notion of movement and its function as signifier and signified. As the signifier movement is rendered with the expression of 'moving and multiplying people' and with the image of 'happy life'. The latter discloses the vision of sociality as a pluralist community given that the signified movement reveals the content to which the signifier refers. It encloses the knowledge claims of civic initiatives, which are described as "movement within", "movement against" and "movement towards". They reflect the social intelligence, the emotions, particular feelings, affects and passions of citizens engaged in civic activism. Thus, the discourse of social change does not solely describe their social knowledge and vision of social reality. The performative, discursive agency communicates a shift in the meaning of the extant hegemonic economic liberal democratic discourse. As practices, they arise from the possibilities that their 'situatedness' in the discursive formation of Europeanisation makes possible. They are contextual articulations of the European liberal discourse, which they modify in the shade of Dewey's understanding of democracy as 'happy life'. They constitute a new meaning of democracy in the Bulgarian social space, which coheres with Dewey's creative democracy as participatory and pluralistic.

Chapter X explores the power dynamics in the construction of the discourse of social change. The intelligibility of social reality as 'moving and multiplying people' is achieved in action, which is analysed as deconstruction-construction moves. Civic initiatives initiate the construction of the discourse of social change within the cultural idolatry of communism rendered with Derrida's expression "theatre of cruelty". Representing the Bulgarian social milieu as passive the metaphor embodies the symbolic violence of cultural symbols and is sustained by the operation of two logics, i.e. the logic of dependency and the logic of mistrust. The deconstructive work of these social groups involves disavowing the power of communist symbolism deeply ingrained in social relations. Civic initiatives engage in "technologies of empowerment" thus disrupting the authoritative modes of thought in the conceptual vocabulary of the social institutions of education and media, as carriers of the two logics. Empowerment also involves construction dynamics. These are oriented towards the creation of *Homo Civicus* and proceed through building cultural and social capital as the as means to forge citizens with power. As catalysts of citizens' agency, civic initiatives are educating the citizens. In addition, they are building social capital by promoting networking for socialization thereby reinstating

connectivity among citizens. The deconstructive and constructive moves are finally analysed as political acts. As politics of des /identification and politics of inclusion, they are working to re-activate the social by fostering the development of politically conscious social agents.

Chapter XI concludes on how civic initiatives are constituted by Europeanisation and on how they are constitutive of the process. It does so by asserting that the nature of civic initiatives is that they are discursive practices of the liberal democratic discourse. As such they articulate the liberal ideals of individuality and tolerance, of singularity and pluralism in the hues of John Dewey's vision of democracy as a way of life. It further concludes on their contribution to Europeanization as one of remodelling social relations along the principles of multiplicity and movement, thus substantiating the civil society project in Bulgaria.

Chapter II: Europeanisation: Concept Formation and Definitions

This chapter focuses on conceptual issues in defining Europeanisation. It presents an overview of the main ideas and concepts developed by political science as the main discipline within which Europeanisation research is located. Europeanisation as a process denotes change in the domestic political context of a member state of the EU. It is thus associated with the influence of the EU. The first part of the chapter elaborates on the notions of impact, causality and mechanisms of Europeanisation. The second part interrogates sociological perspectives on the phenomenon. If the insights of political science are laying the foundations of 'What is Europeanisation and how is it to be studied?', sociology adds to this vast domain the focus on the 'social'. In comparison to political science's focus on institutions, sociology brings in people as the bottom-up dimension of Europeanisation. This chapter sets the tone of the inquiry within the premises of political science and sociology, discusses Europeanisation as a social process and its impact in terms of changes in social relations.

2.1. What is Europeanisation? Elements of the concept and necessary conditions for its application.

A vast amount of scholarly work has emerged conceptualising Europeanisation (Radaelli, 2000, 2003; Knill and Lemhkhul 2000, 2002; Grabbe, 2003; Borzel and Risse, 2001; Risse, 2003; Caporaso, Cowels et al., 2001; Graziano and Vink, 2007; Ladrech, 2010). Between the poles of this vast scholarship diverse opinions are advanced, elaborating different conceptual aspects. To begin with, as a concept Europeanisation serves as a "classificatory tag according to associations made with certain words" (Thompson, 2000: 14). In the literature on Europeanisation, the notion is semantically linked with the impact of Europe on the domestic context of member states. This, however, denotes a semantically broad field, and scholars have attempted to clarify and thus define the meaning of the notions in the syntagm: Europe, impact, domestic context.

The prevailing agreement in political science literature is that it is intrinsically linked with the widening and deepening of the European Union (EU), i.e., European Integration, and the changes that this process entails. Thus, Europeanisation is most often associated with domestic adaptation to the pressures emanating directly or indirectly from EU membership. Cowels, Caporaso and

Risse (2001) in fact consider the process as synonymous with European Integration. One of the most prominent scholars of Europeanisation, Claudio Radaelli (2003: 33), states that "Europeanisation would not exist without European integration". The substantial link with European integration is highlighted by other political scientists who also contend that Europeanisation is best explained with theoretical approaches to integration as well (Ladrech, 1994; Borzel, 2003; Radaelli, 2003; Caporaso 2007). Within Caporaso's theory of integration, Europeanisation is seen as "a logical outgrowth of the evolution of integration theory". In the three-step model of integration, Europeanisation is the third stage, implying attention to the national variation of domestic outcomes associated with the integration process (Caporaso, 2007: 23).

Thus, at the minimalist level, Europeanisation consists of the national response to European integration (Haverland, 2003). Europeanisation is concerned with what happens once EU institutions are in place and produce their effects. Thus, while stressing the conceptual link between the two processes, Radaelli (2003) also establishes a distinction between them at the ontic level. According to him, European integration belongs to the ontological

stage of research, that is, "the understanding of a process in which countries pool sovereignty", whereas Europeanisation is post-ontological. Likewise, Caporasso (1996: 30 in Featherstone, 2003: 4) has argued that Europeanisation is moving into 'post-ontological' state, meaning that "scholars are less concerned with how to categorize the EU than how to explain process and outcome". While theories of integration inquire if European integration strengthens the state, weakens it or triggers 'multiple governance', the post–ontological focus of Europeanisation brings to the fore the role of domestic institutions in the process of adaptation to Europe (Radaelli, 2003: 33).

There are, however, scholars who suggest distinguishing between European integration and 'Europeanisation'. Wincott (2003) asserts that a similar distinction contributes to analytical strength. Others suggest the need to evaluate exogenous factors when examining the domestic impact of the EU. For instance, Wallace (2000) proposes studying the impact of the EU in terms of particular EU arrangements, reflecting cross–border connections, as well as historical and geographical experiences of the European continent. She defines Europeanisation as "development and sustaining of

systematic European arrangements to manage cross-border connections, such that a European dimension becomes an embedded feature, which frames politics and policies within the European states" (Wallace, 2000: 370). Implicit in this definition is the influence of global developments enmeshed in the domestic response to the EU. Therefore, she proposes that the domestication of EU impact as particular experiences, and institutional responses to be rendered by the term "EU-isation". Europeanisation implies a broader notion of Europe rather than a narrow EU-centric one; it is also intertwined with globalisation and the challenges it presents. According to her, Europeanisation can act as a filter of globalisation. Featherstone (2003), among others, saw Europeanisation as a "defensive strategy" against the material experience of neoliberalism associated with globalisation, and the latter as a possible threat to the European social model. Hay and Rosamond (2002) point to the global ideational structures and their institutionalisation and normalisation in contemporary European public policy and political economy.

A further clarification of the concept links it with the notion of change it denotes. Europeanisation as a process entails

transformation in a domestic context, and defining the dimensions of change, as well as the link with the EU, is of paramount importance. Thompson (2000: 15) suggests "to analyse a concept is to pick up the conditions of its application". Europeanisation research stresses the notions of impact and causality as necessary conditions in assessing domestic change. Sedelmeier (2011) defines Europeanisation as the impact of the EU on member states; Radaelli and Extadaktylos (2012) argue that Europeanisation can be defined as causality. Thus, a crucial task in Europeanisation research is to define the nature and scope of its impact as well as the mechanisms of causality.

Europeanisation is considered a useful "entry point for understanding important changes occurring in our politics and society" (Featherstone, 2003: 3). This claim brings to the fore questions about what is changing and how is it changing in the domestic context of a member state. In order to avoid the "overstretching" to which the concept lends itself (Radaelli, 2003), the domestic impact of the EU requires specification of the nature of the impact, which in turns influences how to assess it. Hence, Radaelli and Extadaktylos (2012: 3) argue that "as domestic focus, the field of Europeanisation is defined by establishing causality".

Defining impact and causality implies unpacking the ways the EU affects the domestic political system, or as Radaelli (2012: 2) suggests "the definitions scholars provide reflect conceptual differences of the parameters of this change".

Defining impact is a difficult task, for European integration is a multi-faceted process (Olsen, 2002) and as Radaelli and Pasquier (2006: 12) observe "it is impossible to pin down precisely the territory covered by the concept (Europeanisation)". In addition, as observed earlier, there are the subtleties of global imprints as well. Consequently, the meaning attributed to Europeanisation is wide-ranging and "diffuse" (Trenz, 2014); it includes long-term historical transformations (Conway et al, 2010), the dynamics of societal change and the advancement of modernity; (Delanty and Rumford, 2005); the convergence of political cultures; the public sphere and collective identities (Koopmans and Statham, 2010; Risse, 2010), and more confined political science analyses of the processes of adaptation of member states' law, policies or public administration (Héritier, 2007). This broad range of meanings is implied in the typology of Europeanisation that Featherstone (2003: 5) provides. According to him, the concept applies to four broad categories: first,

as a historical process; second, as a matter of cultural diffusion; third, as a process of institutional adaptation; and fourth, as an adaptation of policy and policy processes. At its core, this wide spectrum of meaning indicates that Europeanisation is primarily useful as a relational concept. As such, it denotes a process that is best understood as the interaction implicit in the notions of structure and agency.

The definition which Radaelli (2003: 30) proposes captures the manifold nature of impact through which the EU induces change in a domestic context. In his conceptualisation "Europeanisation is "processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies".

Olsen (2002) analyses Europeanisation as an organising concept covering different yet related phenomena. According to him, rather than focusing on definition, scholars should investigate the structure

and the dynamics of change. Olsen (2002: 944) identifies five phenomena falling under the heading of Europeanisation. These are: a) Changes in external borders. Europeanisation is taking place as the EU expands through enlargement. Territorial changes entail expansion of a system of governance as a result of which "Europe as a continent becomes a single political space"; b) Developing institutions at the European level. This suggests centralising formal legal institutions of governance and normative order; c) Central penetration of national systems of governance. These dynamics cover the adaptation of national and sub-national systems of governance to European integration and European Union norms; d) Exporting forms of political organisation. Democracy becomes the political model in member states; e) A political unification project. The degree to which Europe is becoming more unified and a stronger political entity is related to both its territorial space, centre-building, domestic adaptation, and the degree to which European developments impact and are impacted by systems of governance and events outside the European continent.

Crucial for navigating amongst this proliferation of meanings is the theoretical lens through which scholars approach the process. What

is Europeanisation and whether or not it is taking place depends on the definition used (Page, 2013: 163). Defining Europeanisation, in turn, depends on the disciplinary perspective (Qualglia, Neuvonen, Miyakoshi and Cini, 2007) as "alternative readings of the EU and European Integration follow from alternative theoretical propositions" (Rosamond, 2016: 80). Scholars highlight the crucial role of conceptions of the EU, i.e., the ontological and epistemological foundations (Christiansen et al,1999; Radaelli, 2012; Rosamond, 2014). Thus, accepting Sartori's (1984)'s observation that researchers interested in different problems draw on different notions, we can highlight the importance of theoretical premises for defining Europeanisation. Conceptual clarity is of paramount importance in order to avoid the confusion that the multiplicity of meanings might provoke. At the same time, theoretical conceptualisation is essential to avoid the pitfalls of what Manners and Rosamond (2018: 29) call the "professionalisation" of EU Studies. The latter is associated with "the appeal of particular forms of scientific rigour, methodological tightening, the eschewal of normativity, and narrowing of empirical foci" which entails drawing various boundaries and, as a result, leads to the exclusion of perspectives or voices in the field. Professionalisation, therefore, has

cast a shadow over some important analytical and political dilemmas.

Political science and sociology have been the main disciplines to engage in intellectual debate and attempts to define the process. Rosamond (2007) suggests that although the study of EU integration and politics might be organised in a number of ways, two main debates can be identified for heuristic purposes: a) the study of EU politics would be the domain of political scientists (the mainstream model), and b) on the other side, sits the claim that the study of EU politics should be inherently a multi- (perhaps interdisciplinary) field. This suggestion is particularly fruitful given the abandonment of "the essentially static" (Pollack, 2005: 357) neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism theories of IR as the dominant paradigms to study the EU (in the 1950s-1960s). The multidisciplinary approach enriches the study of the EU by allowing for contributions from the broad rationalist-constructivist debates in IR; from comparative political perspectives, which analyse the EU using the models of legislative, executive, and judicial politics in domestic settings, to multi-level governance as an umbrella approach drawing on IR and comparative politics. The interdisciplinary field represents a

pluralist position, which is also open to critical approaches, and which this study adopts. An inter-subjective approach, which the present inquiry favours, demands a presentation of the main points by political science and sociology, if it is not to elapse into an essentialist view of Europeanisation. Different disciplines examine the same phenomena from different foci. An intersubjective approach emphasises hybridisation rather than stressing the division of territories between disciplines. The study of Europeanisation as intersubjective builds on the insights of both disciplines, as hybridisation implies "an overlapping of segments of disciplines, a recombination of knowledge into new specialised fields" (Goodin and Klingemann, 1996: 39). Thus, the study follows political science's essential points on Europeanisation as the EU's impact on domestic politics, whereas in sociology the impact is examined in the sphere of social relations. It also draws on political philosophy's insights for framing the theoretical and methodological approach in which the study is embedded as discourse.

Based on the above discussion we can outline three main properties of the concept of Europeanisation. First, it suggests that Europeanisation implies a process, or a set of processes, rather than

an end-state (Goetz, 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Radaelli and Pasquier, 2006). It is thus a relational, hence multi-faced concept, which possesses dynamic, fluid properties. Second, Europeanisation is a process denoting change in a member state of the EU determined by the interaction between the EU and the specific domestic context. This underpinned the general definition of Europeanisation "as impact of whatever sort" (Page, 2003: 162) and the need to establish causality. Third, -and central for conceptual clarity- is the theoretical perspective, that is, an approach to the analysis of Europeanisation premised on the idea that different theories can explain different parts of the same phenomenon. For example, the EU has been conceptualised differently on the theoretical premises of positivist and post-positivist epistemologies. Consequently, the different EU ontology that the constructivist and rationalist models of knowledge posited reflected theoretical endeavours to explain the EU enlargement process. Social constructivism acknowledged the importance of ideas for action in foreign policy, whereas rationalist models of international life (as neo-realism and neo-liberalism) stressed power and interests (O'Brennan, 2000; 2006). Relying entirely on positivists' claim of knowledge is one-sided and hence a limiting approach to explain

political processes. Europeanisation requires a theoretical lens able to capture its complexity, expressed in Featherstone's definition, according to which Europeanisation generally designates "structural change, variously affecting actors and institutions, ideas and interests, transformation or change in domestic contexts associated with Europe" (Featherstone, 2003: 3).

2.2. The Political Science Approach: the nature of impact and mechanisms of Europeanisation

2.2.1. Policies, Politic, Polity

The impact of the integration process is usually assessed in terms of the EU's influence on domestic developments in the spheres of policy, politics and polity (Ladrech, 2010; Sedelmeier, 2011: 9-10). This claim is reflected in the main definition of Europeanisation proposed by scholars as "domestic change, in terms of policy substance and instruments, processes and politics as well as polity caused by European integration" (Ladrech, 1993: 69; Radaelli, 2003: 3). Börzel and Risse (2003: 60) use the distinction between policies, politics and polity to identify the dimensions along which the domestic impact of Europeanisation can be analysed, and the process

of domestic change can be traced. Integration takes place as a synergetic process through introducing changes simultaneously in the three domains. The scope of the policies, politics and polity impact is underpinned by an understanding of EU influence as formal and informal rules. Defined by Schimelfennining and Sedelemeir (2005: 7) Europeanisation is "a process in which states adopt EU rules" The authors clarify that rules cover a broad range of issues, while states are considered as the political-institutional structures into which EU rules are integrated. Further, in analysing domestic response as rule adoption, they focus on the *institutionalisation* of EU rules (italic in original, ibid.) at the domestic level.

Public policy is a central plank of Europeanisation. Adjustment to policy is a central dimension of impact in a definition considering Europeanisation as equivalent to European integration. For example, in Héritier's (2005: 199) definition the process "denotes the pooling of national competences in different policy areas at the supranational level in order to engage in joint policymaking". Extadaktylos's (2010) stress on Europeanisation as causality entails establishing a cause at the EU policy level and tracing it down to

implementation in domestic society. Schimlefnning and Sedelmeir (2005) suggest that analysing the institutionalisation of EU rules at the domestic level implies inquiring into the transposition of EU law into domestic law. This way it can be determined if Europeanisation is leading to adaptation, change or lack of change in the member state.

Among the many activities the EU is involved in, policy formation is the most important one. Scholars emphasise the evolution of the Union since its establishment in the 1950s through extensive policy formation (Nugent and Paterson, 2003). Also, developing policy ideas is at the heart of the EU because as a régime it operates primarily through regulation. The regulative dimension of the EU as a system of governance (Majone, 1996) implies turning policy ideas into legislation (Cini and Borragán, 2016: 5). In order to lay down the regulatory framework for public activity the EU is involved in making and management of policies as concrete actions and outputs (Rosamond, 2013).

While Radaelli (2003: 34) argues that Europeanisation and EU policy formation should be kept distinct at the conceptual level, he also acknowledges their interconnection in the real world. He states that "European policy is not a mysterious *deus ex machina* situated 'up

there'. Instead, it originates from processes of conflict, bargaining, imitation, diffusion and interaction between national and (often subnational) and EU level actors. Therefore, Europeanisation is defined as a national adaption to EU policies" (Featherstone, 2003).

Analysing Europeanisation as taking into account particular policies or problems and tracking their outcomes have been an important argument in Europeanisation research (Héritier, 2005: 203). Börzel and Risse (2003: 60) further specify that studying impact in the domain of policy involves examination of "standards, instruments, problem-solving approaches, policy narratives and discourses".

Studying impact at the level of policy through the implementation of EU directives does not presuppose a definition of Europeanisation as a harmonisation of policies. Neither does it suggest equating Europeanisation with convergence. Harmonisation, as Radaellli (2003) explains can be a consequence, not a condition for Europeanisation. This is valid for convergence as well. Europeanisation does not accord with harmonisation for it allows for "regulatory diversity, intense competition, even distortions of competition" Radaellli (2003: 33). It also can produce divergence or convergence limited to a family of countries. Héritier (2005: 200) explains that in the process EU influence on the domestic context is

not a unilateral adjustment on the part of the member states resulting mechanically from a good or bad fit with respect to EU policy demands. The specific EU policy input into national policy-making processes is used by actors to strengthen their political position in domestic contexts, thereby increasing their chances of obtaining policy goals. At the same time, individual member states are also able to strategically influence the formation of particular EU policy measures that they subsequently must comply with. Thus, in the prevailing understanding of Europeanisation as adaptation to policies, it is a "two-way street" process (Héritier, 2005: 203). It implies recognition of domestic inputs into EU policy making and allows for divergence. This proposition alters with regard to the domestic context of Central and East European (CEE) states, where Europeanisation of policy domains is marked by strong uncertainty (Grabbe, 2003). Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2005) warn about the pitfalls of the domestic context of "Europeanisation East" wherein there is the strong possibility of difference between formal change (the legal transposition of rules) and behavioural change (practical application and reinforcement).

The design of policies also reflects power dynamics and is therefore strongly linked to politics. Policies emerge as a result of the

interaction between the various levels of the EU system. Consequently, "European integration has produced a new and complex political system" argues Hix (1999: 5). This new political system refers to a new process of governance and is characterised as multi-levelled governance. According to Rhodes (2003: 66), governance signifies a change in the meaning of government and refers to governing with and through networks. Multi-level governance implies relinquishing the state monopoly over matters of governance and builds on the existence of overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across these levels (Nugent and Paterson, 2003: 101). It points to supranational decision-making, meaning the dispersal and fragmentation of decision-making and a focus on regulation rather than redistribution (Smismans, 2016).

Contestation and engagement with the policy domain has constituted the main focus of EU politics (Wallace and Wallace, 2007: 339). The politics dimension of Europeanisation touches on processes of interest formation, aggregation, and representation, as well as public discourses (Börzel and Risse, 2003: 60). Börzel and Sedelmeir (2006: 54) explain EU input into domestic political processes as a possible incongruity between European rules and domestic understanding.

Thus, either by design or through lack of influence, EU policies can be inconvenient at the domestic level. Challenges emerge when certain governments or societal actors may not always be successful at influencing EU policies in a way that reflect their preference.

The power dimension in Europeanisation has been stressed by Radaelli and Pasquier (2007), within their focus on wider political aspects of the process. These two scholars see Europeanisation as surpassing the focus on transposition of policies and as the emergence of "a set of contested discourses and narratives about the impact of European integration on domestic political change" (2007: 36). In particular, the authors argue for inquiries with a focus on the formation of political systems and domestic political structures. Europeanisation therefore reflects and modifies the ways in which political power is constituted, legitimised, exercised, controlled and redistributed.

The study of European integration is also concerned with the emerging shape of a new European polity. According to Hix (2007: 141), the western states voluntarily delegated significant executive, legislative and juridical powers to a new set of institutions at the European level, and so established a new polity. Thus, the EU is the first genuine 'supranational polity' where politics and government

exist in many contexts either outside or beyond the classic state (Badie and Brinbaum 1983 in Hix. 1971). The polity dimension, while at risk of "marginalising integration as a central guiding *problematique* for the field of EU studies" (Manners and Rosamond, 2018: 29, italics in original) contains the most 'intractable' problems of the EU. These are connected with the subject of democracy as the historically-established political framework of the Union (Rokkan, 1999).

Democracy poses two main challenges that correspond to the constitutive ambiguity of the EU. These are, on the one hand, the nature of democracy as governance, and, on the other, as constituency (Agamben, 2012). In the political science debate both strands are placed within, and hence associated with, the political institutions of the nation state (Smismans, 2016). Democracy thus has raised a theoretical conundrum about the role of the EU citizen as a constituent of democracy. According to Hix (2007: 152) the new political system, which EU integration has established, exhibits extremely weak democratic control despite the relative efficiency of the EU institutional architecture. This statement pertains to the limited political participation of citizens in the EU decision-making process. In the literature scholars refer to it as the 'permissive

consensus' of public opinion (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) and has opened the debate about the alleged 'democratic deficit' in the EU (Weiler et al., 1995; Siedentop, 2000; Bee and Guerina, 2014).

The intergovernmentalist response, as argued by Moravcsik (2002) recognises the reasons behind the concerns of a democratic deficit by scholars adhering to a state-centric nature of the EU. The EU, observes Moravcsik (2002: 604), as an organisation of continental scope, is rather distant from the average European citizen; moreover, as a multinational body, the EU "lacks the grounding in a common history, culture, discourse and symbolism on which individual polities can draw". According to Moravcsik (2002: 605-606) however, concerns about the alleged democratic deficit are misplaced. They are based on an analysis of the EU in ideal and isolated terms, and therefore "fail to appreciate fully the symbolic relationship between national and EU policy–making". Further, against the claims of lack of any form of democratic participation and accountability, Moravcsik (2002: 611) contends that the EU possesses two robust mechanisms: direct accountability via the European Parliament (EP) and indirect accountability via elected national officials. Yet, the overtly technocratic nature of the EU highlights the challenge of effective citizen participation, and hence

the second line of the debate about democracy. Delanty (2005) has noted that although the EU has gone far in creating a political framework for Europe, it is far from being accomplished as it is missing its political subject. Moravscik (2002: 615) is sceptical about the possibilities of expanded citizen participation. In his view one of the reasons lies in the inverse correlation between EU legislative and regulatory activity and the issues in the minds of European voters. Europeanisation research has put forward the concept of politicisation as the way to respond to these challenges and to the process of EU polity formation (Statham and Koopmans, 2013). Implicit in politicisation is the need to promote civic engagement and participation in debates and contestation of Europe, or as defined by Statham and Koopmans (2012: 3) politicization involves: "expansion of debate from a closed élite-dominated policy arena to wider politics". Contestation of Europe could foster the participation of citizens presupposed by the EU normative frame of liberal democracy, and thus avoid elapses into abstract concerns about democratic deficit, and substantiate the concrete picture, which Moravscik's analysis emphasises.

2.2.2. The EU as 'institutional architect'

Implicated in Europeanisation as a process of transformation of the domestic political space (i.e. policy, politics, polity) is the understanding of the European Union as a vector of change. As such, the EU represents a resource for domestic actors for initiating changes "by providing new resources, references and policy frames, which national policy actors use strategically (Jacquot and Woll, 2010: 113). The EU exhibits a multiple or hybrid nature (Laffan, 2001; Eriksen, 2005; Sjursen, 2006)[16]. It thus incorporates "symbolic systems (cognitive constructions), normative rules and regulative processes" which shape social behaviour (Scott, 1996: 36). Therefore, as Woll and Jacquot argue, "it becomes crucial to understand what kind of resource the EU can represent". As noted earlier on the definition of Europeanisation, the resourcefulness of the EU is likewise determined by the understanding of the meaning of the EU that is adopted.

The resourcefulness of the EU within political science is considered to lie in devising institutions or as an "institutional architect" (Olsen, 2002: 929; Wallace, 2017: 9). As a multilevel institutional polity

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[16] Eriksen identifies three modes of rationality within the EU: instrumental, contextual and communicative to which correspond three integrationist modes: economic, cultural and political. Building on this perspective Sjursen (2006:10) presents an account of the entity of the EU as enclosing three ideal types, namely: problem solving, value-based and rights-based.

(Rosamond, 2016: 83) the EU represents a distinctive set of supranational institutions as well as a number of intergovernmental bodies. It is a heavily institutionalised system and these well-established institutions are assigned functions – executive, legislative, bureaucratic and judicial – that resemble the classical design of political systems. The resourcefulness of the EU from this perspective therefore is considered to lie in devising institutions within its function as a system of governance. In its capacity of a system of governance the EU is an "institutional architect" (Olsen, 2002: 929), and as such is assumed to be involved in a continuous search for "the right formula for building lasting and stable institutions in order to improve functionality, legitimacy and credibility of the institutionality of governance" (Patten, 2001).

Within political science however, institutionalism is a spectrum (Aspinwall and Schneider, 2001: 2). "Institutionalists of different hues differ over how much institutions matter" (Rosamond, 2016: 84). Political science's perspective on institutions reflects the discipline's two main theoretical approaches, namely, rational choice and new institutionalism (Hay, 2002: 7). In the ambit of rational choice, the EU is approached with the intergovernmentalism

developed by Moravscik (1993, 1997). The economic rationalist position sees human beings as self-seeking, behaving rationally and strategically, hence forming their interests on the basis of self-interest. Intergovernmentalism considers international institutions of all kinds to be established in order to reduce the level of anarchy within the state system. The EU then is just another of these institutions, albeit within highly institutionalised settings.

Rational choice has been the predominant framework within the mainstream political science approach to Europeanisation (Pollack, 2007: 23). The realist ontology has constituted the "the backbone of current political reality" (Kauppi, 2009). Accordingly, it conceives of political reality as empirical, exogenous, "waiting to be analysed by the subject" (Kauppi, 2009). The rational choice logic reduces political function to formally decided rules (Rothstein, 1996: 508) guided by instrumentally driven actors. It thus promotes the regulative nature of the EU "as a problem-solving entity", utility-driven and output-oriented (Sjursen, 2006). The regulative pillar suggests conformity to rules, hence the resourcefulness of the EU in devising rules and regulations. The realist ontology however, prevents a more complex understanding of the political reality.

According to Kauppi it is unsuitable to grasp the political reality of the EU project for it assumes the social world as opaque and predetermined and of political institutions as existing natural entities cut off from the individuals who make up these institutions. The rationalist ontological presuppositions frame the impact of Europeanisation as exogenous change, hence as independent of the social sphere in which individuals operate. For intergovernmentalists, European integration is normal, even 'mundane' (O'Neill, 1996: 57 in Cini & Borragán, 2016: 89). Cooperation has nothing to do with ideology or idealism but is founded on the rational conduct of governments as they seek to deal with the policy issues that confront them in the modern world. There is nothing particularly special about integration other than its highly institutionalised form. Political science's recognition that formal institutional structures play a significant role in shaping political life is embedded in the Risse et al. (2001: 3) definition of Europeanisation as "the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance. Further, Europeanisation entails inquiring how domestic level institutions adapt to the emergence and development of EU-level distinct structures of governance (Faetherstone, 2003: 7). This definition is

consistent with the peculiar characteristics of the EU polity, i.e., its multi-levelled structure; the combination of supranational and intergovernmental elements; the strength of the judiciary; its functional and technocratic style; the heterogeneity and fluidity of actors involved over different policy areas.

Europeanisation examined with regard to the development of common institutions (Olsen, 2002; Risse, 2001; Caporaso, 2007) focuses on politics as institutionally embedded and governance as "creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action" (Stoker, 1998: 7 in Christiansen, 2016: 98). As institutional adaptation, Europeanisation is closely linked to the governance school of European integration studies (Schimmlefenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 5). It is concerned with the impact of policy outcomes and institutions at the EU level on domestic policies, politics and policies of member states (Börzel and Risse, 2003; Hix and Goetz, 2000; Radaelli, 2000).

2.2.3. The EU as 'Normative Power Europe': the ideational dimension of institutions

On the other side of the spectrum of institutionalism is new institutionalism. Also referred to as sociological institutionalism, this

theoretical stance operates within a constructivist post-positivist ontology. The latter, unlike rational choice, sees individuals' interests not as exogenous to their action, but as endogenous, hence as a product of social interaction. Likewise, institutions are not exterior to agents, but are *intersubjective* (Hay, 2001: 16). In contending the social constitution of knowledge, constructivism enables a broader notion of institutions. It acknowledges the roles of ideas and values for the creation of institutions. Besides rules, institutions tend to be defined also in terms of norms and conventions (Hall, 1986: 6, March and Olsen, 1998). Sociological institutionalism then integrates concerns about culture, collectively recognized symbols, rules and norms in its approach to institutions.

Concurrently, the resources provided by the EU expand the complexity of its impact. Without denying the material aspect of Europeanisation, social constructivism pinpoints the resourcefulness of Europe as rooted in a cognitive and ideational dimension. From the perspective of new institutionalism Europeanisation can be studied in terms of how existing institutional arrangements impact on (broadly) two key dimensions of institutional change (Olsen, 2002: 922)[17]. First, as an assessment of the changes in political

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[17] Olsen (2002: 932) identifies four institutional spheres within the EU: a) regulatory institutions; b) socializing institutions developing through education and socialization; c)

organisation; second, the changes in structures of meaning and people's minds. The former implies the development of an organisational and financial capacity for common action and governance through a process of reorganisation and redirection of resources; the latter refers to the development and redefinition of political ideas-common visions and purposes, codes of meaning, causal beliefs and worldview - that give direction and meaning to capabilities and capacities. According to Radaelli (2003: 35) the cognitive and normative structures (discourse, norms and values, political legitimacy, identities, state traditions of governance, policy paradigms, frames and narratives) pertain to the impact of Europe on the values, norms and discourse prevalent in member states. They can also trigger transformative effects on all elements of politics and policy.

O'Brennan's (2001; 2006) study of the Eastern Enlargement process makes an argument for the importance of ideas for action in foreign policy and thus the need to consider a social-constructivist stance in integration theory. His analysis pinpoints some of the limits of the rationalist epistemology underpinning neo-realism and neo-liberalism as the two main approaches that have dominated

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democratic institutions: creating equal rights, political participation and opportunities for public debate and popular enlightenment among others; d) welfare institutions

European integration. The neorealist perspective sees the international system as complex interdependencies and states as primarily concerned with economic gains and losses in their interaction.

Neoliberal intergovernmentalism, espoused by, for example, Moravscik (1998) views international institutions as "the creatures of states driven by strong domestic interests" (O'Brennan, 2001: 9). While a neorealist approach to EU integration cannot account for the deep levels of institutionalised cooperation that have evolved over time and the necessary concessions of sovereignty that states had to do willingly, intergovernmentalists' micro-economic base falls short in explaining the European Council's decision for enlargement as being contrary to the interests of not a few member states[18].

The implicit constructivist position in new institutionalism enables a broader understanding of the institutional nature of the EU. Constructivism has been integrated into the study of the EU through the seminal work of Alexander Wendt (1999). By incorporating social theory into IR, Wendt argued that the structures of

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[18] The concrete example O'Brennan (2001:11) employs is the Helsinki European Council (1999). The overall critique of Moravscikian 'logic' to the 'enlargement grand bargains' is supported by the outcomes of other European Council Summits, i.e. at Copenhagen (1993), Madrid (1995), Luxemburg (1997), Berlin (1998). The decisions taken provide evidence for the member state uncertainty and the leading role of the EU Commission, rather than "the decisive import of domestic interest and unchanging national preferences."

international life are not only material but consist of a substantial ideational dimension. The cognitive legitimation of institutional order noted by Berger and Luckmann (1967: 93) has already been developed with regard to the EU in the work of Carr (1962) as 'power of opinion', Duchêne's (1972) concept of 'idée force' and Galtung's (1973) 'ideological power'. These insights have been included in conceptions of the EU integrating constructivist assumptions in the work of Christiansen et al. (1999), Laffan (2001), Sjursen (2006) and perhaps most prominently in Ian Manners' (2002) conceptualisation of the EU as a 'normative power'. Norms are central to Sjursen's ideal type three, which conceptualises the EU as a 'rights based' post-national union underlined by moral discourse of universal standards of justice. It is driven by deliberative and communicative rationality where actors justify their actions with reference to intersubjectively valid norms. In a similar vein, Laffan (2001: 714) emphasises values in her analysis of the EU as a normative pillar.

Constructivism expands the resourcefulness of the EU to include the vocabulary of norms. These are defined as "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity"

(Katzenstein, 1996: 5 in Rosamond, 2016: 88). The emphasis on values and norms intrinsic to a conceptualisation of the EU is a shift from the empirical emphasis of the EU's institutions or policies, and towards "including cognitive processes, with both substantive and symbolic components" (Manners, 2002: 239). The values enshrined in the EU's norms and conventions can be understood as external expressions of the EU's constitutive principles (Rosamond, 2014: 139). Regarding the nature of EU norms, the literature points to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as the constitutive features of the EU as a multileveled form of governance (Börzel and Risse, 2004). These are enshrined in Art. 2 TEU.

According to Manners, the principles of 'sustainable peace', 'social freedom', 'consensual democracy', 'associative human rights', 'supranational rule of law', 'inclusive equality', 'social solidarity', 'sustainable development' and 'good governance' inform the constitutional norms of the EU and are the bases on which the EU derives its normative power. These principles constitute the normative difference of the EU, which "comes from its historical context, hybrid polity and political–legal constitutionalism (Manners, 2002: 240-241)". They were integrated into the Union's institutional

framework through the legal instruments and treaties that it has devised. Thus, the treaty of Maastricht (1992) included democracy and human rights as constitutive principles of the EU (Art. 6.1. TEU), while the 1997 Amsterdam treaty essentially enshrined the Copenhagen criteria into the EU's primary law (Art. 49 TEU). From the perspective of NPE the integration process could be understood as the EU's vocation and commitment to externalise its values and democratic principles. The norms of reciprocity, multilateralism, respect for fundamental freedoms and minority rights, and transparency of administrative, judicial, and political institutions historically framed the domestic political institutions of the member states of the EU (Rokkan, 1999). They were firmly rooted in both the domestic legal systems of the member states and the cognitive templates that guide decision-makers**.**

2.3. Mechanisms of establishing causality

2.3.1. Causality as top down and bottom up

Impact covers one facet of the process of Europeanisation. The other one "seeks to explain how the EU induces change in member states

or third countries" (Börzel and Panke, 2016: 111). According to Börzel and Panke (2016), explaining impact and assessing changes are two aspects which point to two notions of Europeanisation. Implicit is establishing causality between the EU level and the member state. In political science, causality possesses two axes, rendered by the notions 'top down' and 'bottom up'. Europeanisation thus denotes a two-way process: member states download rules and practices from the EU level, but national governments also participate in the making of EU rules (Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2006: 54).

Causality reflects the direction of (causal) flow between the actors in the process. Within integration theory the flow of causality has been considered mainly as top-down, where domestic change is traced back to EU sources and thus mainly consists in "downloading from the centre of the EU back to the domestic level", as in Ladrech's (2010) approach to Europeanisation. Likewise, Börzel and Panke (2016: 111) argue that Europeanisation happens as top-down in terms of 'downloading or taking' as the response of member states and third countries to the EU. A central concept of the top-down dimension of Europeanisation is 'misfit'. It suggests that only if

domestic policies, processes and institutions are not already in compliance with the requirements of the EU can the latter causally induce domestic change. It also posits that EU policies and institutions are a constant impetus to domestic change for all states (Cowels et al., 2001; Sander and Belucci, 2012).

A frequent question about top-down Europeanisation posed by academic research is whether the polices, politics and polity of member states converge over time as an effect of membership, or if states maintain distinct features (Börzel and Panke,2016: 6). The findings have suggested that EU policies are not downloaded in a uniform manner. In fact, scholars have pointed to difficulties in finding evidence of complete convergence towards EU policy or institutional models. Change through policy implementation has been the prevailing strategy to introduce change into CEE countries (Sedelmeier, 2011: 12). The EU has had a differential impact (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2005; Schimmelfenning, Engert and Knobel, 2005; Börzel and Risse, 2007; Börzel, 2014, 2015; Börzel and Schimmelfennig, 2017). O'Brennan (2006: 55) in his study of Eastern Enlargement observes that the process (of integration) "is a policy domain, which involves each of the main EU institutions (the

Council, the Commission and the Parliament) in a distinctive way".

As noted, transposition of policies could result in the differential empowerment of domestic actors; the Bulgarian case is an example of this. Dimitrova and Steunenberg's (2013) research on transposition of policies in the sphere of the environment and culture emphasised the difference between the official transposition of policies and actual implementation. Toshkov (2008) in his study of transposition of EU law comes to similar conclusions. His findings point to the sectional difference in transposition, the governments' capacity and preferences as influential in adopting EU legislation.

The top-down perspective is complemented with a bottom-up direction of causality. Bottom-up Europeanisation explains how states can trigger changes in the EU (Börzel and Panke, 2016: 119). In integration theory, the bottom-up dynamics refer to what has been "uploaded" from member states, which are not simply passive recipients the EU pressures or influences. States can 'shape' and hence influence policies, politics or the institutions of the EU. In Caporaso's integration theory, this bottom-up causation indicating "uploading domestic societal preferences at the EU level" (Caporaso, 2007: 23) was crucial in the formative years of the EU (back then the

European Economic Community). The resources and aspirations of member states gave the Union flesh and bones. In Börzel and Panke's (2016) understanding of bottom-up Europeanisation, bottom-up thinking also indicates that many EU policies have their inception and are moulded by the member states themselves. In Ladrech's definition of European integration, bottom-up has become the label for this "uploading of national preferences onto the EU policy-making process". This axis, however, consists of an under-researched field of Europeanisation studies. As Wallace (2017: 10) acknowledged, the academic community has limited knowledge "how the domestic processes of this or that member country frame, shape and transform the adoption of European shared practices".

The bottom-up perspective in political science as the direction of causality of the process retains states as the main actors involved. Policies, institutions, norms and goals can be 'uploaded' to Europe, just as those from Europe are downloaded to and by individual countries. The bottom-up and the top-down dimensions of Europeanisation point to the interactive influence of the integration process. These dynamics, however, essentially denote a vertical process following a logic of international institutionalism through

policies and designates a political space for élite interaction (Radaelli, 2007).

Europeanisation "from below" contains another layer of meaning, furnished by social movement (Tarrow, 1989) and civil society literature (della Porta and Caiani, 1999; 2009). In this perspective, the focus is on the social dynamics and the relevance of Europe in their mobilisation. Scholars see Europeanisation as producing more layers of decision-making and explore this shift from the supranational-level to multi-levels of governance as a complex field of interaction among different actors. In particular, they consider the involvement of non-state actors (civil society and social movement organisations) with EU issues as contributing to EU accountability as pressure from below. Also, inspired by constructivist approaches they refer to the role of ideas and images of Europe as resources that actors mobilise and involve publicly in European politics. The debate of the role and function of the social constituency in the process as Europeanisation "from below" is central to the focus of this study and it is addressed in further detail in discussing the sociological approaches to Europeanisation. The next section outlines the

mechanisms of causality political science employs. These are the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness

2.3.2. The logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness

Political science draws on two different strands of institutionalism to explain the mechanisms of Europeanisation as top-down and bottom-up. European integration modelled on rationalist assumptions of power claims that material interests promotes variegated forms of economic cooperation and operates following a logic of consequences. Rational choice institutionalism argues that the EU facilitates domestic adaptation by changing opportunity structures for domestic actors in a first step, and that a 'misfit' between the EU and domestic norms creates demands for domestic adaptation. In a second step, the downloading of EU policies and institutions by the member states is shaped by cost-benefit calculations of the strategic actors by rendering some options more costly than others (Tsbellis, 1990; Scharpf, 1997). The causal analysis of Europeanisation is often connected with empirical concerns about measurement, resulting from adaptation to vertical pressures. Rationalist institutionalism, within its focus on

institutional equilibria, tends to neglect endogenous change. "The purpose of rational choice theory" argues Hay (2002) "is to produce a deductive and predictive science of the political". It follows the positivist logic of causal explanation, which as O'Brennan (2000; 2006) argued had significant limitations in explaining Eastern enlargement. Thus, while it might offer a plausible general explanation for the initial enlargement preferences of the main actors in the process (membership applications tabled by the CEE states) it cannot account for what appears (after the Helsinki European Council summit of 1999) to be a normatively determined outcome (O'Brennan, 2000: 12)[19].

Research drawing on sociological institutionalism in its explanation of mechanisms of Europeanisation specifies changes based on ideational and normative processes involved in the process. This approach assumes a neo-institutional logic of appropriateness by interrogating how institutions produce norms that in turn structure the identity of actors (Adler, 2002; Checkel, 2007; Rosamond, 2014). Normative rules empower and constrain social actors; they do so by

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[19] The following articles published in The Economist regarding Bulgaria and Romania' s accession into EU membership give a glimpse at this theoretical puzzle: "Romania and Bulgaria and the European Union: We are off on a European odyssey. Two poor countries celebrate joining the EU, but the mood among existing members is glum" (28 September 2006); "Bulgaria and Romania: The New Kids on the Block. The European Union's two newest members Bulgaria and Romania are both economically and politically backward" (4 January 2007).

imposing "scripts" or "templates" as guidelines for behaviour; they suggest expectations (Parsons, 1951: 37). "Actors internalize values and act upon them not because it is rational, in the pursuit of a given set of interests, but it becomes habitual to do so. In this way the parameters of the possible become restricted through the emergence of (intersubjective habits) and norms and their reinforcement over time such rituals become *normalised*" (Di Maggio and Powell, 1991 in Hay, 2002: 105). The EU defined as a normative power is "seeking to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international politics" (Manners, 2002: 239; Rosamond, 2014: 139) through externalising its identity (embedded in its goals). From this perspective, Europeanisation entails the emergence of new rules, norms and practices and structures of meaning to which member states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic structures (Börzel and Panke, 2016).

Social institutionalism explains the normative mechanism in the EU's strategy for domestic change as proceeding through processes of socialisation and politicisation (Radaelli and Pasquier, 2007). The process of socialisation implies an internalisation of EU norms by domestic actors via mediating factors or agents such as domestic

norm entrepreneurs (Sedelmeier, 2011: 11). Through norm diffusion and social learning, actors are socialised within institutional settings that define informal rules and procedures. The literature has drawn attention to the micro-processes of socialisation and informal domestic structures, networks, and epistemic communities (Cowels et al., 2001). Politicisation, as already mentioned, follows a logic of international institutionalism and designates a political space for élite interaction (Radaelli, 2007).

So far, this chapter has examined the political science perspective on Europeanisation and the theoretical positions that underpin the conceptualisations of the process the discipline has proposed. Two main theories were outlined: rational choice theory, which conceived of Europeanisation as taking place via the logic of consequences, and new institutionalism proposing a logic of appropriateness as the key mechanism. The latter integrates constructivist assumptions about social life and organisational forms and allows for common ground on Europeanisation between political science and sociology. The constructivist ontology acts as a bridge potentially between the disciplines. Nevertheless, there are significant differences, in particular in the view of causality that affect the dynamic referred to

as "Europeanisation from below". These I discuss in the next section examining sociological perspectives on Europeanization.

2.4. Sociological Approaches and Europeanisation from below

2.4.1. Meaning and people as implicated in Europeanisation

Europeanisation is a process that takes place at many levels, as suggested by Radaelli's definition. Scholars observe the need for adopting a pluralist position in order to grasp the complexities of the process. For instance, Rosamond (2007: 8) argues that "the fullest picture of EU politics is obtained through the collective and sometimes collaborative efforts of several disciplinary communities". Likewise Checkel (2007) contends that the study of EU politics benefits from the input of work from diverse epistemological and methodological standpoints. Analytically, maintaining a rigid boundary between disciplines is detrimental to the quality of analysis. Colin Hay (2002: 4) reminds us that "it is difficult and arbitrary to draw boundaries between disciplines, especially in an age in which the degree of interdependence between cultural, political and economic processes is increasingly acknowledged.

These boundaries surely threaten the quality of the analysis we are capable of generating."

This study proceeds from an interdisciplinary perspective. Thus, it draws on political science contributions in conceptualising Europeanisation, while addressing the research question from a sociological perspective. Adopting a sociological lens on Europeanisation is useful, for it allows us to acknowledge certain important contributions but also caveats of the political science approach and hence to complement the insights developed within it. To begin with, sociology is interested mainly in the transformations of society (Saurugger, 2009: 935). Sociological approaches to Europeanisation then focus on changes in society. In the search for explanations of when and how social relations and structures begin to change, sociology brings into focus ordinary individuals and relations and actions they generate. A main concern is to "analyse mundane and ordinary social interactions and the hidden aspects behind them" (Lemert,2013: xvii).

This shift of perspective is crucial, for it addresses a main critique of European integration as a political process disconnected from the

lives of ordinary people. Sociologists note that the dominant understanding of EU integration remains wedded to the top-down view of international relations (IR) theory, law and diplomatic theory. Political scientists acknowledge this claim by highlighting that Europeanisation is usually discussed in vertical terms of how top-down pressures for change are received, interpreted and implemented at the national level (Goetz and Hix, 2000; Cowels et al., 2001; Radaelli, 2002). Helene Wallace (2017: 13) in the Annual Review Lecture of *JCMS,* entitled "In the Name of Europe" emphasises the role of narratives for capturing the "cognitive and the affective responses to European integration". Given their instrumental role with regard to putting European integration issues to the test "by the ballot box or the court of public opinion", narratives have been underestimated in the European studies community. The Europeanisation "from below" research (della Porta and Caiani, 2009) captures the voices of social actors by studying social movements and civil society organisations. Scholars doing research within this field examine the political and social components of protests across Europe, the resources of actors' mobilisation, the political opportunities and political outcomes of these social developments.

Even when explored at a horizontal level (as differentiated), Europeanisation of actors and institutions occurs within the policy process (Coen and Dannreuther, 2003: 255). A central claim sociologists make is that a research focus mainly on institutional and constitutional design could not and cannot capture the social dynamics that drive (or constrain) Europeanisation (Trenz, 2008: 1). This has led to alienation of citizens from the European project and has been referred to by Beck (2013) as a situation where we have Europe without citizens or, in his own words: "the House of Europe is empty of people. Nobody lives there". Political science's predominant focus on "comprehensive institutional templates that would be needed to shape institutional institutions" (Grabbe, 2001: 1013) ignores the vast social forces that institutions depend on. Further, the EU's impact measured by implementation of Brussels-designed policies is mediated by the local specificities of the context. These often emanate from highly differentiated localised codes of culture, and are difficult, if not impossible, to "measure" with an institutional lens. The inclusion of sociological approaches to Europeanisation becomes indispensable when we recognise that together with political processes and economic markets,

Europeanisation denotes also a specifically *social* process (Immerfall and Therborn, 2010).

"Sociology focuses on society as *a constraining factor* of European integration that shapes the present choices and preferences of the actors involved. It also analyses the conditions under which society becomes an *enabling factor* of European integration accounting for accelerated change in the behavioural patterns and expectations of Europeans" (Trenz, 2008: 3). The emphasis on society as a simultaneously constraining and enabling factor is crucial with regard to debates on democracy as the political order of the EU polity. For some scholars the social environment of politics is an essential variable for the quality of democracy (Morlino, 2004). For others, who also analyse democracy beyond its minimal (formal) electoral definition (Kelsen, 1945; Dahl, 1998; Przeworski, 2010), the meaning of democracy is "infused by the values or ideals of political freedom and equality" (Munck, 2014: 12). For these democratic theorists, together with formal procedures and attributes, i.e., rights, democracy also entails conditions (Przeworski, 2010). The societal dynamics of democracy are paramount for democratic governance, for as Munck argues, "the social context

cannot turn the principles of political freedom and equality into mere formalities" (Munck, 2014: 1). A sociological account of Europeanisation suggests a search for *meaning* and employs a variety of conceptual tools. As Woll and Jacqot (2010: 2) observe, "within sociological accounts the Europeanisation debate goes beyond the study of supranational institutions and adaptive pressures. It also asks what is the relationship between institutions and individual actors, how much agency remains, how institutions evolve."

To this end, sociological accounts are deployed within neo-institutional constructivism and particularly through the notion of reflexivity that it employs. However, reflexivity as a theoretical device, when used within neo-institutional constructivism, while implying interaction between object and subject, presents an under-theorised account of action. It is conceptualised on a limited view of rationality, which does not permit the explanation of the type of actions, nor the reasons for actors' engagement, i.e., their objectives and values (Kauppi and Madsen, 2008: 97). Reflexive sociology, in its attempt to contribute to the understanding of social life, concentrates on local actors and the way they seize and interpret

European rules and opportunities (Pasquier, 2002; Pasquier and Weissbein, 2004 in Favell 2007). It interrogates the nature of (local) agency and stresses the availability of resources and how these determine actions and results (Giddens, 1984). Sociology's approach to institutions, together with individuals' practices is based on the understanding of reflexivity not as "an intellectual exercise but as also a social action". It is an analytical vehicle that is commensurable with the research dilemma that drives this project, namely, how the EU shapes not only institutional structures and policies but also influences configurations of social relations, and how these, in turn, foster or inhibit Europeanisation in Bulgaria.

2.4.2. Reflexive Europeanisation: Top-down as "Europeanisation from above" and bottom-up as "Europeanisation from below"

Sociological inquiry enables a more complex or "thick" description of EU integration. An account centered more on social dynamics surpasses the 'system integration' (Delanty, 2005a) of Europeanisation highlighted in political science's interpretation of causality as the flow of impact as top-down and bottom–up. Within their research focusing on society, scholars within sociology acknowledge two axes of causality, i.e., "Europeanisation from

above" or *top-down* and "Europeanisation from below" or *bottom-up*. These dimensions, however, are implanted *in the social*, and as such are intrinsically interwoven and hence mutually dependent. Therefore the top-down and bottom-up models point to the reflexive dynamics of the process as social integration. They suggest the relational logic of causality (Jaquot et Woll, 2004, Palier, 2007) or that causality is essentially relativized, circular, fluid or dynamic. Likewise they point to Europeanisation as the transformational impact of the EU from and through 'circular' dynamics (Saurugger, 2014).

The top-down approach of Europeanisation or "Europeanisation from above" examines the social consequences of the integration process and asks questions such as: What is the impact of the EU on social change? How much do EU policies influence social patterns? What is the implication of the evolution of European institutions and politics for societal developments? (Immerfall and Therborn, 2010: 3). At the kernel of the notion of impact of Europeanisation from above is Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999)'s question about "how Europe matters" in people's engagement with the (social) world and in interactions between themselves.

In order to disclose what the meaning of Europe is and how (if at all) it alters existing patterns of social interaction, the sociological approach towards Europeanisation attempts to reveal the cognitive scripts of social action and its numerous practices. Sociological accounts, which are predominantly constructivist in epistemology, assert the mutual constitution of knowledge and action in social processes. Society is approached as a repository of knowledge and Europeanisation (as a socially-generated process) points to the diffusion of the EU political project and its symbolic underpinnings.

The second axis examines the bottom-up dimension or "Europeanisation from below". It focuses on the social basis for political integration and asks questions such as: How important is social integration for political integration? What are the social underpinnings that foster or impede political integration? (Immerfall and Therborn, 2010: 3-4). The dynamics of integration are studied in terms of the social constituency or grounding of political authority in social settings. Implicit in this perspective is the constructivist view that most political reality is symbolic, immaterial and virtual, but it requires physical props, individuals, social actions, stationery,

buildings, and the like to really exist (della Porta and Caiani, 2009).

In researching how the symbolic vision of the EU is supported by "Europeanisation from below" sociology is potentially one of the disciplines that might bring a much needed 'bottom-up' view of the origins and evolution of European integration (Guiraudon and Favell, 2007). Rather than studying how universal laws generate social practice, sociology investigates how social practice generates the logic of European integration.

Thus formulated, top-down and bottom-up dimensions reinstate the intrinsic connection between political dynamics and social processes. It is a perspective reflecting the understanding that any stable political system depends on a broad social basis undergirding its political structure (Guiraudon and Favell, 2007). It is thus embedded in a broad understanding of politics and political institutions. Unlike political science, which locates politics in institutions (formal legal bodies with a particular mandate), sociology explores institutions as patterns of individual and collective interaction. To point a sociological lens at the process of Europeanisation therefore, would imply a focus on exploring the social bases of integration, to engage in an attempt to show how

politics is grounded in society (and history) and not made up *sui generis* of juridical interventions and/or a voting poll. The sociological focus then is not on how political authority is applied, rather how political authority is constituted (Trenz, 2008).

2.4.3. Towards a pragmatic sociological inquiry of Europeanisation

The top-down, bottom–up intertwining implied in Europeanisation as a social process carries implications for analytical perspectives and methodological commitments. These in turn will determine what particular phenomena fall into the notion of impact, and how to study and measure it.

Analytical approaches to Europeanisation will require integrating into the analysis of impact the political analysis of social relations and the sociological analysis of politics. This disciplinary interaction implies a critical examination of shifts in power. According to Hay (2002: 4), all events, processes and practices which occur within the social sphere have the potential to be political and hence, to be amenable to political analysis. The political aspect of social relations resides in their implication in power dynamics. Within sociology the

notion of power is a central category of social analysis. A political analysis of social relations will be thus concerned with the distribution, exercise and consequences of power. Sociological analysis will imply first and foremost a critical stance. Lemert (2013) stresses that the first duty of social theory is "to ask fresh 'why' questions when everything seems to be settled and unproblematic". These questions gain significant importance with regard to discussing normativity. Assessing of norms in terms of content but also as practice demands adopting a particularly acute stance towards normative prescriptions.

Sociology casts a cold eye on European studies for it questions categories such as integration, identity or interests that are often taken for granted in conventional European integration theories (Saurugger, 2009: 937; Wallace, 2017). Approached sociologically, 'Europe' is not a neutral reality but a 'contested concept', the meaning of which is not (yet) fixed (Connolly, 1983: 603). Even assuming that it is somehow related to a system of governance does not help that much: there are still numerous ways to construct such a system, in content, nature or scope. Therefore, sociology also challenges the descriptive and the categories generally supportive of

"strong normative positions" that are used to make sense of Europeanisation (Delanty, 2003: 472).

Moreover, a focus on actors and human action permits the consideration of the creative element involved in the construction. The sociological quest for the meaning of Europeanisation opens avenues to detect and explore the creative way domestic actors make use of the resourcefulness of Europe. Radaelli has pointed out that "Europe can be used creatively by domestic actors, as a resource for their own agendas (Radaelli, 2003: 38). Therefore domestic change as socially embedded is investigated for more complex dynamics, rather than tracking down policy implementation as patterns of adaptation to Europe. Consequently, as an object of research, Europeanisation will require different theories and methods to address the above concerns.

'Pragmatic sociology' is currently gaining attention and popularity beyond its original academic context (France), and is an academic approach that encompasses the critical and pluralistic dimension of social research. Further characteristics of this body of work as developed mainly in Boltanksi and Thevenot (2006)'s book *On*

Justification include an emphasis on action in its attempt to situate itself between an emphasis on human agency and on the structural features of social life. This feature suggests pragmatic sociology's steering away from structuralist approaches and assumes a pragmatic reassessment of theoretical knowledge as implicated in social practice. Also, in seeing human action (knowledge) as always deeply situated, pragmatic sociology supports the assumption of the implication of the researcher and sociological knowledge in social reality. This means that there is an irreducible plurality of practical-theoretical viewpoints in social reality. An important point is also the recourse to the resource of political philosophy as providing the systemic theoretical statements of knowledge forms used in social practices of justification (Wagner, 1999: 343 in Blokker, 2011: 252).

These points are integrated into the sociological inquiry of the research. Within the ambit of pragmatic sociology the present study orients the discussion of Europeanisation through the notion of discourse. Approaching Europeanisation discursively has been suggested by Radaelli's definition in the beginning of the chapter. Radaelli and Pasquier (2007: 36) proposed to examine Europeanisation as the emergence of "a set of contested discourses and narratives about the impact of European integration on

domestic political change". Olsen (2002) also argued that Europeanisation is not limited to changes in politico-administrative structures and policy content, but "European values and policy paradigms are also to some (varying degree) internalized at the domestic level, shaping discourses and identities."

Through the notion of discourse, sociological inquiry aims to unravel the reflexive connection between social actors and the social world. It thus tries to contribute to the understanding of Europeanisation as a social process through an exploration of the constituted and constitutive aspects of the notion of discourse. Discourse, as conceptualised within a post-structuralist perspective, coheres with sociology's critical stance and pragmatic logic. Discourses, considered as practices, are containers of knowledge. They constitute the social world in meaning. Practices as discourses are constituted by meaning. They are the sites of intelligibility of social acts. Hence, while they are mainly a means of reproducing social reality, they are also the medium of its change. Discourse, therefore, is chosen as a tool of investigation in order to capture the dynamic and reflexive nature of Europeanisation, and hence to answer the question this study attempts to answer, namely how are civic

initiatives constituted by and constitutive for Europeanisation in Bulgaria.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter explored the different ways in which Europeanisation has been conceptualised. It proceeded through a discussion of the properties of the concept as outlined by political science and sociology. Political science, the main discipline within which the concept has been developed, defines it as a process endogenous to European integration. It is determined within the notions of impact as central to the concept of formation, and causality as the necessary condition for it to take place. It considered EU impact in three domains: policies, politics, and polity. Ontological assumptions are central for defining (and refining) the nature of the impact, the flow (mechanisms) of causality as to how it is changing, as well as the methodological choices regarding how to assess the changes. The main political science approach underpinned by rational choice theory conceptualizes the "transformative impact" of the EU as top-down at the level of institutions. Subsequently Europeanisation is interpreted as following a logic of consequences resulting from

adaptation to vertical pressures and (in the Bulgarian case and others most recently) through policies of enlargement conditionality. The embrace of constructivist insights broadened the vision of the EU as a political entity to include symbolic resources (norms and values) and the role of social agents in the construction of the very context within which their political conduct occurs. Europeanisation, interpreted as domestic change, thus follows a logic of appropriateness and proceeded through internalisation of norms. The sociological perspective, predominantly constructivist, goes further, and focuses on studying social relations as a constraining and enabling factor for Europeanisation. The study adopts the bottom-up view of sociology that is based on its focus on the social rather than the (solely) institutional. Sociological inquiry into Europeanisation examines the reflexive nature of the process between the top-down and bottom-up, which the study proposes to investigate through the notion of discourse. The latter as a key theoretical vehicle is chosen to capture the circularity and reflexivity of the impact of the EU on social relations and the latter's contribution to its constitution as a political process.

Chapter III: Europeanisation as Democratisation

This chapter contextualizes the research question. It presents an account of the domain specific theory as advocated by Alexander Wendt (1999) for the study of international processes. It begins by developing the argument about the EU's impact in CEE states as primarily about democratization, based on the literature associated with the so-called 'Europeanisation East' school of thought. It outlines political conditionality as the specific mechanism of Europeanisation in CEE as they key vehicle encouraging the embedding of pluralist democracy. After exposing the accomplishments but also the significant limitations of the mechanism, the discussion then moves to liberal democracy and the role of civil society the latter accords it. Civil society is examined from the perspective of theoretical propositions but also as understood and applied in the approach of the EU Commission's overall approach to enlargement and CEE.

3.1. Democratisation as the vector of the EU's "gravitational pull" in CEE

Political science scholars put forward the notion of impact and its extent as the parameters of change as the referent to speak of in the process of Europeanisation, (Radelli and Pasquier, 2007) (Olsen, 2002). While EU 'impact' has been defined in many ways (broadly, as political structures, structures of representation, cognitive and normative structures in Radaelli's (2003: 35) words), the general accord in the literature suggests the transposition or enactment of EU rules in the domestic context of a member state as the key element. Rules, however, are not free standing. As the social constructivist approach claimed, rules, together with procedures, are embedded in the multiple resources that the EU stands for. Nevertheless, political theory suggests that the nature and qualities of rules pertain to the political régime and its Janus-like face (Schmitter and Guilhot, 2000: 134). Thus rules, on the one hand, "determine the form of governmental institutions, the channels and conditions of access to these structures, and the way in which decisions are made, as well as the extent of the population eligible to participate in these processes" (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986: 73, Collier and Collier, 1991: 789). On the other hand, rules point to the

procedures that characterise the régime in a given country, according to their proximity to one or other poles of an imagined continuum running from democracy to autocracy.

Rules, concomitant to the European project, are a synthesis of democracy, for they play the role of the "myth as the charter for legitimation" (Malinovksi, 1926) of the "European construction" (Shore, 2000). The EU includes states that share human rights, liberal democracy and the rule of law as the fundamental rules of legitimate statehood (Schimmelfening and Sedelemeier, 2005: 29). Thus, the democratic norm is what binds these states as homogenous communities and that sets them apart from less like-minded actors (Schimmelfennig, 2002). From this perspective, rules as an expression of EU impact and the process of Europeanisation that they determine reflect the different political and social arrangements between Western European states and the Central and Eastern European states, summarised by Grabbe's (2003) statement that "the EU gravitational pull is different in the CEE countries".

A vast strand of literature, referred to as "Europeanisation East" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier et al., 2005) elaborates on this point and argues the need for alternative models for the domestic impact of the EU in CEEs. Two main reasons underpin this claim.

Firstly, the historical trajectories that mark the specific nature of Europeanisation of CEE states. Unlike advanced Western European states, which were democracies, the CEE's political landscape was shaped via the imprints of communism (Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2006). Second, the Western states were already members of the EU, while the CEEs were candidates (Grabbe, 2003; Dimitrova, 2005; Héritier, 2005). The different nature of the political régimes together with the asymmetries deriving from the insider–outsider relations between the EU and the candidate states underpin the different impact of EU rules. These differences have significant implications, both for the scope and the mechanisms of domestic impact (Grabbe, 2003; Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2006). Scholars studying Europeanisation East point to the broadness and depth of the EU domestic impact. Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2005) describe Europeanisation as a far-reaching process, while Grabbe (2003) stresses power and uncertainty in the EU-isation of these countries. The pervasiveness of the EU impact has been described via the concept of democratisation (Pridham, 1994, 2005; Vachudova, 2005).

According to Ladrech (1994: 69) Europeanisation is "a process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC

political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy making". Implicit in this conception is that impact implies actors' redefining their interests and behaviour to meet the imperatives, norms, and logic of EU membership. These criteria apply to all states within the EU and are pertinent referential points to discuss the impact of Europeanisation as democratisation premised on the important role the EU played in the political and economic development of CEE states after the fall of the communist régimes.

3.1.1. After Communism: Democratisation and/or Europeanisation?

Democratisation is an all-encompassing process towards electoral and liberal democracy. It entails socio-economic and political liberalisation and also takes place in stages. As defined by Heywood (2014: 272) democratisation refers to: the process of transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy and encompasses three sometimes overlapping processes: a) the breakdown of the old régime, usually involving loss of legitimacy of the existing régime; b) 'democratic transition' demarcates the construction of new liberal democratic structures and processes, and c) 'democratic

consolidation', which sees the embodiment of democratic values and normative principles in the "minds of élites and the masses that democracy becomes the 'the only game in town' " (Przeworski, 1991 in Heywood, 2014: 272).

More specifically, democratisation denotes a political process implying régime change and the promotion of democracy. There are, however, differences between paradigms of democratisation (Parrot, 1997). Just as some economists have challenged the applicability of models drawn from non-communist societies to the dilemmas of economic reform in post-communist states, some political scientists have questioned whether paradigms of democratisation drawn from non-communist countries are relevant to the study of post-communist political change (Linz and Stephan, 1996). Democratisation departs from non-democratic entities exemplified by totalitarian and authoritarian régimes.

Democratisation of post-communist states implies a process consisting of the introduction of liberalism as a new ideology, and democracy as the political foundation of social order. Together with

political transformation, "the fourth wave of democratisation"[20] had

the significant task of economic transformation (Klaus von Beyme,

1996; Pinder, 1994). According to Whitehead (1994: 37), the

transition to a market economy was viewed as integral (possibly

even a dominant) component of democratisation. This is a long and

deep process, for, at its very core, it entails a process of

"decolonisation" of the Soviet model of governance and command of

the economy (Whitehead, 1994). It also involves democratic

promotion, and the active pro-democratic pressure towards

domestic actors it refers to (Whitehead, 2001; Pridham, 1994).

The premise that democratisation in CEE has been impacted by the

EU is widely accepted (Grabbe 2001, 2006; Pridham 2002, 2004;

Vahudova, 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005;

Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel, 2006; Börzel and Sedelmeier,

2017). The literature on Europeanisation East argues that the

structural changes with which Europeanisation is associated were

initiated in CEE states after the fall of the Communist régimes. The

EU Parliament as "an important norm entrepreneur" and the

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[20] Eastern Europe has been presented with a democratic option three times in the course of 20th century: in the inter-war era (1919-39); during the first few years after the Second World War (1945-49) and again in the wake of the velvet revolutions of 1989-1990. According to Berglund and Aarebrot (1997) the first two experiments in democracy stand out as failures (Berglund and Aarebrot, 1997:150).

Commission as the main agent of the EU were guiding the candidate states, using "a carrot and stick approach to induce EU candidate states into accepting EU norms" throughout the Eastern Enlargement process (O'Brennan, 2006: 98). Accordingly, the point after which it is possible to speak of Europeanisation in these states is the transfer of EU rules in the period of transition to democratic political systems of CEE states and their transformations to market economies. During the Eastern Enlargement process

Nevertheless, there are also scholars who are sceptical about the overlapping of both processes. The role of exogenous factors is central to scholars' criticism about overestimating EU influence on the process. Dimitrova's (2005) early research emphasises that not every process of transformation taking place in every post-communist CEE can be called Europeanisation. Scholars emphasise the importance of the international environment and national historical legacies among the variables that have shaped post-communist political change. Petrovic's (2013: 8) study highlights the importance of the international environment, which includes geo-political, institutional-normative, and cultural elements[21]. Thus, as

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[21] He also draws attention to the fact that historically, the overall effect of the international environment on the attempts to promote democratization has ranged from highly beneficial to

suggested by Dimitova, Petrovic also acknowledges that established democracies had a generally propitious influence.

Western powers leveraged strongly the changes within these societies. Due to the collapse of communism, the new post-communist states were overall highly receptive to any new political and economic ideas; they were also faced with a lack of local knowledge and, more importantly, a lack of resources for modelling and financing the construction of the necessary institutional frameworks for the introduction and operation of these desired systems of multi-party democracy and a market economy.

Heightened Western commitment to human rights as a major aspect of interstate relations was attractive to the political security concerns of the newly established governments in Eastern Europe. The latter underpinned the desire of these states to be admitted to NATO. Further, they shared concerns about economic security from the very beginning, and especially after the economic crash that followed in most of the CEE states in the first years of the transition

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extremely harmful. For example, Huntington's (1993) The Clash of Civilizations shared the opinion that Marxist–Leninist Regimes, Nazi Germany and the advanced capitalist democracies shared some ultimate political values because they were parts of the same western civilization. Parott (1997) however, sees these three western traditions as divided at least as fundamentally as are liberal democratic thought and the authoritarian strands of non-western cultural traditions.

(Petrovic, 2013: 9). Financial support by the Western states was provided in the form of economic policies and structural change packages created in accordance with the neoliberal spirit of the so-called "Washington consensus". This policy become the cornerstone in defining the IMF and World Banks' conditions for providing financial support for the macro-stabilization programmes and structural economic reforms in Eastern European countries after 1989 (Shtiglitz, 2002 in Petrovic, 2013)[22]. Notwithstanding, research also shows gaps between the EU commitments and actual disbursements during the transition of these states. O'Brennan (2006: 17) provides evidence on the actual amount of aid transferred to CEE in comparison to its own poorer members (such as Ireland, Spain, Greece, Portugal). Thus the EU's rhetorical support for the process of transition did not entirely match its acts in reality.

On the above grounds, Dimitrova's (2005: 74) argument that the (indirect) influence of the external incentives model with regard to the process in CEE should not be stretched to the EU, is well-founded. In particular, she highlights the importance of the USA as a model for young democracies and refers to the domestic process of

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[22] The strict implementation of which paradoxically led to further deepening of the economic crisis.

rule adoption in these states as the result of lesson drawing. Therefore, she suggests calling it Americanisation rather than Europeanisation.

The argument positing Europeanisation as democratisation draws on a body of literature, which acknowledges the important role of the EU in the process of transition. It builds on the notion of European membership as a strong gravitational pull or anchor for transitioning states. EU democracy promotion thus can be understood in terms of encouragement of democratic ideas (Uhlin, 1995: 38-40). In this view, as developed by Uhlin, the first object of the spread of democracy is general encouragement to pursue political change. The object of encouragement stresses the possibility to see change of any political kind. Research has shown evidence of accession as being the only incentive with a systematic democratic effect (Schimlefenning and Scholtz, 2008; 2010; Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2017). The second goal of the spread of democracy is democratic ideas themselves. Democratic ideas refer to the establishment and implementation of democracy. Democratic ideas may consist of ideas on how to cause the breakdown of the dictatorial state, ideas on how to provide for a democratic alternative

in form and substance, and ideas on how to achieve democracy, considering means to deploy and strategies to apply. Thus, the overlap between Europeanisation and democratisation rests on the crucial role of the EU as a "conduit" giving transition a certain shape (Schmidt, 2001 in Héritier, 2005: 204) during this period in view of the frailty of rules, norms, procedures and behaviour that characterise it (Schmitter and Guilhot, 2000)[23].

3.1.2. European membership as "magnetic field" fork democracy promotion

Hellen Wallace's (2000: 370) metaphor of a "magnetic field" is a suitable figure to describe the adjustment to Europe in light of the post-communist political change. It conveys a twofold meaning: first, implicit in the metaphor is the understanding of Europeanisation not confined to those countries already members of the EU (Wallace, 2000: 5). Second, it points to a reading of Europeanisation as the EU's role in reinforcing national democratic institutions (Héritier, 2005) through the diffusion of cultural norms and ideas. Both propositions relate to the specificities of CEE states. Wallace

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[23] Transitions are best understood as underdetermined political situations in which the absence of clear rules and struggles between different actors over the nature of these rules make the political outcomes very unpredictable – especially in terms of the structures in which they are embedded (Schmitter and Guilhot, 2000:134).

establishes the link with the European dimension implied in Europeanisation through the EU commitment to enlarge as a vocation to include states that share these values. Héritier stresses the fact that the EU did not play a role in reinforcing national democratic institutions in the process of Europeanisation West because such institutions were already in place.

Indeed, there are scholars, such as John Pinder (1994) who trace the beginning of the EU's endeavours to democratise the CEE states back to the 1970s when the European Community espoused the principles of human rights in the Helsinki negotiation. Whitehead (1991) sees the role of the Helsinki clauses in the subsequent formation of independent organisations in the CEE states as the most significant contribution of the democratisation effect. Further, the explicit intention to democratise the CCE states is demonstrated in the aims of the European Community. Pinder (1994: 120-123) points out to the three aims of the Community underpinning its policies towards CEE: notably, to support their movement towards a market economy, pluralist democracy and international integration. These aims have been expressed in some of the principal Community documents

relating to PHARE[24] program and Europe Agreements (Commission 1990, Official Journal, 1992) as well as in the statutes of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which was founded with the exclusive purpose of supporting economic transition in the post-communist countries.

The new CEE governments, on their behalf, from 1989 onwards, framed their goals of reforms with explicit references to the core values of European integration and presented 'joining Europe' by entering the EU as a principal foreign policy objective (Sedelmeier, 2005: 408). Pridham (2005, 84: 95) suggests that the motivation for joining the EU stemmed from four imperatives that the former communist countries faced in the midst of their political and market transition. First, joining the EU was an historical imperative since membership offered countries the opportunity to reclaim their historical European national identity. Second, new democratic élites faced a democratic imperative to integrate into the EU. They perceived EU accession as crucial to the legitimation of their rule and to their countries' successful democratic consolidation. Third, countries faced a security imperative to join the EU. The newly

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[24] PHARE is EU Assistance Programme designed in the 1990s for Poland and Hungary; hence the name "Pologne, Hongry Assistance à la restruction économique". It was extended to all applicant countries to help them preparing for accession (European Parliament, 1998)

democratic régimes were more likely to survive if they were embedded in the European security architecture. Finally, joining the EU was a modernisation imperative since membership offered greater access to trade, foreign direct investment and EU development aid, which could in turn improve economic development and modernisation.

The prospect of EU membership was a driving force behind the enlargement. It was the main effective instrument for the export of EU rules in the region (Schmmilfenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 221) and "the most powerful political tool for enforcing compliance" (Grabbe, 2001: 1021). The EU's democracy promotion proceeded as a form of spill over through externalising its domestic norms to the candidate states. O'Brennan (2006: 14) states "just as the countries of Central and Eastern Europe sought to 'return to Europe' in the 1990s, the EU's gravitational pull has been the most important factor in the reconstitution of economic, political and civic life in the Western Balkans region over the past decade". For the applicant countries the prospect of EU membership was a strategy to induce and anchor domestic change (Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2006). In particular, the process of accession had significant impact on the

nature and depth of post-communist reforms. Petrovich (2013: 6) explains that the choice of pro-reformist or anti-reformist political option in the first post-communist elections was decisive for the success of the entire project of post-communist political and economic transition because it helped to attract necessary early external (i.e. western) and particularly EU assistance.

Given the 40-year period of communist (institutional and ideological) construction that the CEE states shared, EU assistance and expertise had a decisive importance at the beginning of their post-communist development. The literature on transition emphasizes the unpredictability that marks the period with undermined political situations and the absence of clear rules and struggles between different actors over the nature of these rules (Linz and Stephan, 1996; Schmitter and Guilhot, 2000: 134). Within similar circumstances the EU's resources (ideational and practical) mostly through and within the accession and pre-accession period assured ideological rebuilding through constructing new institutions of democracy and market economy on the CEEs' institutional "tabula rasa of 1989" (Elster et al, 1998: 25). EU assistance also meant easier access to EU markets for exports and the eligibility of CEEs to obtain

EU donations and credits from a variety of specially-credited European funds for supporting development and transition in candidate counties. Thus, while acknowledging Dimitrova's remark on the need to distinguish between transition research and Europeanisation research and to stay analytically cautious so as not to elapse into west-centrism with regard to the EU's role in domestic political transformation, the obvious conjunction of the two strands of developments necessitates taking into account their interdependence. Both phenomena, i.e., democratisation and Europeanisation reflect the normative rooting of the EU, which is instanced in the development of EU enlargement policy.

3.2. Political conditionality as the mechanism of Europeanisation in CEE

The literature on Europeanisation East refers to the EU's political strategy towards democratisation of CEE states as political conditionality. Europeanisation research has identified different mechanisms by which the EU can affect political change (Cowels et al, 2001; Vahudova, 2005, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). These were related to the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness that rest on distinct assumptions about actors and

their relations with social structures and institutions. Conditionality is based on the logic of consequentialism and has also been referred to in the democratisation literature as leverage (Kubicek, 2003; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2010). As the "the main mechanism of Europeanisation in CEE" (Grabbe, 2001: 1020), conditionality captures the EU's allocative and authoritative resources (Giddens, 2012: 277) which underpin the EU's most powerful tool, namely "access to different stages in the accession process, particularly achieving candidate status and starting negotiations" (Grabbe, 2001: 1022). Conditionality aims at levelling cost-benefit calculations through creating positive and negative incentives with the perspective of EU membership (Börzel, 2015). As the backbone of the EU's external political integration capacity (Börzel and Schimmelfennig, 2017), membership conditionality reflects the evolution of EU foreign policy over time and is firmly rooted in the Copenhagen criteria (Grabbe, 2001; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier et al., 2005). While reflecting the immense political significance of the EU, conditionality also points to the prevailing technocratic and functional mode of the Eastern enlargement process (O'Brennan, 2006: 74).

Conditionality represents the unevenness of the Europeanisation process. According to Héritier (2005) Europeanisation East is a "one-way street process", thus reflecting the fundamental differences between EU member states and candidate states. Grabbe (2001: 1028) explains that unlike Western states, CEE applicants were working from different starting points in terms of institutional development, and conditionality is aimed at the policy transformation of the candidate states so that the process of 'EU-isation' becomes an integral part of the domestic political arena. The essential difference, however, resides in the absence of the candidates from the process of the EU rule-making, which, in turn, influences domestic structures and policies (Featherstone, 2003; Dimitrova, 2005). Europeanisation, as adaptation of policies, relates to the public policy impacts of EU membership. This implies recognition of the domestic inputs into EU policy making. Member states frequently try to influence the policy agenda of the Commission through "political regulatory competition". This way they attempt to "attain a more privileged position on the Commission's policy agenda and to 'upload' a particular policy practice into the EU level" (Héritier, 2005: 207). By contrast, in the context of democratic and economic transition and accession

negotiations, the CEE states have not been involved in shaping EU policy measures[25]. The lack of this important element of EU relations and its member states in the Europeanisation of CEE countries underpins the essential asymmetry of the enlargement process.

Conditionality thus reflects the existing asymmetries between member states and candidates and captures the specific adaptational pressures towards the EU-isation of CEE countries (Grabbe, 2001: 1028). It is a policy tool aimed at changing patterns of governance in the application countries during the EU accession process. As such it is broad in scope and refers to two different (stylised) historical stages in the Europeanisation process, i.e., democratic conditionality and *acquis* conditionality (Schimmlefenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 221). Democratic conditionality is the first stage initiated in the period of post-communist transition in CEE starting with the beginning of negotiations for EU membership. The prospect of EU membership involves preparation of the states and democratic conditionality entailed promoting democratic and effective governance in these countries. Accord with EU values and norms of liberal democracy is a central precondition for entering into

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[25] Héritier (2005:208) acknowledges that "there seems to have been few policy initiatives on the part of accession states to actively shape the individual EU policies that have been adopted".

accession negotiations with the EU. The formal accession conditions enshrined in the Copenhagen criteria, adopted at the Copenhagen European Council at 1993, implied compliance with the fundamental liberal-democratic rules of the EU. Negotiations are mainly a process of rule transfer (Schimlefenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 221) and at this stage, conditionality focused on human rights, democratic principles and democratic stability as a whole (Dimitrova, 2005: 75). The main elements of conditionality were to be found in the Association agreements concluded with post-communist states and in the assistance programme, PHARE.

3.2.1. Democratic Conditionality

Scholars studying EU Enlargement East draw attention to the importance of compliance with EU norms of democracy. O'Brennan (2006) observes the normative logic of the enlargement process, which required an identification with EU values and norms of liberal democracy for "they represented what the EU is about" (O'Brennan, 2006: 143). Thus, the rules or norms were "usually considered as cognitive guides to appropriate behaviour, reflecting EU values and collective identity" (O'Brennan, 2006: 143). They were a crucial

driving force for the European eastern enlargement process. These principles were integrated into the Union's constitutional framework, which as Manners' Normative Power Europe (NPE) suggests, the EU externalises through its foreign policy. The EU commitment to enlarge was a vocation, to include states that share their values; to be a member state involved transforming neighbour states from 'other' to partner (Laffan, 2001: 715). Thus, Pinder (1994: 120) observes that at the early days of the European Community the replacement of power relationships among the member states with the rule of law in the field of community competence has been key in establishing the framework within which democracy could thrive. Member states are expected to abide by certain common rules implying a commitment to a particular political culture. Börzel, (2015: 10) stipulates the goals of political integration to refer to the EU's promotion and protection of constitutional norms that reflect the values and principles upon which it has been built (Börzel and Risse, 2009; Schimmelfennig, 2009: 10). They can be inferred from the EU Treaties, partnership and cooperation, association or accession agreements and other official documents and decisions of the EU. These principles strongly influence other mechanisms of Europeanisation besides political

conditionality. The socialisation model, based on constructivism, is often presented in opposition to the rationalist model of conditionality (Checkel 1999, 2001; Börzel and Risse, 2003). Compared to the political conditionality model, the mechanism in the socialisation or social learning models is that of legitimacy or appropriateness. Here, it is assumed that "the European international community is defined by a specific collective identity and as a specific set of common values and norms. Whether a non-member state adopts EU rules depends on the degree to which it regards EU rules and its demands for rule adoption as appropriate in terms of the collective identity, values, and norms" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005: 18).

Other scholars advance the opinion that the norms of liberal democracy are "one size fits all" and thus carry the assumption that the world can be shaped according to European democracy and welfare standards (Börzel and Risse, 2004). With regard to Eastern Enlargement, scholars contend that EU integration has developed based on a discourse that "sought to end the division of the continent, and to promote liberal democracy and market economies" (Sedelmeier, 2005 in O'Brennan, 2006: 407). Sedelmeier (2005)

draws attention to the discursive framing of integration in terms of 'responsibility' of the EU towards the CEECs, and in particular, to support their political and economic reforms and ultimately their integration with the EU (Sedelmeier, 2005: 122). It was activated at the Rhodes European Council in December 1988, which reaffirmed the "EU's determination to act with renewed hope to overcome the division of the continent" (Council of the EU 1988: 19 quoted in Sedelmeier, 2005: 407). The EU used the eastern enlargement process as the main instrument supporting its efforts to 'democratise' and 'Europeanise' (modernise, pluralise) CEE and to transfer democratic norms and practice (Rosamond, 2014). Regarding the goals or objectives of the EU, fostering and enabling political integration also implied strengthening the administrative capacity of the CEE candidates for legal approximation with the *acquis communautaire* (Dimitrova, 2002).

3.2.2. *Acquis* Conditionality

Conditionality, together with being a "one-way street" process, is also one of significant breadth and rigour. Democratic conditionality entails also *acquis* conditionality (Schimlefenning and Sedelmeier,

2005). The candidate states' compliance with Copenhagen criteria implies responding to the accession conditions enshrined in the *acquis communautaire,* which has bearing on almost every aspect of public policy-making and implementation (Grabbe, 1999). Grabbe (2001: 1023) explains that legal transposition of the *acquis* and harmonisation with EU laws are essential to becoming a member state, and they have so far been the central focus of the accession process and preparations by the candidates. EU membership requirements included proof of the ability to implement the entire range of the *acquis communataire*, regularly cited as including over 80, 000 pages of legislation (Grabbe, 2001: 1022; Schimlefenning and Sedelmeier, 2005: 1; Börzel and Schimlefenning, 2017). Applying the *aquis* as the full body of EU law and practice of the EU agenda for institutional and policy change in CEE, together with its coercive nature[26] distinguishes Europeanisation in CEE from western states. By contrast to the western states, where the focus has been on a narrow policy areas or individual issue, Europeanisation East focuses on compliance performance with the entire *acquis* (Héritier, 2005).

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[26] The literature on policy transfer draws a key analytical distinction between voluntary and coercive forms of transfer. While "conditionality "lies at the more "coercive" end of this continuum, the "ideal-type" of voluntary transfer is lesson drawing" (Dolowitz and March 2000:13).

Acquis conditionality is the mechanism through which the EU is shaping democratic governance in CEE. According to Grabbe (2001; 2003) the EU has an interest in the structure and functioning of all branches of government in CEE, including the legislature and judiciary as well as the executive. The EU then affects several aspects of governance in CEE, including public policy-making processes and intra-governmental relations through different forms of assistance. Once the candidate countries start to prepare for full membership, the EU policy transfer proceeds through 'reinforcement by reward' (positive conditionality) and 'reinforcement by support' (capacity building). These two modes of conditionality imply different forms of assistance. According to Grabbe (2001), the EU promotes both the strengthening of existing institutions and the establishment of new ones through benchmarking or ranking and monitoring their progress. It also offers advice and provides examples of best practice that the applicants seek to emulate (e.g., policy advice to CEE through the technical assistance offered by the PHARE programme, and through the "Twinning programme"[27] that started in 1999). In

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[27] Twinning' is aimed at helping CEE countries adapt their administrative and democratic institutions to comply with membership requirements by learning from member state experiences of framing the legislation and building the organisational capacity necessary to implement the acquis, while Phare programme's emphasis is on developing the applicants'

addition, the EU offers monetary and technical assistance. As the largest external source of aid for CEE, the EU provides funds administered by the European Commission and also bilateral programmes from individual member states.

The mechanism of conditionality as a tool to develop rules in the political systems of CCE accounts for Europeanisation as a process of unilateral adjustment linked to conditions for democratic and economic transition. As a method of policy transfer, conditionality indicates firstly, the nature of Europeanisation in CEE as institutional reforms, and secondly, the depth of their scope. Unlike Europeanisation in Western countries where a policy's scope is directed at a particular problem, accepting the institutional *acquis* to an important degree included requirements to change national political, administrative, and judicial structures of CEE states. It required accepting the *acquis politique* and the *finalité politique* of the Union. In this sense, O'Brennan (2006: 26) argues "the CEE states were effectively set a much higher threshold than had ever been set for prospective members".

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capacity to implement EU legislation and prepare for participation in EU policies (Grabbe, 2001:1022)

3.3. The impact of conditionality on democracy promotion

The literature acknowledges the EU's role in the democratic political transformation in CEEs (Hyde-Price 1994; Vachudova 2005; Grabbe 2006; Schimmelfenning and Scholtz 2008, 2010; Börzel and Schilefenning, 2017). The overlapping of democratisation and Europeanisation is premised on the transformation that these entail and "that have helped to move countries from electoral democracy to institution-building and then to the adoption of EU norms and practices" (Rupnik, 2007: 22). This claim has been submitted to scrutiny and critical examination in view of democratic difficulties CEE states have recently experienced. Two strands of criticism emerge in the literature. These pertain to a) the institutional focus of political conditionality and b) its time limitation to the period of accession negotiations. Both are evidenced in debates about the quality of democracy in CEE states. They substantiate the claim that neither of these phenomena, i.e., democratisation nor Europeanisation is premised on a linear trajectory and a definite end-point.

The overlapping between Europeanisation and democratisation is based on the efforts of the EU to build democracy in CEEs. Among the various typologies of Europeanisation, the focus on political conditionality entailed institutional adaptation and policy transformation. This, according to Àgh resulted in the twin process of Europeanisation and democracy as "creation of large formal institutions in the checks-and-balances system followed by the institutional transfers from the EU" (Àgh, 2015: 8). The implicit logic in political conditionality foresees putting into place institutions conducive to constraining and cultivating political and social actors. Institutions would gradually anchor themselves in transformed social structures and cultures, as well as "anchoring themselves from above" in an enlarged EU (Sedelmeier, 2014). There is an agreement in the literature of the contribution of conditionality to democratisation (Bandelj et al, 2015; Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, 2008). Vachudova (2005: 4) makes the argument that the EU has had a positive impact on state level democracy in CEE by employing a cost-benefit analysis. The EU's active leverage on candidate states makes compliance with EU conditionality attractive and non-compliance costly. Bandelj et al. (2015) adopt a disaggregate view on the integration process differentiating between the signing of Europe

Agreements, those agreements entering into force, and formally submitting EU application and negotiating accession. They find consistent positive effects of the EU integration processes that happened before EU accession on early democratisation in CEE, while they did not find statistical evidence at the phase of the Agreements entering into force. Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) show that democratic conditionality is strongly and positively correlated with democratisation, even when controlling for economic development and transnational exchanges. In a later study, these authors also find that democratic conditionality maintains a robust effect on democratic development in CEE when taking into account historical political and religious legacies (Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, 2010).

Recent scholarly work however, has raised concerns about the success of democratisation in CEE. Analysis of current socio-political developments in CEE countries stresses that democracy in CEE is deteriorating (Sedelemeir, 2014). Often referred to as "backsliding", the term has been criticised for its normative and moralistic overtones (Krastev, 2016) but also for not allowing for an adequate account of the trends in these states (Cianetti et al, 2015). Scholars

speaking about democratic backsliding generally explain it in the literature within the conceptual framework of oligarchisation, state capture. While these concepts suggest ideas about the general diminishing of the quality of democracy, Morlino's (2004) differentiation between aspects of deficiencies enables a specification of the meaning they denote. These terms point to a diminishing of democratic quality in terms of "result", but in view of analytical purposes they most importantly expose a shortage of quality in terms of "content" and "procedure" (Morlino, 2004: 7). According to Morlino, quality in terms of "result" defines a good democracy as a broadly legitimised régime that completely satisfies citizens. The content aspect refers to good democracy as one where "citizen associations and communities enjoy liberty and equality", while the procedural dimension involves citizen's monitoring of the efficiency of the application of laws in force. Oligarchisation and state capture are symptoms of democratic deficiency, which, based on Morlio's differentiation, indicate régimes which have overcome the minimal democratic threshold, but still experience problems of consolidation (Morlino, 2004: 6).

Democratic backsliding, therefore, does not sufficiently account for the difficulties of democracies in CEE, for it presupposes that democratic consolidation has been achieved and the democratic malaises are a sort of deviance from the established norm (Cianetti et al, 2018; Dimitrova, 2018). There is also widespread agreement that these difficulties go beyond the problems of poor democratic quality usually understood as legacies of communist or pre-communist authoritarianism, or side-effects of transition politics: stunted civil societies; disengaged and distrustful citizens; parties lacking social roots; corrupt and ineffective public administration (e.g. Howard, 2003; Van Biezen, 2003; Innes, 2014)

Scholars' revision of the democratic difficulties of the CEE states questions the logic of democratization through EU enlargement and its mechanisms. With regard to the latter, research draws the correlation between the falling away of EU accession conditionality and the emergence of anti-democratic trends (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2007; Rupnik, 2007; Rupnik and Zielonka, 2013; Sedelmeier, 2014). Grabbe (2002) acknowledges importance of EU incentives for the adoption of democratic measures by the CEECs. She, however, also contends that the reason the CEECs choose to implement EU inspired

structures is because of the incentives and constraints posed before them during the accession process. Rupnik (2007: 22) states that "EU tutelage works until you get in, but once you have joined there are few incentives or means to induce further reforms or the observance of democratic norms. Börzel and Schimmelfenning's (2017) recent research asserts the robust effect of EU conditionality at the accession stage but didn't find any systematic effect in the absence of membership incentives. In order to understand this situation scholars interrogate the consistency of the EU efforts in applying conditionality. The majority of scholars recognize the fact that the EU has much more leverage over applicant states than member states (Rupnik and Zielonka, 2013) because of the Union's inability to sanction backsliding member states (Börzel and Sedelmeier, 2017). In connection to this, Börzel's (2015) observes the Union's inconsistency and reluctance in applying strict conditionality and its use of reinforcement by reward as the linchpin of its efforts to induce political change instead.

Finally, the limits of democratization in CEE democracy touch on the fundamental nature of political conditionality. The mechanism exhibits a paradox, for while "its success depends on achieving

cognitive and behavioural change" (Rupnik, 2007: 22) political conditionality has entailed an eclipse the social aspects of democratization. The strongest critique scholars voice concerns its impact on the social embedding of EU norms as essential for supporting democracy building. The EU accession process involves many different processes that effect changes not only in formal patterns of governance (the legal transposition of rules) but also in behaviour (practical application and reinforcement) as Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2005) stress. This is because in order for democracy to take root the EU norms need to become embedded not only in institutional structures but in the configurations of social relations. Democratization than can be viewed beyond institutional perspective but also as a process of socializing actors into liberal democratic norms and political culture. Political scientists have frequently asserted the need for a democratic political system to be consistent with the values of its people (Almond and Vebra, 1963; Dahl, 1989; Diamond, 1993). Hahn (1995) claims that successful democratization is unlikely to take place in the absence of political culture which is supportive of democratic institutions. Rupnik (2007: 22) emphasizes the conundrum at stake: "without a change in political culture, the

formal adoption of institutions or norms may merely create an empty shell and possibly undermine the EU from within". Thus, the prioritization of building formal institutions related to the rule of law while aimed at securing democracy in CEE states jeopardized its quality. According to Pippidi (2007: 15) "the day after accession, when conditionality has faded, the influence of the EU vanishes like a short-term anaesthetic"; and the reason she argues is because the accession process did not touch on the problems of these societies.

3.3.1. The eclipse of conditionality and the eclipse of the social

The focus on institutional transfer established the formal institutions but omitted the *bottom-up* democratization (Àgh, 2015: 2, italic in original). In particular, the top-down trajectory overlooked the role of meaningful political participation of citizens and the informal institutions of civil society (Àgh, 2015). The emerging democracies had limited opportunities to develop the patterns of civic political culture, and informal mobilizing that supports it. This is evidenced in citizens' lack of capacity to hold ruling elites of CEE states accountable as Dimitrova (2018) observes. Also, the lack of informal practices as carriers of the democratic norms entailed what Àgh

(2015) presents as "façade of democracy". This situation jeopardized the functioning of formal institutions of democracy and hence the successful consolidation of democracy in CEE states. According to Sorsensen (1993: 46) "the final phase of a (democratic) consolidation is the process whereby democratic institutions and practices became ingrained the political culture...Not only political leaders but the vast majority of political actors and of the population come to see democratic practices as the right and natural order of things". Rupnik (2007: 19) concludes that "the CEE setbacks underline the importance for democratic consolidation of a civic culture, summed up by Tocqueville as the "habits of the heart" without which the legitimacy and stability of democratic institutions will always remain doubtful".

Dawson (2018) argues that the stress on formal institutions is at odds with most contemporary democratic theory in which practices of deliberation take centre stage. In democratic theory, internalization of the democratic values by citizens is crucial variable for the consolidation of democracy. Asserting pluralism, as 'a condition in which political power is diffused among a wide variety of social groups' (Jordan, 1987: 426) indicates that a stable transition

to democracy cannot be achieved without changes being embraced and supported by the citizenry. In Linz and Stepan's (1996) classical definition a democracy is consolidated when following a change of formal rules, attitudes and habits have also changed and broad societal acceptance of the rules of the game over several electoral cycles has been reached. Institutions do not get reformed on their own and policies do not get enhanced without the people behind them (Heywood, 2014). Thus the success of building democracy "from above", i.e. through elite interaction and institutional arrangement is intrinsically supported by citizen participation.

Tilly's (1995) interpretation of democracy recognizes the crucial role of the 'bottom-up' or the social constituency of democracy. While defining democracy in terms of interaction of elites and citizens, Tilly places citizens at the very core of democracy. He argued that democracies are defined by the breadth of citizenship, the binding consultation with citizens on governance (elections), the equality of citizens and their protection from arbitrary state action. Thus, Dimitrova (2018: 261), who resorts to Tilly's perspective on democracy as a theoretical route allowing to emphasize the crucial role of the bottom up dimension in the process, argues that "by defining democracies in terms of the interaction between the state

and citizens, Tilly's work is an important reminder that institutions are only meaningful if they reflect wider political and societal relationships". This suggests the need to broaden the institutional or elite path for democratic creation with a perspective on citizen participation.

Europeanization through political conditionality reveals a feature of the Enlargement process, described by Mungui-Pippidi (2007: 15) as "nearly miraculous incentive, but quite sluggish and ineffective as an assistance process". Commission's elaborate monitoring procedures depend upon an overall "prescription mechanism" according to which countries are evaluated by the number of measures adopted from detailed Commission "roadmaps" rather than by indicators measuring real changes on the ground. Thus, as Dimitrova (2018) observes citizens in the region have not managed yet to compel political elites to universalize access to resources. Nevertheless, as Dawson (2018) argues it has precipitated the scholarly consensus before 2007/8 that most CEE countries had reached the stage of "democratic consolidation" relying on measurements drawn from institutionally-focused indices (such as Freedom House) and the equally institutionally focused EU accession criteria. In the words of

Mungui-Pippidi (2007: 15): *"This is as if a doctor evaluated a patient by the number of prescribed medicines taken, rather than by measuring the patient's fever to check on the effect of the medicines. Both the adequacy and the impact of such measures in each country were presumed rather than demonstrated."*

The next two sections elaborate on this claim by discussing the salience of notion of civil society within Europeanization with regard to: a) the EU's self-understanding as liberal democracy, and b) the discourse of democracy deployed by the EU Commission

3.4. Civil Society as the metaphor for EU liberal democracy

3.4.1. "The civil" in Europe's political genealogy

The EU democratic discourse places a strong importance on the existence of an active civil society. According to Börzel and Risse (2004: 30) in a key difference to the American version of democracy and capitalism, the EU democratic self-understanding and identity is focused on the promotion of political party associations and civil society. Laffan (2001) stresses that the establishment of civic

statehood in Western Europe was from the onset the central value in the construction of the EU. She also considered that post 1989, it has emerged as the central value for the wider continent, a claim which current socio–political developments may leave open to question. Political philosophy sees civil society as a specific feature of the EU political project embodying the great ideals generated in the age of democratic revolutions - liberty, political and social equality, solidarity, and justice. Hence it is a concept that represents the self-understanding of European (political) modernity (Wagner, 2006): "Modernity, the creation of Europe, itself created Europe" (Heller, 1992).

In the tradition of Italian philosophical discussion this civil dimension within the European project is given paramount importance. Europe is seen to prefigure a "civilian" power (Mario Telo in Esposito, 2018: 228). This image has gained a significant place in debates about Europe in the development of the idea by François Duchêne (Orbie, 2006). In the philosophical perspective outlined here, Europe as a 'civil' power' can be understood as a force with two-fold semantic weight. First, the term 'civil' as used in Machiavelli's description of 'civil way of life' of the republic or of his

depiction of "civil princedom", denotes a breach with natural forces, i.e. the animalistic condition of humans. Taming the natural forces through disciplining and/or educational processes is what Vico called *incivilimento,* or the "civilizing process". For Machiavelli *civile* emerges as the outcome of this struggle of human beings to restrain their animal nature without even being capable of forgetting it (Esposito, 2018). Later on, this idea of the bellicose human nature will reverberate in Hobbes' statements about the condition of the human world as "war of all against all".

Second, civil refers to the "popular" dimension. The terms "people" and "popular" are used by Machiavelli and Vico as indicating "a large social segment opposed to another segment, which confronts it and clashes with it". In the chapter devoted to civil princedom in *The Prince*, Machiavelli says that "the man who becomes prince with the aid of the rich maintains his position with greater difficulty than he who does so with the aid of common people," partly because "their purpose is more honorable than that of the rich: the latter want to oppress, the former only want not to be oppressed." (Esposito, 2018: 229-230). Europe as a "civil power" signifies a political space where the civil contains a dimension of power, rather than inactive and

associated with stasis, and immobility, hence powerlessness implicated in civility as a counterpoint of military[28], This power is interjected with conflictual dialects for it is involved in forming the people, which are not a homogenous and undifferentiated whole. Thus tension and the conflict it entails is constitutive of the political genealogy of Europe. The domestic system of governance as liberal democracy, which Kagan (2003) describes through the Kantian "paradise" of perpetual peace is rather inherently permeated with the Hobbesian view of power as ineradicable of the social world.

As a crucial constituent of the European democratic political régime, civil society embodies the set of EU values which can be represented by the term 'democratic culture'. Indeed, democratization dynamics have been linked with the establishment of a type of culture in the country (Gill, 2000) There are, of course, other approaches to democratization, e.g. Huntington's (1991) emphasizing rational and individualist values as embodied in European culture. Others, as based on Lipset's seminal article in 1959 sought to relate democratization to economic development. This approach and his basic findings sustained many authors work. There is also

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[28] Esposito (2018:228) refers to the understanding of the adjective "civilian" as "non-military" as displayed in European foreign policy through diplomacy and economic pressures.

democratization as 'the road to socialism' embraced by Keane (1988), which envisages a specific image of civil society as a "thorn in side of political power" (Keane, 1988: 15). Almond and Vebra (1965) defined democratic culture as the link between a 'civic culture' and democratic forms. These two aspects of democratization are contained in the concept of civil society as a set of values and institutions (Hall, 1999) and inferred in Gill (2000: 240)' s quotation: "*civil society is important not only as the site within which many of the institutions though which democratic political actors act but because it is the repository of the democratic values which underpin any sustained democratic culture.*"

3.4.2. Civil Society as acts of sociality

Notwithstanding, it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact meaning of civil society. As a contingent political concept (Heywood, 2012) it is marked by conceptual richness (Edwards, 2004) not being susceptible to definition of any singular theory and hence acquires many definitions within various axes of political thought (Cohen and Arato, 1992). The ambiguity (Coldor, 2003), opaqueness and elasticity (Ehrenberg, 1999) that the concept encloses stem from its

position at the intersection between state, economy and associative activities (Cohen and Arato, 1992: ix) but also from its historical evolution (Ehrenberg,1999). Consequently, civil society is generally purported to contain the tension between the institutions of state, markets and associations (Gramsci, 1971; Young, 2000) and also to exist as differentiated between norms, forms and spaces as Boyte (2011) proposes. These nuances are reflected in Taylor's (2006) interpretation of civil society as simultaneously a minimalist and strong concept.

In its "old-fashioned" or more traditionalist sense civil society designates networks and the voluntary associations individuals engage in. These represent "a complex of non-state activities...economic and cultural production" (Keane, 1988: 14). In Taylor's (2006) observations this is a minimalist sense of the concept pointing to the existence of "free associations not under the tutelage of the state". Civil society in the guise of voluntary associations sheds light on a crucial aspect of the concept. It encloses assumptions about social relations and the social bonds at the heart of democratic culture. These can be rendered with the metaphor of social capital. The concept has seen many interpretations in various

academic disciplines, which have been succinctly theorized by Fukuyama into two main strands. The term as defined by Fukuyama (1995; 2001) pertains to the cultural component in modern societies. Social capital is important to the efficient functioning of modern economies[29], but also has significant political functions. These are envisioned in its role in forming civil society, which in turn has been seen as a necessary condition for modern liberal democracy. Robert Putnam (1993) has argued the value of social capital in terms of participation in social associations for strengthening democratic institutions and culture. Given the critique of his concept of associationalism his research demonstrates that participation in voluntary associations enhances intrinsic social values. Young (2000: 163) critiques his concept of civil society as associational life for covering a great variety of groups and activities, and thus not making distinction between what kind of associations or "*how* some of them or all of them allegedly enhance democracy".

Participation in social associations fosters social ties, in particular trust (Fukuyama, 1995). Social capital was originally used to

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[29] An interpretation within market relations is offered by Lin (2001) who defines social capital as individuals engaging in interaction in order to produce profits. Fukuyama (2001) emphasizes the efficiency that social capital entails as preventing negative externalities. The importance of social capital for both transition economies and developing nations have been stressed by Stiglitz (1989,1999).

demonstrate the importance of relationships in developing responsible individuals in a society (Jacobs, 1961). It has been more commonly understood as the "dense networks of norms of social trust which enable participants to cooperate in the pursuit of shared objectives" (Norris, 1996: 474). According to Fukuyama, social capital emerges through instantiation of actual relationships. Co-operation between individuals leads to actualization of the norms of reciprocity. Fukuyama argues that all groups embodying social capital have a certain "radius of trust", that is the circle of people among whom co-operative norms are operative" (Fukuyama, 2001: 8).

Civil society is a space which emerges as a result of nurturing social relations. It is simultaneously a space for cultivating civic virtues and civic knowledge. The connection between knowledge and civil society is reciprocal, whereby they contribute to each other (Levine, 2011: 362). Becoming a member of civil society requires knowledge, but also civil society generates knowledge. It is a learning process (Eder, 2009: 31). Originated from de Tocqueville's observations about nineteenth century America, civic society in the form of

associations has been considered the necessary seedbeds for developing a virtuous citizen with a strong sense of solidarity.

The understanding of civil society as pertaining to acts of sociality beyond rational interests has its roots in an intellectual tradition dating back to the Enlightenment. It was originally developed in the Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson's (1767) argument of social ties established on the grounds of altruism, solidarity and generosity rather than solely private interests. This line of thought has informed theoretical positions in contemporary sociology examining civil society as social relations. For example, Klaus Eder (2008) sees civil society as the enactment of the social bonds of solidarity. According to Edwards (2011, 2014) society refers to 'the geometry of human relations' and becomes "a malleable framework through which to examine the patterns of collective action and interaction by providing frames and spaces in which agency and imagination of individuals can be combined to address the issues of the day" (Edwards, 2011: 14). Edwards sees the merit of a focus on social relations to lie in that it encompasses many different interpretations while calling attention to a set of core concepts and mechanisms.

3.4.3. The political and social meanings of democratic participation

The view of civil society as individuals gathering in associations is connected to political vocabulary. In Whitehead's (2002: 67) interpretation of democratization, social capital provides "a parallel metaphor that may help structure the theatre of democratic politics". The author emphasizes that "an established ethos of social trust" may help us structure and simplify our thinking about the complex and untidy long-term changes involved in democratization. Keane (1988: 14) argues that "even when stressing wider social life, the term civil society "has no natural innocence" (Keane, 1988: 14). This is because the notion contains strong political connotations as to the nature of political reality and to individuals' place and role in its constitution and management. Putnam (1993) saw the fostering of social ties as an essential contribution to citizen's political participation.

Identifying civil society with associational life and the civic bonds it stimulates also potentially designates the patterns of socialization, the process of communication and institutionalization of social relations. These are related to notions of power. It is worth mentioning that de Tocqueville's idea about the value of voluntary

associations is indebted to Montesquieu's insights on free associations as a tool against despotism[30]. In Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of civil society as the public sphere, the notion interlaces individuals' agency with, or rather as, acts of politics. According to her the birth of the political is in the public arena of the man in action. While action, or rather interaction is constitutive of the public arena, it is power that can keep it in existence (Cohen and Arato, 1999: 178). Power is defined here as acting in concert and as deriving from the structures of communication based on mutual recognition and solidarity.

The contentious element of civil society is introduced with Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Gramsci (1971) theorizes this space as a product of both advanced capitalism and a strong state, and representative democracy in the West. Civil society is the terrain of hegemonic struggles. Through its institutions civil society is connected to the state, and, as such reflects its ideological position for generating consent. Civil society plays an especially crucial role in times of political crisis for it holds the potential to contain it. Political or organic crises indicate the loss of ideological consent, whereby

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[30] Montesquieu (1748:261) in De L'espirt des lois observed that "on the state of nature, men are born equal, but they do not know how to remain so. Society makes them loose equality and they do not return to be equal other than by laws" (quoted in Przeworski, 2009:288)

general masses no longer believe what they used to. In times of political crisis, the institutions of civil society are the bedrock of ideological consent for the reinvention of capitalism. According to Gramsci (1971: 53) "Hegemony is won when the ruling class has succeeded in eliminating the oppositional forces, and in winning the active or passive consent of its allies, thereby managing to become a state".

Civil society contains a strong normative dimension (Cohen and Arato, 1992; Ehrenberg, 1999). The observed features linked with civic virtues cultivated in social relations and the dynamics of redistribution of power are largely associated with democracy (Cohen and Arato, 1992; Wagner,2006; Young, 2000). However it still remains equivocal for it is subject to different interpretations of democracy[31]. Kohler – Koch and Berthold (2007: 14) emphasize that there are different schools of thought, which place different emphases on what is the necessary prerequisite of democracy and what is the best way of achieving it; accordingly, they attribute different roles to civil society. Consequently, within the different

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[31] David Held (1996) summarizes eight 'models' of democracy in his book "Models of Democracy".

models of democracy civil society can acquire "many languages" (Terrier and Wagner, 2006: 10).

Nevertheless, democratic thought stresses citizen participation as the crucial component, which underpins the significance of civil society for democracy as "good practice" (Alexander, 2006). Indeed, since its "first vocabulary" (Hallberg and Wittrock, 2006) as laid down in Aristotle's *Politics* civil society denotes the idea of the significance of active citizenship for good government. Later on, democratic theorists have asserted that the level of civic engagement is an indication of the health of a political system (Heywood, 2013: 444). It is believed that one of the key strengths of democratic rule is that it offers wide opportunities for popular participation than other forms of rule, ensuring not merely "a government *for* the people, but also government *by* the people" (Pateman, 1989: 98). Democracy, regardless of the various definitions it may assume, is realized when citizens come to exercise control over the decision-makers who act on their behalf.[32] Thus, although civil society has assumed various connotations individuals' participation in public life is integral to the concept. As Gill (2000: 7) states: "it is through civil society and its

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[32] This statement reflects Beetham's (1999:1-31) argument on democracy as defined by two principles, i.e. popular control and political equality

institutions, including political parties and voluntary groups and associations, that the network of popular participation and activism which is at the heart of any notion of what democracy means is established". Likewise John Keane(1988) also stresses citizen participation as a requirement of democracy "It is through civil society and its institutions including political parties and voluntary groups and associations that the network of popular participation and activism which is at the heart of any notion of what democracy means is established" Keane (1988: 7).

The democratic relevance of civil society lies in the mediating function citizen participation assumes in the governance of the *polis*. According to Gill (2000: 7) "civil society has been seen as important for democracy because it mediates between the regime on the one hand and the mass of the populace on the other". Implicit in civil society as intermediary is its political role. Civil society carries the idea of placing restraints on government. Civil society is thus fundamental for the functioning of an effective democracy because through the associations and voluntary groups it represents the interests of different social groups. These, however, can be considered as constituting civil society only if they are realizing their

interests with political means. The point that Gill and Keane make is that the existence of networks of groups or voluntary associations does not constitute civil society *per se*. Gill (2000: 6) emphasizes that "political activism is a crucial condition for civil society". Thus among the groups of society only those who are politically oriented can function as civil society (Keane, 1988: 6). Civil society comes only through mobilization of political actors. It "can be achieved only through the efforts of that society itself in pursuing democratic change. Civil society cannot be created from above, but must constitute itself through its own activity, and after all, this is the essence of democracy" (Gill, 2000: 242).

A vigorous civil society then is one of the key features of liberal democracy (Heywood, 2013: 272). This is presented in Earnest Gellner's (1994) phrase "no civil society, no democracy". We can thus borrow Seckingelgin's (2002) expression of civil society as a metaphor for western liberalism to denote the 'liberal' commitment to limited government, which is blended with a democratic belief in popular rule (Heywood, 2013: 272). A central idea embraced by liberals is that the citizen should join many communities *within* civil society. Therefore, civil society within a liberal nation, "comprises

many different churches, educational institutions, cultural groups, business organisations and other voluntary associations enabling the citizen to pursue common interests with little oversight or interference from national political institutions" (Schumaker, 2008: 210). Its democratic commitment lies in contributing to the exercise of popular control in enabling people to define what are their interests and realize the "public good".

3.5. The EU Commission approach to civil society

Political conditionality as the main policy of the EU Eastern enlargement traced the road to integrate CEE states into EU norms and structures of democracy. The policy was aimed at their infrastructural development and required satisfying economic and political conditions. These were contained in the requirement to adopt the entire *acquis communautaire* of the EU. This meant that the oversight and monitoring of the process of implementation has gradually become the primary concern of EU policy (O'Brennan, 2006: 74). It is at this point that civil society in the EU discourse of democracy and the EU Commission intersect. The latter played a

crucial role in the Eastern enlargement process[33]. As principal interlocutor with the candidate states the Commission became central to oversight and monitoring of the implementation of conditionality. Within the formal rules and procedures that govern the integration process, the Commission's "agenda-shaping and agenda-setting" ability had an important influence on both the content and the shape of the process as it develops (O'Brennan, 2006: 76). Thus, although civil society issues fell within the European Parliament's (EP) fundamental concerns with and vigilance over the safeguarding of the democratic foundations of the EU, it was the Commission, which acted as the "key custodian" of the Community's norms and interests in the applicant countries. The EP deep attachment to and employment of different variants of political conditionality were enacted by the EU Commission, which played "a functional-bureaucratic *and* normative political role in the course of the eastern enlargement" (O'Brennan, 2006: 75; 101).

Civil society is an ambiguous, underdeveloped concept within European political discourse. It is a floating signifier with positive

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[33] Although the Eastern Enlargement drew on the input of the three main institutions of the Union (the Parliament, the Commission and the Council) the Commission had a significant role in the external governance of the EU. It became a crucial actor in the decisions that marked the process - based on its strategic organisational know-how and informational reach, which was formally framed in Article 29.

connotations (Kochler-Koch, 2009: 47). Within the EU discourse, the ambiguity of 'civil society' emanates only partly from the contrasting images and divergent roles (or strategic use) of the concept on the part of EU institutions. It also stems from difficulties in disentangling it from the moral, philosophical and ideological view of those who advance them (Heywood, A., 2004: 3). Thus, as embedded in the democratic ideals of liberalism, civil society is still a "notoriously fissiparous" (O'Brennan, 2008) concept.

Within the EU political system, the normative stipulations of citizens' participation is infused in the understanding of the EU liberal democracy as participatory (Saurugger, 2010). The participatory model of democracy maintains that "what makes for good leaders also makes for good citizens" Cohen and Arato, 1992: 7). So, as a principle, participation stands for "active participation (equal representation) in ruling and being ruled for the decisive narrowing of the gap to the point of its abolition" (Barber, 1984 in Saurugger, 2009: 1276). There is also functional understanding of participation within this model of democracy. As a functional understanding the focus is on the outcome of social participation both in terms of good governance and efficiency (Kohler-Koch and Finke, 2007). The

instrumental character of participation is based on the idea that including all concerned actors will lead to system effectiveness and will contribute to its overall level of legitimacy (Gbikpi and Grote, 2002; Heinelt, 2007). The view adopted in the European Commission's approach to civil society reflects the latter.

The Commission's approach to civil society, its role, meanings and functions vary a) with conceptions about the political nature of the EU, and visions of its future, and b) is tailored to respond to particular demands (K ochler-Koch 2009). In view of the Commission's institutional priorities, the EU is conceived as a system of governance, as a "problem solving-entity" (Sjursen, 2006: 10). Within this pragmatic image, civil society plays an instrumental role in the "participatory engineering" underlying good governance (Kochler-Koch, 2009: 53). Good governance results in a fusion of governance tasks in policy-making and implementation, where institutional actors and social actors increasingly rely upon each other. It is based on the normative supposition that all who are affected by a political regulation should have the right to participate in the decision (Schmitter, 2002). Conceived as a partner in governance, the positive role of civil society lies in its contribution to

the efficiency of the system, hence in assuring citizen participation in the decision-making system.

Additionally, civil society acquires a role within the Commission's visions of the EU's future (Kochler-Koch, 2009: 53). Its role is accordingly tailored in response to particular challenges. Finke (2007) observes that the concept of civil society entered the debate on EU governance relatively late, and largely as a result of the perceived legitimacy crisis thrown up by the 1992 Maastricht treaty. O'Brennan's (2008) analysis of the role of civil society in the process of European integration emphasizes the treaty as the "crucial anchor point" for the entrance of civil society in the EU governance debate. Maastricht initiated the deepening of political integration following the deepening of the economic integration promoted by the Single Act. Political participation was placed on public and political agendas as strategies for strengthening the democratic process. Civil society embodied these ideas and the possibilities they convey for restructuring democracy; it was considered conducive tool to use in the endeavours to rectify the EU's democratic deficit and as such was a promise for the EU's democratic future (Kochler-Koch, 2012). As the remedy to "the deficient democratic accountability of the Union"

(Kochler-Koch, 2012: 810) civil society was linked with the idea of citizenship and the view of ever-closer union, implying bringing citizens into a direct relationship with EU institutions. It was believed that the involvement of civil society would set off a "virtuous circle" of improving both the input and output legitimacy of the EU. Within the Commission's democratic vision civil society incorporated the idea of active citizenship as carrier of the political constituency of the union, and as such bears the promise for a foundation for the development of a European *demos* (Kohler-Koch, 2009).

In the Commission's deliberative discourse on democracy the democratic credentials of civil society rest with its capacity to constitute a public sphere. The broad participation in decision-making that participatory democracy calls for is envisioned through the medium of deliberation. Accordingly, civil society acquires practical connotations with its main role being to provide a societal structure for public debate and deliberation. Habermas (1996) developed the idea that civil society could act as a key facilitator of public discourse. Civil society, situated within the public sphere, is the institutional correlate of deliberative democracy (Benhabib,

1994). Civil society in Habermas' words, is the "social foundation of an autonomous public" (1997: 288) which engages in a process of informal opinion formation. Deliberative democracy is proceduralist, argues Benhabib, by which she means that the institutions of democracy emphasize first and foremost certain institutional procedures and practices as essential for collective decision making and forming institutions. With the emphasis on the deliberation of participants, the notion of civil society then comprises civil society organisations, which give citizens a voice. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a crucial role in constituting the public sphere, whilst also acting as a top-down "transmission belt" (Kochler-Koch, 2012: 814). According to her, in "a bottom-up process they feed citizens' preferences and in a top-down process they inform the public about issues on the political agenda, about the stakes involved and possible alternatives". Thus, CSOs have a double function (Kochler - Koch, 2010: 106). On the one hand they have a 'performative function', which works as the formation and reformation of civil society 'through discourse and interaction in the public sphere'; and a 'representative function' on the other. The latter involves 'making civil society visible and giving societal interests a voice'. This way CSOs convey demands and concerns from the grassroots to the

upper level of decision-making. CSOs in the EU discourse, argues O'Brennan (2008) are contributing both to input and output legitimacy. As mediators between the local level and the supranational centre in Brussels, they echo local points of view and policy concerns and bring a diversity of views to the policy-making table.

The political connotations of the idea of the public are theorized on the constitution of plurality via interaction based on verbal communication. The notion of the public sphere originates in Arendt's understanding of the *polis* as "the organisation of the people as it arises out of speaking and acting together" (Cohen and Arato, 1992: 179). It draws on theoritisation of subjectification indebted to Kant's metaphysics. In the Arendtian political world, the political subject comes into being through the medium of speech[34]. Speaking presupposes an interlocutor, an Other, whose presence makes possible self-disclosure and self-renewal. The Other sees and hears and thus is capable of establishing the reality of subjective expression. Political community therefore, according to Arendt (1967), arises out of 'people speaking and acting together'.

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[34] and thus for Arendt the human right to speech precedes the human right to life as the fundamental right to be defended and uphold (Parekh, 2004b)

Habermas follows a similar theoretical reasoning. A prominent defender of Kant, Habermas conceptualizes civil society as following two distinctive patterns of reason: instrumental and communicative. It is an arena for dialogue and debate where questions concerning the common cause should be addressed. In Habermas' words "by the public sphere", "we mean first of all the realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (1989: 27). So the public reasoning among a wide diversity of political views is important because civil society's influence has to be exerted through the public sphere: not influence *per se*, but influence transformed into communicative power legitimates political actions' (Habermas, 1996: 371). The image of civil society as the public sphere is one of the generating of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussion in the cultural public sphere.

The Commission's functionalist approach to civic society and its theoretical premises have been widely criticized. Firstly, scholars expose the limitations of deliberation as a vehicle to constitute civil society. These will be examined in detail in Chapter VI where the discussion centres on other modalities of agency as part of

Europeanization, theorized as discursive process. At this moment it is worth to introduce Boyte's remark that "deliberation is useful but modest attempt to create an enclave of agency in times of diminished democracy, not sufficient for strong democracy" (Boyte, 2011: 631-632). What Boyte suggests is that the implications for civic agency as a crucial element of the public sphere comprise of activities as conforming, aligning to the *status quo*, rather than challenging the adopted vision of the social. As social action their function is to move problems to the formal system of politics and law-making, thereby reducing their political import to "influence", rather than "power". In addition, the view of the citizen as discussant of the social word presupposes the existence of the publicly oriented, hence politically conscious citizen. A citizen who believes in the value and merits of her/his opinion in the decision-making process and therefore is looking for the possibility to make her/ his voice heard. But how precisely to ensure critical participation of citizens is unclear. As Habermas (1989) observed the role of the public sphere is only possible in the context of existing political culture. Against the background of historical apolitical culture, it is therefore a limited model to create politically active citizens. Deliberation, therefore, as a mode of agency will be an insufficient tool to stimulate engagement

in the context of citizen shunning from participation because they are disappointed with the actions of democratic institutions, and don't see how their decision would matter (Slavov et al, 2010). Consequently, within deliberative democracy civil society refers to distribution of political power rather than constitution of political power (Boyte, 2011).

Secondly, scholars studying the application of the instrumentalist logic of the Commission's approach also expose its caveats. These are voiced by sceptics of civil society as well as scholars studying the impact of the Commission approach on building civil society in the process of the EU eastern enlargement. The former, as observed by Cullen (2010: 323) question the efficacy of civil society based on evidence about its co-optation and, hence the inability to maintain independence from EU policy imperatives. Also, many Commission officials remain sceptical of NGO claims to represent the public interest and rather view them as primarily lobbyists representing narrow constituencies and as sources of expert or technical information which can be fed into the policy process and – in output terms – as 'vehicles to sell EU policy to EU citizens'. O'Brennan (2008) argues that viewing civil society as one of 'communicating

Europe' is not conducive to involve stakeholders in a meaningful and robust way. Rather, civil society is conceived as 'occasional consultations and cheerleaders for European integration'. NGOs and civil actors become vehicles for pronouncements on the positive projects being overseen by Brussels.

The scholars studying the deployment of the Commission's approach in the process of the Eastern Enlargement directly relevant to Bulgaria complement the critic by emphasizing its elitism or top-down model. According to O'Brennan (2008) civil society support has been part of the EU accession framework since the mid-1990s. Its role, however, developed in quite specific ways as a result of different but quite purposeful types of engagement on the part of both EU and external factors. In particular, civil society assumed an important function in the process as "providing an early legitimizing rationale" for the EU east enlargement (Vahudova, 2000:x). Consistent with the salience of functional understandings of participation underpinning the EU mode of governance, the Commission approach to civil society has been driven by legitimacy as deriving from the input of non-state actors and groups. Therefore, "although the EU has consistently held to a pluralist understanding

of civil society, which includes voluntary organisations that give voice to the concerns of citizens, the evidence from the integration process suggests that this pluralism is a *highly qualified* and narrowly interpreted one" (O'Brennan, 2008). In the 'output' legitimacy model of EU governance community matters play a subordinate role. The EU support to a constitution of NGO sector has been a top-down with weak links to grass root constituents. Consequently, scholars stressed that the Commission has been very selective with a preference to engage with state actors, and hierarchical rather than horizontal modes of communication and decision-making. O'Brennan (2006: 79) contends that "the Commission's discursive framing activities may only properly be understood as part of an élite-centered social learning process". Thus the Commission's approach to civil society has been at one and the same time open and pluralist and yet deliberately constructed as limited and utilitarian; it has been "accession driven rather than society-oriented". As a consequence it has led to detachment from real society and thus couldn't achieve its transformative social potential (Dimitrova and Steunenberg, 2013). Moreover, there are some highly critical positions, which demonstrate that the EU's efforts to strengthen NGOs in CEECs had the adverse effect of

undermining them by usurping their agenda and divorcing them from grassroot support and activism (Fagan, 2005 in Sedelmeier, 2011: 21).

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter situated the process of Europeanization with the literature studying it with regard to the EU Eastern Enlargement. The chapter developed the argument of the EU impact in the Europeanization East as democratization premised on the experience of communist regime that the CEE states share and the EU important role in their post-communist history. Unlike Western European states, which were democracies when they joined the EU, the CEE states underwent the transition to democratic state regime under the strong influence of the EU. This difference underpins the asymmetric nature of the Europeanization of CEE states in comparison to Europeanization West. It also determined the EU choice for political conditionality as the main policy tool to transfer its democratic norms and rules. Political conditionality stands for the deep and wide but also unilateral adjustment of CEE states to Europe. While the mechanism did ensure the successful transition to

democracy and supported the establishment of the official democratic institutions of these states, it felt short of reaching their citizens. The chapter highlights its limitations as overreliance on formal transposition of rules and policies and eluding the social dimension of democracy. It underplayed the role of democratic political culture and civil society for consolidation of democracy, hence the current "façade of democracy" that CEE exhibit.

Against this background, the chapter also highlighted the significance of civil society in the EU self-understanding as liberal democracy. It began by highlighting the idea of civility as constitutive of the political genealogy of Europe. The tension and conflict in civility are translated into the intertwinement of social and political dynamics in the idea of civil society. The idea of citizen participation integrated into the democratic connotations of civil society underpins its political implications. Within its liberal commitment, civil society in the guise of various non-state activities and organisations has a mediating function between those governing and those being governed. Its association with democracy lies in the popular control and legitimacy these organisations facilitate. Civil

society is also the repository of democratic culture. As such it contains social dynamics rendered with the notion of social capital.

In the EU Commission's approach these theoretical considerations are implicated in the participatory model of democracy. Within its institutional priorities the political role of civil society is conceived of as a partner in governance. The various NGOs forming civil society serve to assure citizen participation in the decision-making. The credentials of civil society then rest with organising the public sphere via public debate and deliberation. A crucial point, which the discussion stressed is the Commission's favoured top-down approach which revolved around engagement with state actors and as "accession driven rather than society-oriented".

The discussion touched on some significant limitations in the Commission's approach thereby precipitating ideas, which suggest that "nurturing civil society is far more complex, way beyond the usual agenda of organisational development and institutional support for greater citizen participation" as argued by Edwards (2011: 13). Referring to the exaggerated influence of various forms of philanthropic aid and fund raisers after the fall of the Berlin wall,

he suggests that "civil society may be nurtured most effectively when donors do less, not more, step back to allow citizens themselves to dictate the agenda and evolve a variety of civil societies to suit their context and concerns ". In the context of Bulgaria, Slavov (2010) envisages the only possible way to repair the social fragmentation to be through active engagement of citizens in social life or as the authors explicitly state through direct democracy. The next section paves the way to considering these claims. It focuses on the domestic socio-political factors as the other determinant factor behind the emphasis on civil society in the process of democratization.

Chapter IV: The Cultural Codes of Europeanization: Bulgaria and the Evasive Political Subjects

The chapters so far presented the conceptual underpinnings of Europeanisation. They outlined a normative picture depicting what Europeanisation 'should do' and democratisation 'ought to be' in the political context of post-communist states to which Bulgaria's historical legacy fits in. The theoretical toolkit that this study employs put forward the notion of discourse to point to the social world constituted in meaning. Discourse asserts that meaning, as the domain of understanding and intelligibility of social world, is not located in the objects themselves, but in its relations; it is constituted in interaction. Meaning thus, is not tied to structure, but has its own interior logic - following language - which is tied to cultural relativity. With this reminder, this chapter elaborates on the specificities of the domestic context as the cultural codes of meaning in Europeanisation.

4.1. The 'cultural' aspects of democratisation[35]

The definitions of Europeanisation by Olsen (2002) and Radaelli (2003) explicitly highlight the national variations of the process and the key role of domestic structures and national legacies as determinants of EU impact. Thus, within the Eastern enlargement process democratisation emerges as the main narrative of Europeanisation in the political context of CEE states. The successful transition to democracy and EU democratic norms involved the entire reconstitution of political life in the candidate states. The emphasis on compliance with political norms was the driving element in the course of the enlargement process in Bulgaria. O'Brennan (2006) states: "Respect for political criteria was crucial for membership during the negotiations of Bulgaria and Romania. Even if the Union was prepared to overlook deficiencies in the economic preparedness of candidate states it would not do so with respect to the norms of transparency of democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms. These took precedence over those of market capitalism in every case. It is also evident in the requirement of

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[35] I borrowed this phrase from Dawson (2014). His usage has a slightly different meaning to the one in the section of the present chapter. Dawson employs it as an opposite to the formal definitions and measurements of democracy, and hence as referent to "citizens". While this signification is inferred in the way I use it, it also refers to the a) necessary cultural imprint in meaning formation; and consequently to b) the local articulation of democracy and its significance in determining EU impact.

additional criteria by the Commission. Unlike previous rounds, applicants now had to accept the entire Community system, the *acquis communautaire* and the *acquis politique* as well as the *finalité politique* of the Union." In a similar vein, the "accession perspective", as noted before, was a strong incentive for initiating the steps towards democracy in Bulgaria.

The democratisation process was a success in the CEE countries. Given the criticism of political conditionality addressed in Chapter III, the demands of the mechanism worked as "a gravity model" of the EU model of democracy, assuring anchoring for the countries in transition in their voyage into the unknown (Emerson & Noucheva, 2005). In these states the democratic principles in state governance, supremacy of the rule of law and the development of efficiently functioning markets have been affirmed (Krastev, 2015). There are, however, significant differences across countries and specific issue areas, as empirical findings on Europeanisation demonstrate conclusively (Sedelmeier, 2011; Cianetti et al, 2018). Chapter III, in discussing the overlapping between democratisation and Europeanisation, stressed the institutional focus of democratic promotion with reference to the deterioration of the quality of

democracy in CEE states. The evasive social dimension in the EU strategy of democratisation contains difficult and tricky issues, which, as current events in CEE states show, bounce back after their successful transition to democracy.

The citizen dimension carries the blueprint of the cultural legacies in the social and political history of these countries, and these have been an important factor underlying their different response to democracy. The impact that EU rules and norms triggered have been interpreted through historically accumulated layers of meaning, which unavoidably evoke modification of EU rules. Rather than a political and cultural convergence of ex-communist societies with Western Europe, the transition and democratisation of CEE was "a plurality of modernising agents and creativity" (Blokker, 2005: 505). Thus, the local context emerged behind the diversity of impact. The cultural elements underpinning politics continue to present a challenge to democracy in CEE states as Rupnik (2018) astutely observes. He emphasises the need to study the relationship between democracy and the market, "the confusion or collision of political liberalism with economic liberalism", in order to understand the decoupling of liberalism from democracy and the current democratic backsliding and anti-liberal turn in Central Europe that this entails.

Krastev (2015) also stresses the importance of the cultural legacies underpinning the current rise of populism as one tendency of illiberal behaviour in CEE states. His analysis draws attention to the constitution of CEE nations out of the ashes of multicultural empires and the consequences of this rupture as a common trait of post-communist countries. Thus, he explains the lack of tolerance exhibited in the response to refugee migration on the continent with their historical experience of "the dark sides of multiculturalism". In his own words: "while Western Europe's attitudes toward the rest of the world have been shaped by colonialism and its emotional legacy, Central and Eastern Europe's states were born from the disintegration of empires and the outbreaks of ethnic cleansing that went with it" Krastev (2015: 93).

The next section examines the legacies of the Communist and Ottoman period with regard to their impact on citizens' participation. These periods of Bulgarian history have left a significant residue of cultural elements that continue to shape the quality of democracy in Bulgaria. The section does not claim to exhaust neither the meaning nor the significance of these periods of Bulgarian history. It also acknowledges that a fuller and hence more

accurate account of the impact of the historical legacies on democratisation in Bulgaria is to be achieved through examination of other periods in history and developments they entailed. Historians will do more justice to their significance; moreover, such a scrutiny falls beyond the scope of this study[36]. They are introduced because they have been controversial nexuses in Bulgarian history to which scholars of democratisation mostly refer to in their accounts of civic agency. Thus, the argument presents some main points that bear on contemporary debates on civic agency.

4.2. Bulgarian society and the missing political subject

4.2.1. The social legacy of Communism: fragmentation of social ties

With respect to Bulgaria's post-1990 foreign policy, the most important objective has been the 'return to Europe' (Dimitrov, 2001). Sociological research (Kabakachieva, 2009) on individuals' attitudes towards integration in 2008 also point to approval of the integration process by the average Bulgarian citizen and show that trust in EU institutions has grown from 2.37% to 2.60% (from the

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[36] For example, scholars such as Baeva (2011), Spirova (2007; 2010), Ganev (2004, 2007) integrate comprehensive historical analysis in their study of Europeanisation in Bulgaria.

years 1999 to 2008). On the institutional level, European integration has proceeded on two levels, as Dimitrov (2001: 93) argues. At the multilateral level, Bulgaria has made serious efforts towards securing membership in the Western political, economic and security organisations. The second, bilateral level, has involved building relationships with the established democracies of Western Europe and North America. The multilateral level has proved to be the more important, both because Bulgaria has not succeeded in establishing a 'special relationship" with any individual Western country, and because of the strengthening dynamics of integration within Western Europe itself.

Bulgaria shares commonalities with other Central and Eastern Europe countries (CEE) with regard to the experience of communist rule[37] after the Second World War. The 'return to Europe' was strongly influenced by Bulgaria's communist[38] legacy as well as pre-communist history. There is agreement among scholars that the

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[37] Communism was interpreted differently by Bulgarian social scientists, depending on the variety of theoretical approaches, fields of interest and ideological standpoint. Some conceptualisations include: a 'pre-modern paternalism (Dimitrov, 1991; 1992), and on the other end as a 'hypermodern project', a kind of political Dadaism (Todorov, 1999), as totalitarianism was adopted by Daskalov (1991), and 'state capitalism' (Naidenov, 1991). Kabakchieva (2009) defines it as "violently imposed social order with the aim of accelerated industrialization realized by the full authority of the communist party"

[38] Communism is usually interchangeable with socialism. The leading scholar on the communist period in Bulgaria, Kabakchieva (2005) states that "what distinguishes "communism" from "socialism" is the violent imposition of change – revolution; the accent is on the forceful execution of political power, and not on the improvement of modern economic relations.

communist regime (its nature and length) have been determining the prospects of liberal democracy. Democratisation, as the initiation of change in Bulgaria (and Romania), observed Pridham (1994: 17), started "from within the outgoing regime". Given the authoritarian nature of the communist regime which succeeded in "suppression of dissent that ranged from a system of concentration camps and the wide abuse of minority human rights to the largely successful co-option of most critical intellectuals into organisations controlled by the state" (Pedersen and Johannsen, 2011: 82), the prospects of liberal democracy were not very auspicious in the 1990s (Dawson, 2014: 165). Same scholars observe that even when the regime weakened the opposition was small, divided and generally lacking in its capacity to mobilise public support for pro-democratic reform. Following the complete withdrawal of the USSR, "its legacy continues to have a substantial impact on the character of domestic politics" (Higley and Gunter, 1992: 346-7 in Pridham et al., 1996: 8). Ganev (2007) argues that the period until 1997 was politically dominated by an ex-communist Bulgarian socialist party. Dawson's (2014: 82) research on contemporary public culture in Bulgaria claims that the lack of civic liberalism in the contemporary Bulgarian political arena

has its preliminary roots "in the tight authoritarian control of the Zhivkov era".

Bulgaria's social environment exhibits the common trait of a passive political culture attributed to post-communist politics. Scholars who evaluate civil society in Central and Eastern Europe countries (CEEs) characterise it as "weak," whereby citizens tend to have lower levels of participation than those of Western Europe (Howard, 2003, 2011; Wallace et al,2012). There is a general low level of civic participation in these societies. Howard's (2011: 139-141) analysis identifies three factors that are common to societies in post-communist Europe that account for peoples' withdrawal from political and social activities and the general weakness of civil society. These are: 1) the legacy of mistrust instilled by communist organisations; 2) the persistence of friendship (kinship) networks; and 3) post-communist disappointment. The common historical, economic and political characteristics of these countries are among the main macro factors behind the lower level of citizen participation in Eastern Europe compared to those of Western Europe (Barrett & Brunton, 2014).

Communism, as an ideological project, had its own social imaginary (Castoriadis, 1987). As 'an alternative modernity' (Kabakchieva, 2015) the project contained a vision for modernization, building on the hybridisation of two modernisation projects, i.e., the Marxist western one and its Leninist translation into Soviet-type modernisation. It was enforced by the presence of the Red Army (the military force of the Communist regime) in various different stages of modernization. This conflation between a vision and the ultimate submission of the individual it requires has led to a paradox. Communism encouraged sociality and collectivism and yet deprived the citizens of any real meaningful participation in civil life. Gill (2000: 229) explains this paradox by the co-existence of the economic and social changes communism encouraged, i.e., industrialisation, urbanisation, education and strong political control. These elements of communist modernisation created the preconditions for a growing middle class in the CEE countries. They were also conjoint with a societal vision of "intense sites of sociability" which represented a rich fabric of social exchange (Goldfarb, 1989: 27). These included a vast array of social activities and organisations, especially in the sphere of sport and leisure with prominence given to associations celebrating folk heritage, animal

protection societies, and more rarely, organisations engaged with protection of the environment. Thus, strong citizen interaction in associations, together with the developing middle class were conducive to the emergence of a common consciousness of shared interests and social ties to constitute a fully-fledged civil society.

The control of society by the regime, however, prevented the transformation of the potential for civil society from being realised effectively. These activities operated under official ideology and the commitment of the communist regime to transform society (Gill, 2000)[39]. As the official tools of the ideology the organisations were "aimed at reinforcing the state's efforts to develop socialist citizens" (Schumaker, 2008: 323)[40]. Hence, as Howard remarks, it was obligatory for many people to be a member of a state-controlled organisation. The disciplinary power of socialism (Hristiov,2009) functioned through the intertwinement of the state with the Communist party. It worked to demobilise society in different ways. Ivan Krastev (2012) stresses that communism had eroded the

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[39] This involved significant social and economic restrictions. The latter implied destruction of the private economy and replacement by an economic system organised along collectivist lines. The former involved a cultural revolution aimed at wiping out the bourgeois culture of capitalism (Gill, 2000:224).

[40] The totalitarian aspect of the communist regime points to "a cultural penetration of all aspects of social life, where that social life maintains an interaction with its totalitarian definition" (Goldfarb, 1989:26)

capacity for collective action along class lines. Other scholars emphasise the destruction of social networks and the undermining of social identities and values (Jay and Zimmerman in Jensen and Miszlivetz, 2006: 133) as the most effective means of demobilisation. This was achieved through instilling mistrust as an implicit and potent social regulator. Thus, while civic agency was mushrooming and manifold during the Communist period, scholars have stressed that the foundations of associational life in these societies were based on "particularized" trust, and the pervasive relationship between trust and corruption (Uslaner and Badescu, 2003).

Mistrust annihilates individuality and, as Balibar (1994) argues, the mythical figure of 'totalitarianism' was capable of imposing an absolutist uniformity on individuals. In this way the multitude was unified with solitude without leaving any space for 'the human'. Arendt's insightful analysis of totalitarian regimes also offers an account of the implications it had for society. She contends that the totalitarian order fostered a model of society that aspired to the 'liquidation of all spontaneity,' and a model of the citizen as a "human specimen reduced to the most elementary reactions." This has led to a deep entrenchment of scepticism, and the ensuing corruption of

human solidarity (Arendt, 1951: 583). Thus, Cury's (1995) reflections on the sociological legacies of communism emphasise that while communism did not succeed in creating a model of "socialist men" in a homogenous society, it did create a population that was highly educated and mobilised with a sense of "rightful power". The social base of the ideology was impregnated with the values, expectations, behaviour and patterns of social interaction, which were quite different from those of citizens in the West, and different again from populations in other states that have gone from being authoritarian to democratic (e.g. Latin America and Southern Europe).

Communism depreciated the role of civil society in structuring society; it regarded voluntary associations with suspicion and hostility (Schumaker, 2008: 270). Thus, civil society organisations, such as "trade unions, leisure clubs, even churches all had to be permeated and made into 'transmission belts' of the party's purposes" (Taylor, 2006: 88). These were not political societies (Bafoil, 2009), for they were missing a crucial element of civil society, namely its connotations of opposition and dissent[41]. The

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[41] To some scholars (Smilova, 2017) the appearance of forms of resistance, such as the organisations of the intelligentsia, or of members of the ethnic Turkish minority represented

destiny of dissidents and people vocalising other opinions than the one upheld by the party is clear. They ended up in the labour camps. Therefore civil society did not exist in the sense in which liberalism understands it in the wake of Locke, Montesquieu or de Toqueville. Hence, scholars emphasise the lower levels of participation in CEEs than those of Western Europe in their study of the civil society experience in post-communist countries (Howard, 2003, 2011; Wallace et al., 2012, Barrett and Brunton, 2014). The instilment of mistrust during Communism "constituted significant problems that countries in transition from socialism faced in developing habits of trust and honesty" as Rothstein highlights (2004: 13). In his research he observes the persistence of the communist legacy: "trusting relationships extended little beyond the circle of family and close friends". Gazing on the shadows of communism carries important implications in analysing democratisation. It is particularly helpful in shedding light on social relations and the challenges they contain for the constitution of the social base of democracy. Cury (1995: 56) identifies the need to consider the strength and nature of social ties, traditions, learned behaviour and attitudes forged under

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"informal" CSOs. These were developments that took place in the 1980s during the last period of communist rule, when it started to slowly disintegrate. They were precipitated by the developments in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and his "perestroika" on the one hand, and by the dissident movements in Central European communist states on the other.

communism. None of these are the same as those that underlie the birth and survival of democracies elsewhere. In addition, another important social legacy of communism is the "second society shadow". What Cury means by this term is the presence of a black-market trade (or "grey economy"), an opposition media and fiercely held traditions in Eastern European Countries.

4.2.2. Ottoman legacy: Freedom without independence

The civil society axis represents a combination of the pre-communist history of civil society and the strength of civil society during the Communist period (Gill, 2000: 228). As discussed above, Bulgaria shares commonalities with other CEE countries with regard to the legacy of communist rule. There are, however, crucial differences between those countries too (Gill, 2000: 189-217). Bafoil's (2009) study of civil society in CEE countries differentiates between two types of civil society. The first type contains rebellious social ties supporting political opposition, while the other exhibited "a social consensus developed in a sphere removed from political opposition". Both authors agree that these peculiarities stemmed from the pre-communist experiences of the countries (Bafoil, 2009; Gill, 2000).

Gill (2000: 228) compares countries on the basis of the existence of strong elements of a civil society in the pre-communist period with autonomous social activity during the communist period, and argues that in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and GDR (the Democratic Republic of Germany) civil society was sufficiently robust to be able to withstand the regime. These countries, prior to the advent of communism, had developed patterns of organised social activity which in the form of various organisations was able to cultivate interests, generate discussion of issues and promote a sense of civic responsibility.

In the categorization of the different eastern communist countries that Bafoil (2010) proposes, there are differences between different totalitarian regimes. Thus, he identifies "sultanist regimes" (the Balkan countries), "the bureaucratic regimes", which characterized GDR and Czechoslovakia, and "the mature post-totalitarian regimes" of Poland and Hungary. In these CEE countries, the mass-mobilization and civil participation that overthrew the former communist regimes was possible because "while the party still prevailed as the dominant force, it abandoned a lot of its former attributes, particularly ideology, leaving space for some civil

societies"(Bafoil.2010: 10). The most outstanding model of social self-reliance and political resistance was perhaps *Solidarnost* (Solidarity) in Poland, whose "primary goal was to uncouple civil society from totalitarian culture" (Goldfarb, 1989: 21-30). Consequently, in the literature it is usually explained that the social movements of the 1980s brought the rejuvenation of the concept of civil society. The 'revival' or 'rebirth' of the concept came to the point of "overt crisis" as evidence of the existence of societies massively opposed to the political order (Howard, 2003; Cohen and Arato, 1992; Edwards, 2004).

In Gill's (2000: 216) classification of CEE states under the Communist period, Bulgaria is in the second category, reflecting "limited autonomous group activity"[42]. Following Almond and Verba's classification, by 1989 Bulgarian society exhibited a "subjected political culture with strong patriarchal overtones" (Gruev, 2015: 25). In Bafoil's definition, Bulgaria had a political culture disconnected from the rebellious element of mass mobilisation implied in civil society. Civil society in Bulgaria under communism thus exhibited a social consensus that developed in a

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[42] Together with Romania and Albania

sphere removed from political opposition movements. It included a proliferation of burgeoning activities with ties of sociability, yet there was an evasion and circumvention of any political momentum or challenge to the party /state.

By contrast, the political culture of participation - that which we call civic culture, characterized by citizen engagement - in the social environment of Bulgaria was marked by an enormous deficit. The *status quo* of this period was established in a relationship of top-down passivity between the governing and the governed, thus eliminating the possibility of any substantive change in the existing order. The governed were distanced and had a very vague perception about the functioning of the political system (Gruev,2015). The political system under Todor Zhivkov (the leader of the Communist party and of the People's Republic of Bulgaria between 4 March 1954 - 10 November 1989) was entirely subservient to the Soviet Union (USSR). The strong identification of Bulgaria with the USSR has been expressed by Lasota (1985: 31 quoted in Bankowicz,1994: 230) who asserts that Bulgaria and the Soviet Union share "the same lungs, the same circulatory system and the same heart". Hassner (1984: 311 quoted in Bakowicz, 1994: 230)

argues that Zhivkov "turned Bulgaria into an instrument of Soviet policy interest in the Balkans, and never missed an opportunity to emphasise its symbiosis with the Soviet Union".

Communist rule was conducive to a general passivity of society, and the latter facilitated the former. Thus, although discontent and opposition had been episodic during 50 years of Communist domination in Bulgaria, there were no risings sufficient to voice real dissent (Bankowicz, 1994). Civil society took its first steps in Bulgaria in 1989 with the protest on 14 December asking for the immediate cancellation of Article 1 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, which guaranteed the leading role of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Citizen organisations appeared around 1989 and were classified as "pseudo citizen" (Kirilova, 2001). What Kiriova suggests is that all citizen movements, regardless of their officially stated goal, were connected with political structures. Thus, if they were preparing for the change of the regime, they were representing a weaker oppositional stance than the opposition elite (Gill, 2000: 230-231)[43].

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[43] Zhivkov himself introduced the Soviet reform package of communism of 1985. While it did not get accepted by his followers, this step contributed to his own downfall. Bankowicz (1994:231) suggests that his party fellows "were not willing to face up to the consequences of far-reaching political and economic reform. As a result the old guard lost the initiative and paved the way for its own demise."

Unlike other CEE countries where individuals' self-mobilization in the movements of the 1980s demonstrated Havel's 'power of the powerless' and brought down authoritarian regimes, the demise of communism in Bulgaria was administrated from 'above'. In Bulgaria, which was "the most faithful (loyal) and obedient satellite of the USSR" (Baeva, 2010) resistance had been passive, driven by intellectuals via a limited number of publications and carried out through mutual agreement between Moscow and the Bulgarian government of that time. The fall of the communist regime, while inspired by the peaceful revolutions throughout Eastern Europe, was primarily executed from the top by communist party leaders with some assistance from intellectuals such as Prof. Zhelev (the leader of the Union of Democratic Forces, UDF) and organisations they created[44], rather than any wider popular support. Thus, Bulgaria's transition to democracy began not as a result of an internal evolution but rather as a part of an attempt by some of Zhivkov's colleagues to preserve their power at a time when the communist bloc was collapsing around them. The Bulgarian "gentle" (Kabakchieva, 2012) transition to democracy after 1989 had indirect influence (Baeva,

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[44] Such as the pro-environmental ecological movement Eko-Glasnot inspired by Solidarity trade union Podkrepa (Support)

2010). "It was slow to get off the ground, has been dominated by small and often unaccountable elites and has been subject to sudden reverses" as Dimitrov (2001: 35) puts it.

While communism significantly subdued the civic agency of Bulgarians, scholars also emphasise a pre-communist context of Bulgarian passivity and social and political estrangement. These lineaments are traced back to the centuries of Ottoman rule. In Bafoil's work (2010: 10), Bulgaria as a Balkan country falls into "the sultanistic" regimes that were characteristic of these countries. They displayed "agrarian societies, some weak infrastructure, lack of state autonomy, a lack of civil society and a very brutal regime". Kabakchieva (2015) also acknowledges that the Marxist-Leninst communist project in Bulgaria was implemented against the background of centuries of Ottoman rule and low socio-economic development. According to Bafoil, the reason behind the absence of political dynamics in agrarian societies lies in the repression and near-elimination of the bourgeoisie during Ottoman rule. Bafoil stresses that this class barely existed in Bulgaria before the 19th century. Under the Ottomans, Bulgarians had been confined to an almost exclusively rural system. The land-owing nobility were

Ottomans, and when the Turkish armies were defeated by the Russians in 1877, they left behind a country with hardly any powerful urban social groups.

Bafoil's argument, that the lack of a middle class as the central agency to channel the discontent of the mostly peasant population, while highly insightful, is to be taken with a pinch of salt. Ottoman rule is highly controversial still and has been approached through an emotional lens in Bulgarian historiography, being usually referred to as the "Ottoman yoke". Its impact on Bulgarian social constituency is a matter of broad and extremely sensitive debate, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet, two points can be made. First, that the population of Bulgaria was agrarian until very recently is not in dispute; it was not, however, the lack of a middle class that prevented its political organisation. It was, rather, the social and economic position of the middle class that prevented them from becoming actively involved in national movements directed against the Ottoman order. Kemal Karpat's (2002) extensive research on the Balkan states under Ottoman rule points out that "Bulgarians had developed during Ottoman rule the largest middle class, residing in towns". Karpat (2002: 427-438) argues that the Bulgarians were the

first to benefit from the urbanisation that occurred in the Ottoman state that started in the late 15th century. By year 1772, sultan Mustafa III allowed the establishment of Bulgarian guilds and granted them autonomy in administration. There is also enough evidence to demonstrate that by the end of 18th century there were established modern factories. Further, more than any other part of the Ottoman state, the Bulgarians benefited most from the reforms introduced by Mithat Pasha in banking, agriculture and industry. According to Karpat, in the 1890s Bulgaria was the most developed state in the Balkans, both with respect to state institutions and national consciousness. The latter was heavily influenced by Russia[45].

These developments under Ottomon rule facilitated the establishment of a national, in fact-one may say - quite nationalistic state among the Bulgarian population. Yet, the revolts of the peasants (in the 1820s) did not yield immediate political results because they lacked proper leadership on the part of the middle classes. In addition, at the time of the revolts and the creation of the Bulgarian state in 1878, the peasants were not nation conscious.

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[45] For instance, in 1856-1876 some 500 Bulgarian students received scholarships to study in Russia (Karpat, 2002).

They were not very aware of belonging to a national community[46], and the nascent Bulgarian intelligentsia during this period had strong difficulties enlisting the support of the middle class and of the peasantry towards its national goals. Gill (2000: 222)'s argument on pre-communist conditions for the role of civil society during communism also highlights the existence of a middle class. His account acknowledges the existence of a middle class in the country. It was weak, which according to him was partly because of its dispersed nature, and consisted of military men, small town shopkeepers, artisans and rich peasants. Therefore, the pattern of social relations and the nexus of interconnections necessary for the development of the middle class as a prerequisite for the appearance of civil society were in place. They did not cohere and solidify sufficiently due to the social developments advanced by communism.

With these brief remarks in mind, there is still strong analytical value in reverting to the Ottoman period to trace the roots of a Bulgarian

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[46] Most Balkan historians would question the truth of this statement, maintaining that the establishment of the sovereign Bulgarian state was the consequence of national movements, of the people's own efforts. Following Gellner (1983) and Anderson (1983) Bozeva - Abazi's PhD research (2003) sheds light on the creation of a Bulgarian national state whereby the peasantry needed to be educated (with the crucial role of the Christian Orthodox Church) and socialised in nationalism in order to comprehend what a national identity was. This was gradually achieved for purely pragmatic reasons, such as the defence of the state.

lack of political dynamic and civil activity. Toni Nikolov[47] (2014), in an article in *Capital* newspaper called "Our Independence", analyses social apathy and inertia and considers the interruption in the connection between the concepts of freedom and independence. According to him, the unwillingness to engage in social and political life was gradually, yet firmly instilled during the centuries of Ottoman rule and replaced by a feeling of dependency. In the Ottoman administrative system the Bulgarians were living under the status of 'raya' (slave). Nikolov quotes Sofronii Vrachanski (1739-1813)[48]: "we are raya, people always frightened like rabbits" and argues that is still very much relevant to contemporary Bulgarian society and state-society relations.

Nikolov's argument points to the slim difference between the concepts of freedom and independence. While freedom and independence overlap on the common premise of "non-slave" connotations, freedom from a political philosophy perspective can be

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[47] Toni Nikolov, philosopher in academic training, is the chief editor of the Culture Section of Capital, Bulgaria's most important newspaper.

[48] Saint Sophronius of Vratsa was a monk who had been consecrated bishop under the Ottoman rule (one of the few) and is famous for the hand-written copies of "Slav-Bulgarian history" (1776) written by another monk, Paisii Hilendarski (1722-73) and for his own writings "Life and Suffering of Sinful Sofronii". Both works had strong influence on forming of Bulgarian national consciousness.

seen dually as a negative and positive concept[49]. Broadly, as a negative concept, it entails the absence of external constraints; as Nikolov defines it, it is "de facto freedom". In its positive connotations, as defined by Berlin, it posits the individual as an executor of her proper will regardless of external constraints. From this position freedom is self-determination. It is a privilege that comes only when independent. Nikolov contends that independence is "realised or enacted freedom"

Nikolov's insights allow us to reflect upon the enactment of freedom and whether or not it is present in the Bulgarian space after 1989. If freedom has become a reality, how it is represented? Alternatively, if not, what are the impediments that we can identify? They are also guideposts that aid in understanding Dimitrova's (2002) assertion that Bulgaria represents a "democratic paradox" (Dimitrova, 2002: 206). Bulgaria is a country which has a long state tradition of democratic rule conjoined with its citizens' unwillingness to engage in political matters. Democratic principles were integrated in the first (Turnovo) constitution of the country after its independence in 1876; they were well established in the structure of the state and

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[49] Isaiah Berlin (1958/1969:328) in his "Two concepts of Liberty" distinguished between a 'negative' theory of liberty and a 'positive' one (in Heywood, 1992:30-31)

society, respectively. Also, as research on political culture in Bulgaria has shown, citizens express a general interest in political issues and support for democracy (Dimitrova, 2002; Slavov et al., 2010; OSI, 2011; BTI, 2016). Simultaneously however, as Dimitrova (2002: 206) argues, "although there is a commitment to both liberal and democratic principles, Bulgarian people are not up to the task of taking responsibility and power and thereby becoming the active citizenry that democracy requires". She further contends that there exists a "chronic lack of self-confidence" among Bulgarian citizens. In Nikolov's argument on freedom without independence, the syndrome of "freedom being given" is still pertaining 25 years after the collapse of communism. This type of freedom does not require independence. The latter presupposes action, efforts, a price to be paid. Bulgarian social consciousness still resonates with self-pity, with feeling poor or impoverished in comparison to other EU countries. It is a mentality that tends to ignore the efforts that have been dedicated to attaining wellbeing in wealthy European states.

These observations find resonance and gain further relevance when aligned with evidence suggesting that, the democratisation efforts of the EU had limited impact in creating active citizens. The outcome

has been depicted as one of "participation without engagement", and as one that continues to pervade the Bulgarian social fabric. It is summed up by the expression "Bulgarians beyond society", which was employed in recent sociological research (Slavov et. al., 2010) to account for current state of Bulgarian society. I elaborate on both in the next section.

4.3. The Social impact of Europeanisation

4.3.1. Participation without engagement

As a leading agent in the implementation of the EU's normative agenda, and the EU institutional actor closest to the candidate states, the EU Commission played an important role in the transposition of EU norms in these states. The promotion of civil society featured strongly in the Commission's rhetoric about the transformative potential of the EU for the Balkans. To this end, the Commission used a varied range of instruments in Bulgaria. These carried a strong focus on policy in its "insistence on full and unconditional implementation of the *acquis*" (O'Brennan, 2006: 94; Dimitrova,

2009; 2014; Toshkov, 2012) and had strong effects on economic development.

Europeanisation research suggests that the economic effects of integration have been more far-reaching than its political effects (Epstein and Jackoby, 2014) [50]. Research shows the successful application of the neo-liberal model in the transition to free market relations (Slavenkov, 2015), with economic liberalism as the only liberal discourse that has taken firm roots in the country (Dawson, 2014). In fact Dawson argues that the claim of consolidation of liberal democracy in Bulgaria is based on the prevalence of a "narrower, economically-loaded conception of liberalism that resonates beyond academia" (ibid: 135). Dawson (2014: 136) stresses the focus of Bulgarian scholars who argue in favour of democratic credentials as "grounded in an economically-loaded conception of liberalism, the pursuit of fiscal discipline and the continued alignment of policies with the West (not only the EU but also NATO)". These benchmarks reflect the economic and anti-communist character of the liberal movement in Bulgaria, while

[50] According to the World Bank (2017) report Bulgaria, although still the poorest of the EU member states with an income per capita only 47% of the EU average, i.e. the lowest in the EU, has been experiencing a decade of exceptionally high economic growth and improved living standards. Prospects for 2017 projected GDP to grow at 3.8%, with expectations to pick up to 4% in 2019.

ignoring the liberal democratic values such as liberty, equality, civic tolerance, inclusivity etc. Thus the Bulgarian public have been presented with some liberal ideas, which were the product of "the intellectual neglect of democratic pluralism" (Dawson, 2014: 170).

The sociologist Aleksei Pamporov (2016) in an interview for *Capital* newspaper expresses the stark opinion that social liberalism is missing in the Bulgarian political space. Dawson and Pamporov both conclude that the social platform necessary to support liberal democracy is still missing. Economic liberalism is accompanied by a strong nationalist narrative, which girds political competition. The conflation between a materialist discourse and a nationalist drive is seen as promoting strong challenges to the social system, such as ethnic exclusivism. Several recent international reports on political governance and democratic institutions in Bulgaria are also voicing concern over disquieting tendencies towards illiberalism. They point to the spread of racism and xenophobic rhetoric and practices, deterioration of the media environment (NiT, 2018; BTI, 2016, 2018), and widening social distances (Pamporov, 2009). In the Bulgarian public space, public intellectuals (such as the political journalist Karbovski, and the theatre director Morfov among others) involved in culture and media production have articulated the view

that democracy has not taken root yet. In the words of Karbovski (2018) "democracy is not working. There is a religion of human rights, but not regulations. We have no democracy, but exclusion of citizens. Democracy is excluding each of us."

Notwithstanding this, Bulgaria has a growing non-governmental sector including various organisations. Empirical data on civil society in Bulgaria (OSI, 2010; BTI, 2016,2018) stresses the mushrooming of civil society organisations (CVS) and the existence of an increasingly strong NGO sector in the country. Reports also notice that while, in 2018, Bulgaria has about 30,000 registered NGOs, only a small number of them (up to 1,000) are really active (BTI, 2018: 7). The Open Society Institute's (2011) first study of civil society after Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007 acknowledges its important role as a driver of reform in the pre-accession period. It also highlights that it was a "by-product of the financial, institutional and administrative assistance of foreign donors and international organisations (predominantly from the United States) since the beginning of the 1990s" (OSI, 2011: 14).

Among the conclusions of the OSI (2011) report, unambiguously called "Participation without Engagement" (OSI, 2011: 14) are: the persistence of low civic engagement in Bulgaria, a lack of willingness to get involved, and a low level of trust and 'encapsulation' within the family, limiting the potential for building a community. Citizens' low level of participation in CSOs is also among the main findings of the BTI 2016 report, which stresses the weakness and unsustainability of social links among citizens, as well as low trust in public institutions and in CSOs. These trends result in apathy among citizens concerning CSO activities. They resonate with Dawson's (2014: 133) claim that "the public sphere is Bulgaria is hard to locate in everyday life on the basis that conversations rarely involved the linking of one's personal concerns to the broader political context". Citizen apathy reverberates in the broader social body, observed by critical Bulgarian social media such as *Politico* (2018), which claims that "all social systems in the state have gone onto autopilot".

Kabakchieva's (2009) research on Bulgarians' understanding of national identity, while confirming the findings of these reports, sheds light on the above trends. The study, drawing on Benedict

Anderson (1983)'s definition of "nation"[51] inquires into the ethnic and political dimensions of Bulgarian national identity. Political identification is taken as a benchmark of EU citizenship against which the Bulgarians' identification with the values of the EU as a political community is questioned. The study establishes the specificities of Bulgarian political culture as: weak political and citizen participation (81.5% of all Bulgarians have not participated in any organisation, and 86.9% of them have not participated in any volunteer activities), very low interpersonal trust and trust in state institutions (80% of people report being suspicious of other people) and a very low level of horizontal solidarity (59% of Bulgarians report caring only about themselves). Thus, although people value and trust the EU, and want to be part of the supra-national space rather than merely their own, national identification is somehow beyond the consciousness of belonging to a political community. Following Habermas (1999), Kabakchieva asserts political identification as one of the key achievements of European modernity and describes it as open and active. It is open because by presumption all people are equal in dignity and in front of the law,

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[51] Anderson (1983:16) defines nation as collectively imagined and as interlacing cultural and political elements. The cultural identification in national identity can be thought of in ethnic terms, hence it is consolidating around common myths of genesis, history. Nation is also "a deep horizontal comradeship", it is sovereign, i.e. political. The markers of belonging to political community are citizenship as identification with the state and its norms and institutions.

with equal duties and rights. It is active because it requires the actual practice of democratic liberties. On these grounds, Kabakchieva contends the absence of civic consciousness and citizen identity among Bulgarians. EU membership is regarded with hopes for the development of civic culture. For Znepolski (2015: 57), in order for the EU to have an impact the transition that needs to take place is in the Bulgarian mindset. This civilizational aspect of democratisation requires "interiorization of the temporality of the changes". The subjective changes consist in realising that "it is us who need to enact the transition and thus to overcome the predominant understanding of the transition as something that is happening to us". This hasn't happened yet.

There are also scholars who demonstrate the constraints of the domestic context for integration into the EU at a structural level. For instance, Kurjelovski's (2011) study stresses the persistence of communist organisational culture in institutional behaviour and its impact on the process of integration into the EU. Kurjelovski's study of the application of the principle of partnership identifies the following informal constraints during the country's accession and integration into the EU: 'encapsulation of the institutional

structures'; 'feudalisation of the directorates'; 'a lack of horizontal linkages and communication in the administration and personalized bureaucracy; 'a lack of taking responsibility'; 'problems with professionalism'; 'a lack of institutional memory and continuity'; 'a lack of predictability' (Dimitrov, 2004; Dimitrov, Danchev & Karamfilova, 2008). Other factors include over-centralisation of policy and decision making; a lack of predictability of the policy process; a formalistic approach to CSO-government partnership (i.e., lack of civil society actors and sustainable civil society-government dialogue that leaves the policy process dependent on the 'good will' of the administration (Bulgarian Centre for Non-profit Law (BCNL), 2009). Based on this account of domestic constraints, Kurjelovski concludes that instead of transformation, the institutions and the respective procedures were merely mimicking change and predominantly applying requirements only formally.

EU conditionality after accession seems to be even less transformative and more conditioned by domestic factors. The limited and temporal influence of the EU, and the crucial role of internal actors for EU impact has also been argued by Spasova and Tomini (2013). In their research on the evolution of institutions of

social dialogue and actors' perceptions in Bulgaria within the context of Europeanisation, they conclude that EU conditionality became the main source of change in the area of social dialogue at the national level through technical assistance and disseminations of ideas and 'best practice', but the role of the EU was limited to the time of negotiations. This view was presented in chapter III with Mungiu-Pippidi (2007)'s expression about the 'anaesthetic' properties of EU conditionality. Also, in the context of the post-accession period in Bulgaria, outlined in Chapter I, the mimicking in implementing EU rules resulted in what scholars refer to as the "transposition–implementation gap". Dimitrova and Steunenberg (2013) emphasised the difference between the official transposition of policies and the actual implementation in Bulgaria. In their analysis on the implementation of EU rules regarding cultural heritage in Bulgaria, the authors found that different implementation outcomes stemmed from the same policy. They explain this 'gap" with the broad discretion the implementing actors have. Accordingly, implementing players have followed their normative orientations to apply different policies as if they live in "parallel universes" of implementation. The observed discrepancies point to problems in governance, and to the conclusion that Europeanisation and the

transformations it is supposed to engender are isolated changes (Lessenski, 2012). The Balkan countries are still grappling with implementing changes in governance and remain at the bottom of the European Catch-Up Index (OSI, 2013). The Catch-Up Index was initially designed to capture the progress of the EU10 countries – the EU members from Central and Eastern Europe – in catching up with the rest of the EU by measuring their overall performance across four categories: Economy, Quality of Life, Democracy and Governance. Bulgaria and Romania are singled out in the OSI (2013) report as the "laggards" of the newcomer groups and have problems across the board in nearly every indicator of the index.

4.3.2. "Bulgarians beyond Society"

Sociological accounts complement the institutionalist analysis. They establish poverty and deprivation as the main reason behind the limited impact of Europeanisation. Although the OSI 2015 survey demonstrates that 75% of Bulgarians live above the poverty line[52], sociologists identify poverty as "the greatest social problem in Bulgaria" (Bojadjieva and Kabakchieva, 2015: 8). Poverty is

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[52] The line of poverty is considered a monthly income of BGN 240 (≈€120) calculated as the median of 60% of the income.

widespread and "diffuse." Its ubiquity transforms poverty "from an individual or social group trait into a national trait" (Zhelyazkova, 1997: 34). The prevalent sociological understanding of poverty is that it is not about the inability to possess one thing or another, but is "a way of life … manifested by the inability to satisfy the basic needs of life" (Kostov et al, 1993: 2; Kabakchieva et al., 2002; Katsarski, 2011)

The conclusion regarding the absence of a civic consciousness in Bulgaria is analysed as a function of the absence of a propitious social base on which to evolve. Poverty contributes to rising social inequality which sociologists have termed "Bulgarian exceptionality". In the multiple studies done by Tilkidjiev in 1993 and 1994 on people's self-assessment through open-ended interviews and national surveys, sociologists have observed that poverty/wealth has become the main demarcation line on social stratification. There has been "a very defined shift" in the perception of cleavages, whereby wealth/poverty becomes the key divide. It supersedes social and professional differentiation. These results have been confirmed in subsequent studies in 2002, 2004 and 2007.

The deepening of social stratification is also documented in the OSI 2015 report.

Growing income disparities have led to growing social divisions. The influence of poverty on social structuration is multidimensional. Sociological studies have demonstrated the growing influence of occupation, ethnicity, gender, and education on inequality. In particular, they highlighted the strong relationship between ethnicity and inequality. In research done for OSI, Akekesi Pamporov (2009), measuring the social distances in Bulgarian society, shows the particularly strong social distance among ethnic groups. The most vulnerable ethnic group is undoubtedly the Roma, who are also subjected to spatial (physical) distancing or ghettoization. They are followed by new immigrants from Africa, Southeast Asia and the Muslim countries[53]. The "deep" social distances are undermined by significant ethnic, religious and racial prejudices by the majority of the Bulgarian population against Roma, Muslim and black immigrants respectively. The existence of prejudices entails a lack of solidarity with the vulnerable groups and leads to social exclusion.

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[53] Pamporov (2009) argues that migration to Bulgaria is a social fact, which is a trend likely to increase in the future. According to him, as a member of the EU, Bulgaria- in line with other EU countries-has become an attractive destination for labour immigrants from the Third World and is experiencing a growing number of asylum seekers. The National Statist Institute's (NSI) 2017 data on migration captures these tendencies. The data shows an internal legal immigration of 25,597 people into the country and an external migration of 31,586 people.

The analysis concludes that xenophobic tendencies have a strong economic foundation.

Widening social distances are not observable solely on ethnic grounds. Sociologists have coined the expression "Bulgarians beyond society" in order to account for an atomised and individualised society suffering from a lack of social solidarity. This is a society where individuals mistrust each other, consider their compatriots as a potential threat and overtly state that each person is mainly and solely concerned for her own good. Altruism is thus largely absent among Bulgarians. The data in the Slavov et al. (2010) study shows that almost 84% of the people interviewed think that "above all, individuals care only about themselves." "Bulgarians beyond society" is impregnated with the potential for the total collapse of social relations due to "an inability to create a community because of the lack of sustainable social connections among individuals, as well as the limitation of social contact to the sphere of family and friends" (Slavov, 2012 quoted in Bezev, 2014).

Against this background, sociologists have addressed the puzzling question of why people don't get organised to protest against the

social condition of pervading poverty. Kabakchieva, in earlier research (2009) suggests that existing "closed individualism" and a lack of empathy towards the 'other' are perhaps explicable by the ordinary citizen's hostile perception towards their social milieu. Moreover, poverty instils powerlessness. It prevents participation as a response to social injustices. Poverty leads to the shrinking of social networks, reducing them to the closed circles of relatives and neighbours. This anthropological argument, developed by Iliya Iliev, has been adopted by Ivan Krastev (2002) as the explanation for the lack of inclination to protest by "ordinary" citizens, even though they are the losers of the transition. In Bulgaria, argued Krastev, "social shrinking assumes the character of falling out of society in general". The lack of social networks makes collective action and political protest impossible. If people do protest, they are likely to do so "through criminal forms of action, and/or by voting for the opposition – whoever that opposition is". Further, the sharp polarisation between the extremely rich and extremely poor measured by sociologists is well established in the public consciousness. This feeling of despair expressed by the dichotomy between "rich corrupt politicians" and "poor ordinary people" has detrimental consequences for collective action. As Stoychev explains

it, this dynamic "creates an acute sense of sensibility preventing collective solidarity or a willingness to support the protests of others. If a particular group goes on strike, the majority of the population appears convinced that if that group wins higher pay, this will be at the cost of others" (Stoychev, 2008: 232-236). Consequently, the sharp polarisation prevents the constitution of a middle class (Bezev, 2014). Penchev's (2013) measuring of middle-class income shows the thin line between Bulgarians living with low income (43.4%) and the middle class (46,9%); those living with a high income constitute 9.7%. the author argues that the close percentage between low income and middle income fosters exclusion and thereby hampers the exercise of civic and political rights.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the cultural tropes of Europeanization conveyed by the domestic context of Bulgaria. The discussion examined civil society as realised in the Bulgarian socio–political context. The historical overview presented a social environment in which the genealogy of social relations for the development of the

middle class as a prerequisite for civil society could not prosper. This was mainly due to communist social engineering. Bulgaria, like the rest of the CEE countries, exhibited a tenuous civil society characterised by weak social ties and a low level of citizen participation. Unlike peer states, however, Bulgarian civil society did not manifest political mobilization to bring down the communist régime. The strong grip of Communism in Bulgaria de-mobilized the political element of citizens interaction and entailed the withdrawal of citizens in the private domain. The lingering of the Ottoman legacy behind the deficit of 'citizen politics' can be traced in the instillment of dependency in Bulgarian civic consciousness. Burdened with the status of a 'slave mentality' during the centuries of Ottoman rule, Bulgarians internalised a fatalistic passivity, and thence an inability and incapacity to enact autonomy.

Contemporary post-communist Bulgarian society, while democratic in form, still lacks a social constituency. The ideational and financial contribution of the EU Commission has resulted in the development of a strong NGO sector. This proliferation of organisations is conjunct with low citizen participation in voluntary associations and a low level of trust among citizens, expressed by the phrase "participation

without engagement". The situation is complicated, or rather enabled, by the ubiquitous poverty of the ordinary Bulgarian citizen. Poverty is disabling, as it leads to polarisation and social exclusion. It is summed up by the formulation "Bulgarians beyond society".

Approaching democratisation as a normative project and its implementation in the specific context of Bulgaria allows us to draw the following conclusion. The process is taking shape as a hybridisation between overlapping layers of cultural strata[54]. The norms to be integrated in the domestic social space are inevitably influenced or transposed through the prism of the communist and Ottoman legacies, which have both imprinted a cultural texture into the fabric of Bulgarian social consciousness. This means that democratic impact is happening as overlapping diachronic modernising projects. It thus requires a dismissal of its implementation as *ipso facto, i.e.* or following a model, but rather considering of theoretical as well as practical *sui generis* mode of democratisation.

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[54] I owe the idea of hybridity to Kabakchieva's (2016) thesis on hybridity of Bulgarian society. She develops her sociological analysis on post-communism by drawing parallels between colonialism and communism as diversifications of the Enlightenment project. They were meant to alter the societies in which they were deployed as realisations of different substances incorporated in the European Enlightenment. Thus, colonialism carried the incumbent mission of civilising, whereas communism was cast in modernising terms.

Based on the above points, this project proposes to delve into the EU impact on civil society development by focusing on Bulgarian civic initiatives. It addresses the social vacuum in the Commission's approach to civil society. The institutional focus of the Commission could not reach the ordinary citizen because it was cast in discursive tropes that did not resonate with the Bulgarian social milieu. Endeavours to set up NGOs as spaces of deliberating citizenry presupposed already politically-conscious individuals. In Bulgaria, it is posited that the constitution of civility as paving the way to the politically active citizen needs to be highlighted. Hence the question of sociality coming to the fore. Civic initiatives are then regarded as nodes of social relations and interrogated in terms of the change that social interaction enables. Together with being constitutive, as social practices, they are also constituted by virtue of the symbolic nature of the social world. This reflexive causality is to be explored in the chapters that follow. It starts off by laying down the ontological and epistemological premises of discourse as the research framework. Chapter VI then extends the theoretical premises of discourse to Europeanisation. Subsequently, the theoretical assumptions will be allied with the empirical chapters and the analysis of data.

Chapter V: Discourse as Constituted and Constitutive of the Social World

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework around which the study is organised. It outlines the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research vested in the concept of discourse that shapes the research design; it presents its bias, logic and criteria (Crotty, 1998: 66). It thus addresses the question of social theory or the second order question as suggested by Alexander Wendt (1995) implied in the inquiry. The propositions about the nature of the social world and the dynamics through which it can be known are of paramount importance for studying the process of international politics and for scrutinising their connection to social phenomena.

Approaching Europeanization sociologically allows for a 'kaleidoscopic' view of the process. Although predominantly constructivist in their philosophical assumptions, sociological approaches are also heterogeneous in that they allow for multiple theoretical explanations, including critical and post-positivist epistemologies (Saurugger, 2009). Consequently, within each of them a different lens on the process will emerge. The discussion that follows then aims to refine the sociological focus of Europeanization

through the prism of discourse as conceptualized within political discourse theory (PDT). The philosophical premises embedded in discourse provide a lens to look at and study the phenomena of social reality. To justify the methodological and analytical choices involved in the study, questions of ontology and epistemology are also explored[55].

5.1. Discourse within Interpretative Hermeneutics

5.1.1. The common grounds of discourse

This section focuses on the common grounds of discourse. The notion of discourse is 'marked by lack of clear and simple meaning' as its meaning varies across disciplines, users and contexts" (Mills,2004: 7). Nevertheless, there are points of convergence among the different definitions of discourse, which centre on the ontological and epistemological premises of interpretivism, to which they subscribe. The discussion then focuses on the relativist ontology and the constructivist epistemology of philosophical interpretivism

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[55] Connolly (2008 in Griggs and Howarth, 2011:224) argues that every interpretation in political analysis is an 'ontopolitical interpretation', it not only presupposes a particular (and contestable) ontological perspective, it also involves the projection of certain ideals into our objects of investigation.

implied in the notion. The aim is to explore the first line of inquiry, which drives the research question, and hence to explain human experience (social action) as constituted by and constitutive of the social world. Interpretivism considers both, human agency and the social world as constituted in meaning.

Implicit in discourse is the interpretivist position of social reality as emerging as structures of ideas. As a philosophical premise, interpretivism rejects the positivist claim of an objective reality that can be grasped by rational human thought. Instead, it posits a nominalist status to social phenomena as a "product of names, concepts labels, etc. having no independent existence only as names" (Blaike, 2007: 13-17). Interpretivism as a theoretical perspective (Crotty, 1998: 6), paradigm (Blaike, 2007: 12) or model (Silverman, 2010: 103) has its roots in the work of Max Weber and his concerns with *Verstehen* (understanding) of social life[56] (Crotty, 1998: 67). It emphasizes meaningful social action, "socially constructed meaning and value relativism" (Neuman, 2011: 87). At the kernel of interpretivism is the claim that there are fundamental differences between natural and social phenomena. As Wendt (1999) phrases it,

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[56] It is also associated with the work of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833- 1911) and the neo-Kantian philosophers Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936) in Sarantakos (2005: 40).

humankinds are different from natural kinds. The difference is that humans (unlike things in nature) have culture and live in a world of the shared interpretation. Interpretivism upholds this vision of human subjects as self-conscious agents, capable of cognition and of acting agentively from it. Consequently, they engage in activities creatively and intentionally, to which they attach meaning derived from their values, beliefs, ideas, motives etc. This view departs from the conception of human subjectivity within the Newtonian mechanical model, according to which all action can be said to be causal in nature and that cases can be exhaustively traced to forces acting externally upon "actors" (Crotty,1998: 28). Further, within interpretivism, discourse adheres to the hermeneutical tradition cleaved to by thinkers such as Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur who assert Man's general Being-in-the-world as an agent of language (Kearney, 1991: 277 in Crotty, 1998: 87)[57]. The central point of this approach is about how understanding is achieved rather than what understanding entails. Hermeneutics stresses human experience as mediated through language. In focusing on text interpretation, which includes both grammatical as well as

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[57] Hermeneutics' basic premises can be expressed in Ricoeur's famous phrase 'the symbol gives rise to thought' meaning that "the symbols of myth, religion, art and ideology carry messages which constitute our situations, events, practices and meanings in language and may be uncovered by philosophical interpretation (Crotty,1998: 87-88).

psychological interpretation, the purpose is to make authors' intentions and meanings explicit (Sarantakos, 2005).

These views on human nature and social phenomena bear on the organisation of scientific episteme as embraced by social constructionism (Blaike, 2007). In contending the constructed nature of social reality, constructivist premises challenge the philosophical view known as "foundationalism". The latter, a dominant position on knowledge in the social sciences until the nineteenth century, implies the existence of existential truths, which ground our systems of knowledge (Hughes & Sharrock,1997; Gergen, 2001). Constructivism as deployed by Berger and Luckmann in their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) entails the rejection of knowledge as built upon a sound foundation; they argue that there are no permanent, unvarying criteria for proposing a given knowledge to be regarded as truth, as there are no absolute truths. Hence, they are anti-foundationalist.

Discourse resonates with the social constructivist anti-foundationalist presumption of social reality as constituted by the meanings and interpretations of social actors. Associated with

language as a process of signification (Saussure, 1915; Barthes, 1964) discourse points to investigations of meaning production. This common point between approaches to discourse is emphasized by Newman (2007) who emphasizes that "what all discursive approaches share ... is an overriding concern with questions of meaning and the centrality attributed to subjects in the construction and apprehension of meaning" (Newman 2007: 33). Nonetheless, implicit in discourse is the structural linguistic differentiation between speech and language[58], and the extension of language to the wider social world (Barthes,1972; Searle, 1995), which allows for many different definitions and hence, different uses of the concept.

5.2.2. The various worlds of discourse

Within the premises of interpretivism, discourse assumes different definitions[59]. Discourse is a fluid term. It designates a concept which

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[58] Saussure's in his Course on General Linguistics (1916) establishes the difference between speech (parole) and language (langue). Barthes extends this distinction to its social aspect: he argues "in contrast to the language, which is both an institution and a system, speech is essentially an individual act of selection and actualization ". Speech then covers the purely individual part of language (in Elliott, 1999: 48)

[59] Similarly, discourse assumes different connotations within positivist (empiricist) and realist accounts. The former view discourses as "frames" or "cognitive schemata" (McAdam et al,1996: 6 in Howarth,2000:3) which are "instrumental devices that can foster common perceptions and understanding for specific purposes"; the latter see discourse as part of a social ontology consisting of independently existing objects with "inherent properties and intrinsic causal powers". Discourses are, therefore, viewed as "particular objects with their own properties and powers. While for the empiricist the task of discourse analysis is "to measure how effective they (discourses) are to bring about certain ends (Snow and Benford, 1988), for the realist analysing

covers concerns about the production and communication of meaning as well as questions about the constitution and reproduction of the wider social world. Howarth (2000: 2) summarizes this wide spectrum of meanings of discourse: "for some, discourse is a very narrow enterprise that concentrates on a single utterance, or at most a conversation between two people, while others see it as synonymous with the entire social system, in which discourse literally constitutes the social and the political world." A specific definition of discourse within this broad scope is tightly connected with the particular theoretical stance within which it is proposed. As Connolly stresses "as with other complex and contested concepts in the social sciences, the meaning, scope and application of discourse is relative to the different theoretical systems in which it is embedded (Connolly, 1993: 10-44 in Howarth, 2000: 3). Mills (2004: 6) suggests "discourse cannot be pinned down to one meaning, since it has had a complex history and it is used in a range of different ways by different theorists, and sometimes even by the same theorist". Discourse then, is a concept intrinsically connected with that of meaning, and its definitions vary in accordance with the different theoretical interpretations of meaning. Three phases can be

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discourse involves placing them in relation to other social objects, such as the state, economy, etc. in order to reveal the causal connection. Thus they aim to "unravel the 'conceptual elisions and confusions by which language enjoys its power' "(Parker, 1992:28 in Howarth, 2000:3).

presented in the genealogy of discourse theory (Torfing, 1999; Howarth, 2000).

Discourse is first and foremost associated with language in use and the analysis of "talk and text in context" (van Dijk, 1977: 3 in Howarth, 2000: 6). The linguistic focus of discourse is a rather narrow view construed by sociolinguistics (Downes, 1984). It is defined as a textual unit that is larger than a sentence and focuses on the semantic aspects of spoken and written language. Within this theoretical focus which draws on ethnomethodology "discourse can be a *contingent* product of participants in *ordinary* conversation; or it can be *designed* product of a form of talk-in-interaction, which is some systematic *variant* or *transformation* of ordinary conversation" Schegloff (2002: 231). Schegloff's definition points to the use of discourse as conversation analysis in the organisation of linguistic interaction, e.g., the rules governing initiation and conclusion of conversations, turn taking, choice and change of topics, and the sequence of sentence. Analytical philosophers such as Austin (1975) and Searle (1969) regard language as speech acts. The speech act theorist focuses on the fact that by saying something we are actually doing something. They stress the performative function of language

indicating that "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action"[60] (Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 13).

The next generation of discourse theory (Torfing, 2005; Howarth, 2000) emphasized the social aspect of language. Roland Barthes was a foremost exponent of this view. It is further extended to carry ideological connotations implicated in Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) and theoretically developed by Michael Foucault (1972).

Barthes (1957/1972) introduced the ideological connotations of language. His work builds on the distinction between language and speech conceptualized by Saussure and elaborates on the cultural aspect of language developed in detail by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1960). The investigations of myth, which Lévi-Strauss did, suggested the existence of a prototype deep structure that lies behind the various mythical narratives that are found at the surface of social life. In particular, Levi-Strauss' structuralist method revealed that cultural forms of social life involved the use of specific cultural codes (Scott, 2012: 207). The insight into systems of signs

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[60] The example Austin gives is this of marriage: "when I say, before the registrar of the altar 'I do', I am not reporting a marriage: I am indulging in it (Austin, 1962 in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 56)

whose relations structure human activities is further developed in Barthes' (1972: 105 in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 108) argument about myth as a type of speech. In his analysis of the sign (the word) Barthes distinguished between the first level of signification, i.e., denotation, when the word refers to something concrete (the signifier), and a second level of signification, i.e., connotation, when the word gains associative or symbolic meaning. The signs (words) therefore are made of signifiers (meaningful forms) and signified (things referred to). The myth resides in the process of the second signification (connotation) when "signs are becoming signifiers for other signifieds" (Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 46-47).

Language for Barthes then is primarily a social institution and at one and the same time a system of values. It is the social part of language, "which the individual cannot by himself create or modify; it is essentially a collective contract which one must accept in its entirety if one wishes to communicate … it is a system of contractual values" (Barthes in Elliott, 1999: 48). Thus "as a social institution, it is by no means an act, and it is not subject to any premediation". The semiotic approach outlined above is Barthes' contribution to understanding what society reveals about itself through the signs it produces. Social

life for Barthes is "a complex system of signs, a relation of relations" (Barthes in Elliott, 1999: 49).

This extension of language to society and its ideological dimensions has been most consistently developed in the work of Fairclough's (1989) critical discourse analysis (CDA)[61]. Discourse is not restricted to spoken and written language but is defined as "an empirical collection of practices that qualify as discursive insofar as they contain a semiotic element" (Torfing,2005: 7). It includes all kinds of linguistically mediated practices in terms of speech, writing, images and gestures that social actors draw upon in their production and interpretation of meaning. Fairclough uses Giddens' structuration theory - the theme of 'duality of social structure and human agency' - to account for the mutually constituting relationship between discourses and the social system in which they function.

Moreover, the emphasis on linguistic practice that CDA stresses is linked with ideological assumptions of language and their functioning to establish power relations through discourse (Wodak, 2001). This focus on discourse as social practices and their

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[61] CDA integrated of range of sociological and philosophical positions, such as Gramsci, Bakhtin, Althusser, Foucault, Giddens and Habermas (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1996; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). In the words of Wodak (2001: 9) critical means "having distance to the data, embedding the data in the social, taking a political stance explicitly, a focus on self-reflexion as scholars doing research"

ideological connotations is inspired by the post-Marxist tradition of viewing discourses "as ideological systems of meaning that obfuscate and naturalize uneven distributions of power and resources" (Howarth, 2000: 4). Althusser's explanation of discourses with respect to ideological state apparatuses- as economic and political processes permeating social formations has been furthered by Foucault's (1985) concerns about the rules governing the production of statements and practices. Foucault, who rejected Althusser's materialist determinism,[62] developed a genealogical method for discourse, as a way to "dig deeper and to uncover the structures that underline discourse and to discover the ways in which one discourse gives way to another" (Scott, 2012: 210). Thus against empiricist, realist and Marxist conceptions in which "the nature of the objective world determines the character and veracity of discourse, Foucault argues that certain discursive rules enable subjects to produce objects, statements, concepts and strategies, which together constitute discourses" (Howarth, 2000: 7). For Foucault, practices are *discursive* in the sense that they are shaped by discursive rules of

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[62] Althusser moved away from the idea of a holistic, monolithic view of society, according to which "societies were seen as structured by integrated systems of signs that give them unity" (as in Levi-Strauss, but also Parsons' structural functionalism). He also argued that Marxism carried a similar view and hence had a strong tendency towards essentialism. Instead he recognized the existence of the ideological level as de-centered, comprising a diversity of agencies and organisation. Nevertheless he retained the functional explanation of ideological state apparatuses. (Scott, 2012:209)

formation that vary in time. In addition, discursive practices are said to be ideological as long as they contribute to the naturalization of contingently constructed meanings.

Foucault's position on the discursive nature of social practices is further developed by a third intellectual current of discourse. Political Discourse Theory (PDT) extends the notion of discourse to cover all social phenomena. Discourse in this tradition no longer refers to a particular part of the overall social system, but it is taken to be coterminous with the social. This perspective reflects the cross-disciplinary attempt of PDT to integrate central insights from linguistics and hermeneutics with key ideas from social and political science. It draws on resources from post–Marxism, post structuralism, neo-pragmatism, rhetoric and post analytical philosophy, among others (Torfing, 1999; 2005: 12). This is the understanding of discourse that the present study adopts. The discussion that follows addresses the philosophical premises of discourse within PDT with the aim of clarifying the claim of discourse as being constitutive of the social world, and to show what the implications are for studying this social world.

5.2. Discourse as Language games: the social world as discursive

5.2.1. In search of meaning: the differential logic of language

Within the political discourse theory approach, discourse is understood broadly as that which Wittgenstein (1953) calls 'language games'[63]. Glyson et al. (2009: 7) assert that "in a microcosmic form, what Wittgenstein calls a 'language game' more or less corresponds to what we call a 'discourse' or a 'discursive structure'. This abstract notion includes Laclau and Mouffe (1988)'s contribution to the theoretization of discourse as "a differential ensemble of signifying sequences in which meaning is negotiated" (Glyson et al, 2009: 85) and Derrida's (1978) view of discourse as 'a system of differences' whose elements are in a state of constant shifting relations. Central to this definition is the post-structuralist focus on language[64] and the attempt to conceptualize social and

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[63] According to Schatzki (1996: 51-52) language games refers to Wittgenstein's (1953) idea about the lack of rules governing language use. Schatzki states that "the fact that language use lacks 'cognitive' tracks provides one interpretation of Wittgenstein assertion that "the new (spontaneous, 'specific') is a language game". Schatzki sheds light on Wittgenstein's idea by explaining that "mastering a language is not a matter of following rules and meanings but of being able to go on using worlds intelligibly (i.e. making sense) to others ... Language use is a reaction to the world not pinned down by rules, meanings, past usages, ideas or anything else." This claim reflects a perspective of Wittgenstein's philosophy, whereby "all human action and thought is underwritten by a repertoire of non-cognitive (in the sense of pre-determined) abilities to carry out bodily performances. It is thus what we do, how we go on that determines the rule, not vice versa.

[64] The term post structuralism does not have a fixed meaning, and is generally applied to a range of theoretical positions developed in and from the work of Derrida (1973, 1976), Lacan (1977), Kristeva (1974, 1981, 1986), Althusser (1971) and Foucault (1978, 1981, 1986*).*

political meaning through language (Weedon, 2001; Newman, 2005; 2007). The understanding of discourse is then imbricated with language as the ultimate site of the construction and contestation of meaning. Further, the principle of 'meaning is use' as developed by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* (I, sec. 43) applies to discourse as spatio-temporal phenomenon, wherein the meanings of words arises in their use. This is explicitly stated by Newman (2007) who says that "post structuralism addresses discourse from the standpoint of meaning"**.**

The post-structural 'ludic' dimension of discourse, referred to as such by Denizin and Lincoln (2013), is taken up by Howarth and Torfing (2005: 4):

"*Meaning itself is necessary since without the ability to confer meaning on social phenomena and political events we would not be able to orient ourselves and act upon our orientations. However, at the same time, meaning is also impossible because it is constructed within relational ensembles that are subject to endless displacements and constant disruptions*"

The post-structural focus on language and the investigation of meaning draws attention to two important claims informing the definition of discourse as language games. These are firstly the relational nature of language and second the impossibility of complete closure of meaning.

Within post structuralism, discourse is homologous with the notion of language in the linguistic tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure (1967). Rather than seeing language as simply expressive, transparent, a vehicle for communication or as a form of representation, poststructuralists saw language as a system with its own rules and constraints, and with its own determining effect on the way that individuals think and express themselves. Poststructuralist ideas on language follow from structuralism via the latter's emphasis on the differential logic of language. Saussure saw language as "a system of signs that expressed ideas" (Saussure, 1916/1967). Meaning in Saussurean linguistics is not located in the objects themselves, but its relations. Meaning "depends on relations between different elements of a system" (Howarth, 2000: 10); and particularly as an effect of the conceptual opposition of binary pairs.

Language is perceived as a system of signifiers in which the identity of each element depends on its differences with others. Thus 'father' gains meaning through differentiation with mother, or speech via writing. Difference therefore is a central organising concept of meaning formation. Difference discloses the importance of an external element for determining identity and thus precludes structuralism grounding the experience in an objective, 'intelligible' substance or 'reality' that is not internal to it (Newman, 2007). Reflected in the poststructuralist definition of discourse is this idea of structuralism that signs ultimately derive their meaning not through their relation to reality but through the internal relations within the network of signs.

In addition, while recognizing the validity of the structuralist semiological principle of difference for meaning construction, post-structuralists part company with structuralism on the determining role of structure. Difference for structuralism operates with a strong emphasis on structure. It is premised on the existence of a centre that organises the metaphysical oppositions relying on assumptions of *presence.* Presence as a philosophical category refers to the search for foundations, principles or logos as the origin of truth and is

associated with Aristotle's metaphysics (Howarth, 2000: 41).
Difference then, while essential for the meaning of each element in
the binary pair, is associated with longing for a centre
(logocentrism).

Post structuralism problematizes structure because "the concept of
structure involves bracketing its figurative connotation of a self-
contained space unified by a fixed centre" (Torfing,1999: 85). Post
structuralism's anti-authoritarian spirit (Gashe, 1986) suggests the
centre is problematic for it spawns binary opposites, with one term
central and the other marginal. It thus establishes a hierarchical
relationship between the two elements where the first term is more
highly valued than the second and conveys an implicit value
judgment. Furthermore, centres want to fix, or freeze the play of
binary opposites. For example, the opposition Man/Woman is just
one binary opposite. In this way structure in structuralism assumes
totalizing and determining qualities, which for poststructuralists
constituted a lapse into the essentialisation of structure.

Derrida (1978, 1981, 1982) reversed the authoritarian structure of
binary oppositions through the exercise of deconstruction and

argued that the strategy of deconstruction traces a path of

undecidability[65] between the two positions, disrupting the identities

of both terms. Without the possibility of difference, says Derrida

(1974: 143) "the desire of presence as such would not find its

breathing space." Difference, however, does not have a stable or

autonomous identity, nor is it governed by an ordering principle or

central authority. Instead, it is characterized by its very inability to

constitute an identity, to inhabit a stable place. As Derrida says:

"there is no essence of the difference; not only can it not allow itself

to be taken up into as such of its name or its appearing, but it

threatens the authority of the as such in general, the thing's presence

in its essence" (Derrida, 1973: 158). The point of Derrida's

deconstruction of structure as a closed and centered totality is not to

reverse the established order in order to create a new one, as

difference would become an identity and absence a new presence.

The point is rather to decentre, i.e., to expose the contradictions of

the logocentric[66] way of thinking, which led "to closure of the

philosophical discourse though suppressing the play of meaning by a

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[65] Rather than uncertainty or chaos, undecidability, which penetrates every discourse involves a determined oscillation between pragmatically determined possibilities" (Torfing, 1999: 64; 95-96)

[66] Logocentrism refers to the foundationalist logic of western thought, which has been dominated by the search for a universalizing principle of order – the 'logos' – which requires an 'origin'. Derrida's work is concerned with pointing out certain contradictions within this logocentric way of thinking (Delanty, 1999:103).

privileged centre which is beyond play" (Derrida, 1978: 278). For example, in the speech- writing binary, speech claims to be self-present, i.e., that it is immediate and authentic to itself, whereas writing is seen as that which diminishes its presence. Newman observes how Derrida shows that Plato cannot represent speech except through the metaphor of writing: "it is not any less remarkable here than the so-called living discourse should suddenly be described by a metaphor borrowed from the order of the very thing one is trying to exclude from it" (Derrida, 1982: 148 in Newman, 2005: 85). Derrida thus emphasizes the logic of supplementarity between the two elements, which considers their mutual interdependence. Difference *qua* relationality indicates the impossibility of complete closure of meaning. Due to the absence of a transcendental centre the play of signification is extended infinitely[67].

This way - in building on the hermeneutical tradition of inquiry, and on the structuralist tradition of thought - post-structuralism arrives at the broader notion of discourse expressed 'as language games'. In

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[67] This is further explained with Derrida's concept of iterability. The idea is that language both presupposes the repeatability and alterability of signs. "The logic of iterability implies neither the pure repetition of meaning, which could render us insensitive to the differences of particular contexts, nor pure alteration, which would undermine the recognition of the sign in different situations in which it is articulated" (Howarth, 2000: 41)

highlighting the relational logic of language, it exposes the fact that signs derive their meaning within network of signs, and not from reality. Conjointly, through identifying the weakness of structuralist logic, post-structuralism points out the impossibility of closure of meaning by decentring the concept of structure. Moreover, these reflections are extended to social life. The analogy between the linguistic and social system, as premised on the relational nature of meaning formation (and identity), is discussed in the next section.

5.2.2. Difference as the Ontological Commitment of Post structuralism

The linguistic engagement of poststructuralists with structure were driven by philosophical inquiries about the logocentric logic that underpins the category. Deconstruction was an attempt to challenge the determinism and essentialist impulses that structure creates. In asserting difference, logocentric calls for an ultimate centre capable of determining and ultimately fixing social meaning and identities within a stable and totalizing structure, were counteracted. This enabled the understanding of the whole social field as representing "webs of processes in which meaning is created" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 25). Discourse denotes both the lack of principle that

grounds social life and the meaning and identities that are produced through interaction. Considering discourse as part of reality means that the social world is not organised according to some extra-discursive principle, but is fundamentally discursive (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). It doesn't come into being through causally related phenomena but emerges out of meaning. Discourse then assumes the function of ontological horizon (Torfing, 1999, 2005; Howarth, 2005, Glyson et al., 2009), which is implied in Derrida's statement "in the absence of a centre of origin everything becomes discourse" (Derrida, 1978: 280).

Speech-act theorists assert language as constitutive of social reality in his book *The Making of the Social World* Searle (2009: 63) posits the primacy of language in constructing and understanding the social world. He argues that "we are essentially language beings" for language is the "natural biological phenomena as the only medium to experience social reality". He continues, "You can have a society that has language but does not have governments, or private property, or money. But you cannot have a society that has government, private property or money but does not have language ...all human social institutions are brought into existence and continue in their

existence by a single socio-linguistic operation that can be applied over and over again" (Searle, 2009: 62).

Implicit in Searle's understanding is the performative nature of language as developed in the theory of 'speech acts' by his teacher Austin (1974). The latter was preoccupied with language not as "constative" and hence with the act of speaking as a 'locutory act' but with the 'illocutionary" force of language. Austin conceived of language as an instrument of will and intention and is expressed in Searle's saying: "Language doesn't just describe; it creates, and partially constitutes, what it both describes and creates". Following on this Searle argued that an "account of language enables an adequate account of social ontology". Searle's argument on the performative nature of language was deployed in his search for an explanation of social institutions. The post-structural tradition came up with the constitutive role of language for social life with Derrida's radical claim that "there is nothing beyond text" (Derrida, 1986: 167). The concept of language beyond rhetoric as ontology in succinctly expressed in Wittgenstein's (1991: 30) phrase: "the sentence is a model of reality as we imagine it". The implicit 'textual' nature of our understanding of the world, of associated forms of knowledge and their respective social and political contexts suggests

the extension of discourse to cover all social phenomena. This move does not reduce the social world to language understood narrowly as text or speech[68]; rather, it constitutes a proposition for a logic to conceptualize and hence analyse social and political events.

The assertion of discourse as a fully constitutive of our world (Jørgensen and Philips, 2002) inheres connotations about "the nature of the social world, the character of objectivity and social relations" (Glyson et al, 2009: 8). First of all, the main argument here is the assertion of an anti-essentialist ontology. In less abstract terms, this means that social reality is discursively produced. Rejecting the non-discursive nature of social reality does not deny the existence of a physical world. It only asserts the impossibility of grounding social life in some extra-discursive logic[69]. Torfing (2005: 18) explains that:

"Discourse theory does not dispute the materialist assertion that matter exists independently of our consciousness, thoughts and language. The contention is merely that nothing follows from the bare existence of matter. Matter does not carry the means of its own

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[68] which has been a common critique to post-structuralism. As Howarth (2000"13) shows these attacks have been directed at the ontic rather than ontological levels of analysis.

[69] such as for example the Marxist claims on the primacy of economic relations for structuring social life.

representation. ...Intelligible social forms are constructed in and through different discourses. Hence, a particular piece of land can be constructed as habitat for an endangered species by a group of biologists, a recreational facility by the urban population, fertile farmland by the local farmers, or a business opportunity by urban developers." (Torfing, 2005: 18)

What is suggested here is that the existence of natural, physical and cultural objects are clearly acknowledged to exist; but their meaning and significance for situated objects - and how they are engaged with - depends on, and hence is acquired, through discourses. Consequently, they are discursively constructed (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 108). As Heidegger and Merleau - Ponty stated 'the world is always there' but in themselves these objects are meaningless (in Crotty, 1988: 44). Thus, the first implication of a non-essentialist ontology of discourse is captured in Laclau and Mouffe's idea that "all objects and actions are meaningful, and that their meaning is conferred by particular systems of significant differences" (Howarth, 2000: 101)

Following from this is the second assertion that social meanings, human subjects and objects have no fixed essences which determine their identities (Lacalu and Mouffe, 1984). Abandoning the belief in essential subjectivity is the kernel of discourse as non-essentialist ontology. It entails the key claim about the contingent nature of social phenomena. As all forms of social practice take place against a background of historically specific discourses (Torfing, 2005: 8) social identities and entities are likewise constructed in and through discursive systems of difference. As Torfing's example about the land demonstrates, discourse does not merely describe or make known a pre-existing or underlying reality but helps to bring that reality into being. Together with assigning (contingent) meaning to matter, it also tends to construct particular subjectivities. "Hence", continues Torfing, "the construction of land as a 'business opportunity' constructs certain people as urban developers." Similarly, whatever we say, think, or do is conditioned by a more or less sedimented discourse which is constantly modified by what we are saying, thinking, and doing. Discourse therefore provides a contingent horizon for the construction of meaningful objects within ever fluid social context (Torfing, 2005: 8; James, M., 1999: 171).

In removing the idea of fixed essences - excluding the absolute referent of truth - post structuralism opens up the category of subjectivity[70]. As each ontological position entails a concept of the subject, the poststructuralist subject is seen as dispersed and fragmented. Seeing language as being productive of the subject, implies that the subject, rather than homogenous with an essential identity and present interest, is constituted against a plurality of positions with which she can identify (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Adopting discourse as a theoretical frame then implies refusing to adopt given social identities, structures or subjective interests as the privileged starting point of social and political analysis (Torfing, 2005). It directs the inquiry into constructions of subjectivities (Laclau, 1990; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Weedon, 2001) within its goal "to discover the historically specific rules and conventions that structure the production of meaning in a particular social context" (Howarth, 2000: 11)

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[70] Post-structuralism doesn't dispense with the concept of the subject; it rather re-evaluates it by re-examining the humanist conceptions of the individual which are still central to western philosophy. Poststructuralist thinkers challenge the Enlightenment valorisation of the individual mind as in Descartes' dictum 'I think, hence I am' that provides the foundation for rationality which is assumed to produce an authentic representation of reality. In drawing on Freud and Lacan's psychoanalytical insights, poststructuralists theorize subjectivity as a site of disunity and conflict; e.g. Mouffe's (1992) thesis on fragmentation of the subject by conceiving of the acquisition of identity as the assumption of "subject positions"; this way a woman assumes manifold identities defining who she is (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, etc.). Post-structural paradigms achieve this by removing the normative expectations of rationality (made explicit by Kant), and substituting the episteme with diverse and polymorphic hermeneutics (Newman, 2005; Honneth, 1995). Asserting rationality as a multivalent category and subjectivity as multidimensional has been an object of thorough research by the feminist agenda (Weedon, 1997; Butler, 1998, 2001; Hemmings 2012)

5.2.3. Power and Antagonisms as intrinsic to the social world

A third implication of acknowledging discourse as an ontological category is that it is inextricably linked with power dynamics. Political discourse theory comprehends discourse and power as intrinsically linked with each other. In recognizing the political purposes of language (Searle, 1969: 132-6), speech act theorists were concerned with politics *through* discourse, while discourse theory focused on the politics *of* discourse (Diez, 1999). The logic of difference and the impossibility to fix meaning allows post-structuralists to reach a non-essentialised view of power as inherent in language. As Gergen (2001: 170) observes, "the unfixity of discourse opens up speculations of construction while unavoidably pointing to the dimension of power in the process of construction". Contained within discourse is the Foucauldian emphasis on power, not seen in Weberian terms, but as the result of mechanisms that operate independently of particular individuals (Foucault, 1982) and the Marxist appeal in which "ideas, language and consciousness are regarded as ideological phenomena" (Howarth, 2000: 12).

The understanding of reality as discursive denotes an image of the social world as permeated with social antagonisms[71]. The assertion that we are always part of a particular discourse that provides us with a set of relatively determinate values, standards and criteria for judging something to be true, right or good raises the possibility of agonistics between people with different, discursively constructed truth claims; no discourse can be protected from contestation and contamination as their boundaries are continuously breached and redrawn. This suggests the primacy of power in constituting the social[72].

Power then is intrinsic to the society, because it is what gives shape to social world. The social, defined as the ensemble of social relations that establish a horizon for meaning and action, possesses a *relatively* enduring character (my emphasis on Torfing's 1999: 70 comment). Social relations tend to become sedimented into institutional rules and norms. These then are taken for granted in everyday life. Yet, this routinization of social relations is temporary

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[71] Social relations understood as a set of discourses are fundamentally constructions and experience of antagonizing forces. Laclau and Mouffe argue the fundamentality of social antagonisms on the grounds of the inability of social agents to attain their identities (and therefore their interest). This entails the construction of an enemy who is considered responsible for the 'failure' (Howarth.2000:105).

[72] Torfing (1999: 70-82) comments that conceiving of social relations as constructed by social antagonisms indicates that the fundamental state of reality to be characterized by conflict rather than harmony. This impossibility to eradicate social antagonism is expressed in Laclau and Mouffe's (1992: 98 in Torfing, 1999: 41) assertion that "meaning giving relations of discourse are social as opposed to natural".

because the power struggles cannot be eliminated. They can be only suppressed, and it is social agents who interrupt the sedimentation of social relations. They 're-activate the political origin' of the social by subjecting social relations to ongoing practices of constitution and subversion. Mouffe's quote summarizes this claim:

"Power is constitutive of the social because the social could not exist without the power relations through which it is given shape. What is at any given moment considered as the 'natural' jointly with the common sense that accompany it - is the result of sedimented practices; it is never the manifestation of deeper objectivity exterior to the practices that bring it into being." (Mouffe, 2005: 18)

The key concept for understanding the link between discourse and power is hegemony[73]. Hegemony can be understood as the dominance of one particular perspective or entity. As no discourse is a completely closed totality and therefore cannot and does not provide a final definitive vocabulary that fully captures the world, it is rather constantly being transformed through contact with other discourses. Thus hegemony and discourse are seen as conditioned by social antagonisms. Different discourses – each of them representing

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[73] Political Discourse theory draws on Gramsci (1971)' s notion of hegemony. According to Gramsci politics in the modern mass society takes the form of a struggle for hegemony in terms of the establishment of a political and moral-intellectual leadership.

a particular way of talking about and understanding the social world – are engaged in a constant struggle with one another to achieve hegemony, i.e., to fix the meaning in their own way. Torfing (1999: 101) argues that understood as an expansion of discourse (or set of discourses) into a dominant horizon of social orientations and actions, hegemony points to articulations of unfixed elements into fixed moments. Hegemony refers to the construction of a predominant discursive formation.

The construction of a hegemonic discourse occurs through articulations. A discourse is forged and expanded by means of articulation, which is defined as a practice that establishes a relation among discursive elements that invokes a mutual modification of their identity (Torfing, 2005: 15; Laclau and Mouffe. 1985: 105 in Torfing, 1999: 101). The hegemonic articulation of meaning constructs the limits and unity of a discursive system through "the construction of nodal points, which partially fix meaning" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113). Each articulation of discourse involves negotiations, hence a political *act,* and is in itself a constitutive part of discourse. At the same time, articulations emerge from structural preconditions and are working to challenge the borders of discourse.

As structural determinants, the cognitive components may set limits to what is possible to articulate, but they are continuously transformed through the addition and combination of new articulations. As Torfing explains "discourse is a de-limitation of possibilities, but the limits of discourse do not happen by structure, but through an enactment of the limits by articulations". In this process there is the constant presence of continuities and often marginal incremental changes. These changes tend to become visible only retrospectively, when they have taken on sufficient weight, and they tend to be contested. These struggles produce a discursive formation as a relatively unified whole of a variety of discourses.

The contest over the struggle for meaning is at the heart of politics for many discourse analysts (Connolly, 1983; Laclau and Mouffe,1985). In political discourse theory the political is given primacy over the social. Defined by Mouffe (2009: 5) as "the dimension of antagonism", it is constitutive of human sociability. Rather than confining it to a particular institutional region of the social, the political is grounded in the "abyss" of the social[74]. Social

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[74] Discourse theory challenges the common conceptualizations of the social understood in classical social theory as an integrated whole (Durkheim) or internally divided, as in Marx's idea of class struggle (Newman, 2007; Schatzki,1996). Instead discourse operates with a conception of the social based on absence. Society is understood not as a complete identity implying some essential core or principle but one that is fractured and constitutively open (Newman,2005:128).

relations exhibit four properties - contingency, historicity, power and the primacy of politics (Laclau, 1990: 31-6). The impossibility of eradicating the political equates it with the ontological. The "openness of the social", weaving together different strands of discourses in their attempt to dominate or structure a field of meaning, is the origin of the political.

The political is rooted in the anti-logocentric epistemic claims of post-structuralism and the primacy of difference. The political is "a condition of possibility of thinking" for it is not stranded by essentialist presuppositions. It resides in the thought of difference[75]. "The thinking of the political has always been a thinking of difference" (Derrida in Butler, 2009: 292). As Butler observes, "the political doesn't emerge, but it must be there, already, as a condition for the possibility of thinking", hence, the 'always' in Derrida's claims 'pertains to the political'; never to the non-political, non-ethical (Butler, 2009: 280). While its constructive properties are being

Usually referenced as the "loss of the social", this does not entail rejection of the existence of society, nor the disavowel of actual social relations (Mulqueen and Mattews. 2015:2), but "a changed constellation in the cultural realm of a new type of social integration" (Honneth, 1995:220). The abyss of the social rather than nothingness and annihilation of meaning substantiates a social reality as multiple. The social therefore comes to denote "not only one world, but a multitude of worlds, to as many worlds, as many thoughtful consciousness" (Sandu,2011: 41).

[75] Politics, according to Butler (2009:295) comes with the question of plurality. This plural "we" however is not "unified from the start but is constituted through a difference that ceaselessly differentiates those it binds". Difference makes possible a focus on individuality, hence distinction (Newman, 2005:201) on the one hand, and presupposes a relational and heterogeneous social totality, on the other.

emphasized, the political is neither internal nor external to the social. In the Derridean sense it is something that stands between the two without being consumed by either. The *undecidability* of the social is the condition for politics, but there will always be a range of sedimented practice to condition the formulation, realization and transformation of the political strategies responsible for the shaping and reshaping the social relations (Torfing, 1999: 71). Hence, in practical political analysis "politics is understood as the contestation and institution of social relations and practices" (Howarth et al., 2016: 100)

The post structural approach to politics yields a concept of the political that cannot be related to some sort of algorithmic logic. Post-structural thought is sceptical regarding the foundations of politics ushered in by the Enlightenment, according to which politics has been considered as derivative of either the rational pursuit of the pre-given interests of individual agents or the reified structures of collective forms of organisations (James, M., 1999: 17). According to Laclau and Mouffe the political cannot be a regulative idea since it has to act here and now. This view reflects Derrida's argument that following a rule annuls a decision. In Rogues, Derrida states "the

decision that no longer decides but is made in advance is thus in advance nulled. It is simply deployed without delay, presently, with the automatism attributed to machines" (quoted in Rancière, 2009: 282). The political is associated with justice[76], and can't be an enactment of rule as a mechanical action.

In rejecting action stemming from rational considerations, post-structural notions of the political can be better envisaged through the metaphor of *poesia*[77]. The cultural tones implied in politics as poesia are inferring the understanding of the symbolic dimension of politics. Jones Holland (1998: 23-24 in Boyte, 2011: 640) argues *"…numbers go about as far as we can go in sharing away detail. When we talk of number, nothing is left of shape, of colour, or mass, or identity of an object, except the very fact of its existence. …three buses, three strokes, and three mountains are equivalent 'realizations' of the number three, …in contrast, a poem aims at obliqueness and ambiguity to engage the reader at multiple levels."* Politics, like poetry, is partially about complex interpretative acts, concerned with meaning, purpose, justice, and even beauty. In

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[76] While politics is associated with the idea of rule. Likewise for Mouffe (2009: 5) politics means "a set of practices and institutions through which order is created, organising human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political."

[77] It is pertinent because of poststructuralist concerns about essentialising accounts of power.

Mouffe (2005)'s account politics is developed as an agonism corresponding to the post-structural concern about the possibility of community among humans. Agonism as "the taming possibility of antagonism" (Mouffe, 2005: 20) is an imperative for the emergence of community as "a space of encounter for the expression of the dialectical resolution of antagonisms among its various constitutive parts and groups" (Balibar, 2004: 119).

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed discourse within the philosophical premises of hermeneutical interpretivism and the definition of political discourse theory as "language games". Implicated in discourse are the post structuralist inquiries into meaning production initiated at the level of linguistics. Meaning is articulated in discourse, which in turn is defined as "a differential ensemble of signifying sequences in which meaning is negotiated". Further in asserting difference as the central concept of meaning formation post structuralism engages in deconstructing the essentializing tendencies of structure. Discourse as language games reflects the relational logic of language, the impossibility of complete closure of meaning around a central

organising principle. Insights from linguistics are extended to the social world whereby discourse becomes coterminous with social reality. The logic of difference has been transposed to a reality, which is seen as constituted and intelligible solely through discourses. It is thus contingent, modulated by '*homo significants'* (Chandler, 2002: 13), who are also constituted in language in their constant involvement in making meaning through creation and interpretation of signs. The view of the social world as discursive also stands for the power struggles between different discourses. In their attempt to fixate a particular meaning discourses are struggling to define a predominant articulation, hence to assume hegemony. This definition of discourse is achieved through radicalizing social constructivist epistemology, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter VI: Radical Constructivism: Framework for Analysing Practices

This chapter follows on the ontological assumptions of discourse to outline a rationale for researching social practices. The first part elaborates on the premises of radical constructivism for generating knowledge. The pragmatic primacy of experience embraced by radical constructivist epistemology is complemented with examining practices in sociological theory. Finally, the chapter discusses the merits of discourse for conducting social analysis. It highlights the methodological implications of non-positivist research design for establishing causality in interpretivist mode of knowledge production.

6.1. Radical constructivism: the incomplete episteme of discourse

The theoretical propositions implicated in discourse are developed within the terrain of epistemology and its anti-foundationalist premises (Torfing, 1999, 2006; Butler, 1998). Discourse echoes the constructivist critique on claims of objectivity, excluding the possibility of an absolute referential for truth. Discourse, however, denotes a situation of radical incompletion (between an incomplete

subject and incomplete object). The dismissal of constructivist subjectivism is then mooted as nothing more than conjuring up meaning and imposing it on a topic. This position also reflects the neo-pragmatists on the primacy of experience for knowledge.

Discourse shares the non-foundationalist epistemology postulated by constructivism. Having said that constructivism as a particular analytical orientation is not monolithic. It is an "umbrella term approach under which various theoretical interest and research strategies merge" (Shaw and Wierner, 1999: 2 in Eilstrup - Sangiovanni, 2006: 394). As Checkel (2007: 55-58) observes, there isn't a common epistemological ground among constructivists. For instance, in the study of EU politics Checkel distinguishes between conventional, interpretative and critical/radical variants of constructivism (Checkel, 2004: 230-1; Adler, 1997, Ruggie, 1998; Christiansen et al., 2001: 1-21). Thus, scholars adhering to conventional constructivism are positivist in epistemological orientation and draw inspiration on institutional and organisation theory (March and Olsen, 1989) as well as sociology (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Wendt, 1999). Interpretative and radical constructivists are both post-positivist and explore the role of

language in mediating and structuring of social reality. The difference lies in the emphasis critical/ radical constructivism places on power and domination inherent in language. Key sources of theoretical inspiration lay in linguistic approaches - Wittgenstein, and continental social theory - Habermas, Bourdieu, Derrida, among others (Hopf 1998; Price and Reus-Smith, 1998; Neumann, 2002).

6.1.1 Matter matters

Discourse integrates the constructivist objection to claims to objectively existing truth and rationality. Alternatively, it posited that "all knowledge, and all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in interaction between human beings and their world, developed and transmitted within essentially social contexts" (Crotty, 1998: 42). Discourse therefore follows upon the Kantian separation between thought and object, where objects are seen to belong to thought rather than object. Therefore, discourse shares the underlying constructivist assertion according to which all mental phenomena are described as "having reference to a content, direction towards an object" (Torffing,1999: 46-47). Nevertheless, discourse radicalizes constructivism in

contesting the subjectivist leaning and idealist ontology of constructivism. Radical constructivism is realist and materialist[78]. It is realist in that it acknowledges the material world[79]. Its materialist position is reached by putting onto question the symmetry between thought and object.

Radical constructivism problematizes the phenomenological notion of *intentionality* and the "quite intimate and very direct relationship between the conscious subject and the object of the subject's consciousness implicit in constructivism" (Crotty, 1989:) [80] Therefore, it rejects the primacy of the subject in the construction of meaning as postulated by the Kantian logic of constructivism. This way it avoids essentializing the object by reducing it to a passive recipient of an already constituted meaning. Simultaneously, it does not essentialize the subject, thus reducing the object to an object of thought. Instead, grounded in the relativist logic of language, it is suggested that the process of meaning construction occurs through

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[78] Torfing (1999: 45) following Laclau and Mouffe (1987: 86) defines realism as "the assertion of the existence of a world external to thought", and materialism as "the affirmation of an irreducible distance between thought and reality."

[79] Post structuralism has been criticized for denying the independent existence of physical world; e.g. Geras (1987: 66 in Torfing, 1999: 46)'s critique on Laclau and Mouffe's claims that objects are given meaning by virtue of discourse. However, as already noted, Laclau and Mouffe do not deny the existence of reality external to thought. What they contest is the possibility that these real objects have a meaning independently of the discourses in which they are constituted as objects (Howarth, 2000:112)

[80] The construal of social reality premised upon an active agent is at the core of constructivist epistemology.

the complex interaction between an incomplete subject and incomplete object.

Therefore, contrary to idealist constructivism, radical constructivism presupposes that: a) the meaning of the object is not given to us in a direct, automatic fashion, and b) the we cannot produce the 'object' out of ourselves as expression of our omnipotence" (Torfing, 1999: 47). Thus, in the example the example of the land that Torfing employs the land as matter is not a passive element in the discourse. In his own words, "Matter does not merely await a particular signification that is stamped upon it by discourse. Discursive forms play an active role in constructing that which they signify. Hence, the referent in terms of 'a particular piece of land' is retroactively constructed by the discursive form which carves out a particular piece of brute matter to be signified". Consequently, radical constructivism does not reduce the object to an object of thought, which is a position attributed to constructivism. Interlaced within discourse are the realist assertions of the independent existence of matter external to thought with the materialist insistence of distance between thought (subject) and reality (object).

In addition, discourse shares epistemological grounds with pragmatist philosophy. Both theoretical traditions emphasize praxis for determining truth within a world, which is in a constant state of flux. They thus integrate the constructivist assumption that knowledge is contingent and created through social interaction (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 5). In discourse the construction of meaning (and identity) occurring through the interplay of signifiers correlates with the pragmatist assertion of the impossibility of the existence of knowledge independent from the act of knowing.

The key claim is that knowledge is to be sought in action. Concomitantly, both stances fold into Wittgenstein's (1953) position aiming to relate 'meaning' to 'use' (Schatzki, 1996) [81]. Wittgenstein's emphasis that the meaning of a word is in its use underscores the pragmatic aspects of discourse asserting the importance of meaning and of its practical consequences[82]. In the works of Richard Rorty, (1989), William James (1907) and John Dewey (1929/1958) authentic meanings of ideas and values are linked to their outcomes and therefore to the practices in which they are embedded (Crotty,

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[81] Wittgenstein argues that action (not thought) underlies language (Schatzki,1996:135)

[82] Thus the philosophical assumptions of discourse and pragmatism correlate at the field of (linguistic) pragmatics as the discipline studying language in use. Pragmatics as an interdisciplinary attempt to outline a unified and consistent theory of signs and semiotics is a tradition inspired by Kant's use of pragmatisch in his Critique of Pure Reason (Vershueren,1999; Cummings, 2005).

1989: 72; Scott, 2012). Dewey (1927: 12) argued that "we must in any case start from acts which are performed, not from hypothetical causes for those acts, and consider their consequences." In the same vein, Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 107-8 in Torfing,1999: 94) suggest that discourse can be defined as a relational ensemble of signifying sequences that weave together semantic aspects of language and pragmatic aspects of action. Knowledge (the episteme of discourse), therefore, is linked to social processes (Gergen, 1985: 268), it is culturally and historically specific (Burr,1995: 3 in Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 5) and contingent. From this epistemological discussion a 'thicker' connotation of discourse emerges, one to be understood as an articulatory practice.

6.2. Practices as constituted and constitutive of discourse

The discursive nature of the social world entails its coming into being through practice. The latter, rather than external to discourse, is considered its constituting dimension. By allocating difference as the feature of the ontological, discourse asserted the lack of social totality, i.e. organised around a foundational principle. Reality is apprehended as a system of signs. Although physically 'there', it

appears to us only through the meanings it acquires. Reality emerges out of the ceaseless interpretations of humans, who, as the species that "thinks only in signs" as Pierce argued (quoted in Chandler, 2007: 13), appoint meanings to all phenomena encountered in experience and in thought, without reducing them to linguistics or non-linguistics. Discourse pertains to this process of signification whereby meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed. Meaning is intrinsic to understanding and intelligibility, which occur in practices[83].

Within the sociological tradition discourse takes place in the theories of the "praxeology family". This group has been systematized by Reckwitz (2002), who asserts the commonality between different theorists on the grounds of their interest in the "everyday" and "life-world", as well as the influence of the interpretative or cultural aspects within sociological theory on their reasoning (Reckwitz, 2002: 244)[84]. A key point of convergence among cultural theorists is

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[83] The link I establish here is premised on Schatzki's contribution to practice theory. While I draw on Schatzki's ideas onpractice, I argue (in line with political discourse theory) about the discursive nature of practices, which is not explicitly supported by Schatzki. On the contrary, he argues against discursiveness of practices. Yet, his objection is based on Lyotard's understanding of practices as purely linguistic events (Schatzki,1996:134-135). His practice theory is, however, embedded in Wittgenstein's philosophy and he acknowledges the theoretical overlapping in Laclau and Mouffe's definition of discourse as language games. Thus in the argument of discursiveness of practices the linguistic is not given priority. It is action, as verbal and non-verbal.[83] This group comprises of four branches of cultural theories. These are cultural mentalism (Levi-Strauss, Schutz), cultural textualism (Foucault, Geertz, Lukhman), interpretivism (Habermas,) and practice theory (Bourdieu, Giddens, late Foucault, Garfingel, Schatzki).

the identification of the social with the symbolic and cognitive structures of knowledge. They are thus outside classic sociological approaches which "dismiss the implicit or tacit or unconscious layer of knowledge which enables a symbolic organisation of reality" (Reckwitz, 2002: 246). In Reckwitz's (2000: 248) classification, discourse pertains to theories referred to as cultural textualism. Discourse is thus intrinsically linked with knowledge designating the constitution of the social world at the level of signs, "in chains of signs, in symbols in their materiality" (Foucault, 1969). The publicness of these signs is discussed in the work of Geertz (1973). In the praxeology family of cultural theories, the social order appears as embedded in collective structures of cognition and symbols, in 'shared' knowledge, which enables meaning to be ascribed to the world via shared sociality.

This 'novel' picture of the social influences their view on human agency. Although conceptualizing praxis within different vocabularies, they highlight the production of the social order at the level of practices. The cultural theories thus challenge the two classical social-theoretical perspectives on action, namely, the purpose-oriented and the norm-oriented models of explaining action. The former explained the social as a product -intended or

unintended- of subjective interests; a common will or distribution of values on "markets". It was seen as coming from the agency of *homo economicus*, by having recourse to individual purpose, intentions and interest. The latter model envisaged the social at the level of a consensus of norms and roles. It was seen as a product of the agency of *homo sociologicus,* as compliance to mutual normative expectations. The social order was a reproduction of collective norms and values, i.e. to rules which express a social 'ought' (Reckwitz, 2002: 245)[85]. Practice theories are where the social order and sociality are organised.

Within the hermeneutical appraisal of *Homo significus* -the meaning-maker who sets out to interpret everyday social meanings - discourse regards practices as fundamental to social life. Practices contain the connotations of the notion of practice, i.e. praxis as doing, action as opposed to theory. They also label action as talk. "A practice", argues Reckwitz (2002: 249), "is a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood". As conceptualized by Schatzki (1996), practices are "bodily doings and sayings"[86]. They

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[85] Homo economicus and homo sociologicus are terms used by Reckwitz (2002:244-246). The italics are mine.
[86] Schatzki (1996) develops his definition of practices based on Wittgenstein's view on mental matters as always expressed in bodily activities. Wittgenstein, denouncing of the Cartesian

constitute forms of bodily and mental activities interconnected to one another. Furthermore, as there is no extra discursive reality, practices are also discursive. In discourse, action transgresses body and mind separation in human life. In political discourse theory, language, action and objects are intertwined. As defined by Laclau and Mouffe, these elements, fused and forged into practice and discourse, are systematic and interrelated totalities of meaningful actions, words, and things (Schatzki, 1996: 117). Consequently, practices are constitutive of discourse and they are constituted by discourse[87].

6.2.1. Practices as constitutive for discourse

Practices constitute discourse through their ability to constitute meaning. The notion of meaning in discourse is wider than linguistic meaning. According to Wittgenstein language games do not contain only linguistic moves. He writes: "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions with which it is interwoven, the 'language-game'" (1953, I, sec. 7 quoted in Schatzki, 1996). The

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paradigm of separation between body and mind contended that by way of body, mind is present in experience.

[87] The claim on discursiveness of practices is a theoretical extension of Schatzki's idea on the primacy of practices for social life. Scahtzki (1996:111) builds his argument on Heidegger's statement "Practice is the house of being (Being and be-ing)" and Wittgenstein's understanding of both social order and human individuality as resulting from practices.

analogy between words and tools to which Wittgenstein points out is further developed by Shatzki (1996). He constructs his Theory of Practices by elaborating on language games to entail all objects of perception as meaningful entities that are ultimately interpreted in terms of habits of action.

"Meanings", Schatzki (1996: 111) argues "are not freestanding, distinct entities. They exist only in human understanding." The latter occurs at the "tightly interwoven nexus of doings and sayings in which neither doing nor saying has priority". Schatzki (1996: 113) gives an example with teaching, which encompasses writing on blackboards and other surfaces with certain entities, which therewith receive the meaning: things with which to write. Thus what something is understood to be is expressed in both sayings and doings. In addition, integrated with understanding is intelligibility. The term refers to: a) how the world makes sense, and b) which actions make sense. It thus pertains to articulation of meanings and entails specification of the signified. This is achieved in practices. Schatzki (1996: 118) explains: *the articulation of action intelligibly is the specification of what makes sense for people to do. What makes sense to people, moreover, is "signified" to them as the action they*

perform. Although people are always able and prepared to do a variety of things, at a given moment they invariably carry those actions that are significant to them as the ones to perform[88]." Thus, two features of practices as being discursive can be outlined. First, practices are performative. Schatzki states that "each doing and saying constitutes a practice only in being performed" (Schatzki, 1996); and second, practices are containers of meaning. The common denominator that links together doings and sayings is understanding. 'In order for bodily and mental activities to structure a practice they should be linked through understanding of what to do and what to say" (Schatzki, 1996).

Practice is where the social originates and takes place. Understanding and intelligibility structure the realm of the social, of sociality, and of individuality. The social is defined as "pertaining to human coexistence" (Schatzki, 1996: 169), while suggesting togetherness is not to be automatically equated with individuals' interrelatedness. Co-existence also implies "hanging-together of

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[88] Here Schatzki (1996:112) draws on Heidegger's understanding of the notion of signifying, implying understanding and attunement. Understanding covers the teleological component of structuring of action, which consists of "signifying chains" (Schatzki's expression), which stretch from possibilities of existence for the sake of which someone lives, to particular actions that are signified as what to do in particular moments in particular situations for the sake of those possibilities. The second element of attunement relates to "things mattering to people. Things mattering to people is people's being, in particular moods and emotions or having particular feelings, affects, and passions. How things matter omnipresently structures the stream of behavior".

human lives" (Schatzki, 1996: 171). This hanging-together is the formative context of the social, or sociality. Schatzki defines sociality as "the dimension of formative context, constituting co-existence in human life". It is established in integrative and dispersed practices, which constitute a nexus of phenomena that forms a context for each phenomenon involved.

While there are various and complex reasons behind people's lives hanging together[89], practices allow for individuals to connect through understanding and intelligibility. Practices as "a dimension of human existence distinct, though not separate, from individuals and their interrelations" are the medium through which human lives interrelate (Schatzki,1996: 14). Further, practices *qua* sociality allow for a social context which embraces individuals along with relations among them. Together with organising sociality, practices structure individuality. They are the realm where these two domains link. Reflecting Wittgenstein's argument that understanding and intelligibility structure not only the social realm but also the domain of individual mind and action, Schatzki argues that: "Practices, in

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[89] The two classical models of people's lives; hanging together through cooperation and rationality and conformity to ends, norms, and rules. This picture of the social field as a nexus of integrative and dispersed practices does not claim to be the final word on any account of social life; rather it is one explanation among others.

addition to being the elements and circuits forming the "flexible networks" in which the social field consist also 1) help institute what mental states and actions humans are and can be in and 2) are the context in which humans acquire the wherewithal to be in these states and to perform the actions that compose practices."

6.2.2. Practices as constituted by discourse

The claim of the discursive nature of practices also suggests that they are constituted by discourse. Discourse constitutes and brings into being practices and objects (Griggs and Howarth, 2011: 219) by means of articulation. The term practice denotes a human activity that arises from extant discourse to transform them and their positions. "Every social practice is …in one of its dimensions, articulatory (Schatzki, 1996: 118). This means that practices are linking contingent elements into a relational system in which each element acquires meaning in relation to others. While they render them intelligible within a context of plurality, they also invoke modification of their identities. The practice of articulation is characterized by Lacalu and Mouffe (1985: 113) as "the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning…". In this way, the

hegemonic practices of articulations unify a discursive space around a particular nodal point. This fixation of meaning however is always partial, because in takes place in a conflictual terrain of power and struggles, what they call "the openness of the social". This is, itself, a consequence of the constant overflow of everyday discourse by the infinite field of "discursivity" (Lacalu and Mouffe, 1985: 113) A discourse is forged and expanded by means of articulation.

The political discourse emphasis on the constitution of the world via practice draws on the intersection of knowledge and action being intrinsic to discourse as developed by Foucault (1972), who conceived of discourses as forms of knowledge, a powerful set of assumptions that govern mainstream social and cultural practices, "not as a group of signs or a stretch of text, but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972: 49). As knowledge is then constructed within discourse at a particular moment in history, Foucauld asserts that discourses gain and maintain meaning within specific historical contexts and at particular junctures (Wetherell et al., 2001). Political discourse theory retains the historicity of knowledge in Foucault's archaeological writings, and the intersection of knowledge and

action in discourse in the claim of the constitution of the social world in practice. Unlike Foucault, however, who saw the discursive rules of formation of social practices as conditioned by non-discursive relations[90], political discourse theory denies the existence of a sphere of behaviour beyond discursiveness (Schatzki, 1996: 117).

This section focused on the notion of practice and elaborated on the discursive nature of practices. It developed the argument on the social world as constituted in practice, and consequently of practices as constitutive and constituted by discourse. Drawing on Theodore Schatzki's theory of practices, practices are constitutive by virtue of conferring interrelated meanings upon entities. Comprised of sayings and doings of individuals they are the basic ordering medium of human existence. As discursive, they allow for explaining action through understanding and intelligibility. Practices are also constituted by discourse due to the impossibility of fixing meaning. They emerge from extant discourse, which they modify.

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[90] Torfing (2005: 7) observes that this is influenced by Foucault's Marxist legacy. He further explains that the criteria according to which Foucault distinguishes between the discursive and non-discursive is not clear, nor the exact nature of conditioning of the latter.

6.3. Practices in Social Theory

Elements of a theory of social practices are developed in the work of scholars such as Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1990). In Reckwitz's (2002: 245) classification, these theorists are also considered part of the praxeology family of cultural sociological theory. Their models of practice theory lay bare the influence of Wittgenstein, as in Anthony Giddens, and of structuralism, in the case of Bourdieu. Bourdieu and Giddens take practices as the central starting point for understanding social systems. Practice is the category that merges structure and agency, premised on the assumption that anything that happens or exists in social life is generated through enacted forms of conduct.

Anthony Giddens (1979, 1984) develops his version of practice theory in the framework of a 'theory of structuration'. The social world in Giddens's view is not a bounded, unified whole[91], but as an intersection of multiple sets of recurring practices "which 'stand out' in bas-relief from the total network of interlocking practices and are rarely cleanly demarcated in space and time." (Giddens, 1984: 164-165). Theorizing the social world as a mosaic of practices is achieved

[91] *Giddens argued for the outdatedness of the concept of society as unified whole (Schatzki,1996: 4)*

through the recognition of the poverty of using structure and agency separately and insisting instead on their mutual implication. Giddens' approach, developed in the theory of structuration, transcends duality in emphasizing structure and agency as reciprocally related in all social behaviour. In Giddens's formulation, structure and the agent are mutually implicated. As Hay (2002: 118) explains "structure and agency are internally related or ontologically intertwined". Structures are both the result of past actions and social products as well as the context or medium within which ongoing action occurs. Structure represents the persistent or more institutionalized aspect of behaviour and is composed of rules and resources. Giddens recognizes two sorts of rules: codes, which determine the meanings of things, and norms, which determine right and wrong (legitimation). Resources are defined as capabilities that generate commands either over persons or over objects and other material phenomena. For its part, action operates to produce and to reproduce (perpetuate) structure. Giddens argues that practices are governed by rules, and that "social processes are brought about by the active constitutive skills of ...historically located actors", and he adds "not under conditions of their own choosing" (1976: 157)

Another example of practice theory is Pierre Bourdieu's project on praxeology developed in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972/1990) Jenkins. 2005: 67). The focus here is upon the visible social world of practice presented under a variety of rubrics – social interaction, everyday life and social behaviour. Bourdieu's engagement with practice stems from his attempt to construct a theoretical model of social practice, which is "to do more than simply take for granted what people do in their daily lives" (Mahar, Harker and Wilkes, 1990: 8).

Practice, together with habitus and field, constitute Bourdieu's conceptual tools. The agency-structure issue translates into the relationship between habitus and field. For Bourdieu, the structural properties are always embedded in everyday events: "habitus is an internalized mental or cognitive structure which both produces and is produced by society" (Bourdieu, 1972: 79). "Field is a network of relations among objective positions that serves to constrain agents, individuals or collectivities". While the field conditions the habitus, the habitus constitutes the field. Thus, practice is interwoven in the dialectical relationship between habitus and field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97).

Practices in the theories of Giddens and Bourdieu draw on resources and their explanation is oriented towards how they are produced by actors. For Bourdieu, practices emphasize tacitly repeated actions or habits that give people (with common backgrounds) convictions and beliefs with which to deal with social life on a day-to-day basis (Bourdieu, 1984: 94). These dispositions are not consciously discussed, they are brought into people's behaviour without them really being aware of their influence, enabling them to know how to perform in day-to-day life without constant reflection (Jenkins. 2005: 69). Giddens (1984) refers to this as 'ontological security', for these resources enable people's practices to be regarded as reasonable and sensible; they thus serve to reinforce familiarity and a sense of belonging (Giddens, 1984).

Consequently, both theorists restrict agency to the relatively limited power of contributing to the reproduction of established tendencies, and hence to recursive patterns of distribution and routines. They delimit agency by retaining the deterministic role of structure and hence of focusing on practices as routinization. They are concerned with "perpetuation, or expansion, of practices over time-space" (Schatzki, 1996: 144). Space-time extension of practices is made possible through the mediation of structures, which are at once the

conditions of practices and something reproduced by them. The adherence to the traditional definition of structure as the external social context of behaviour is particularly discernible in Bourdieu's work (Jenkins, 1992). As Callinicos contends "the objectivist view permeates the notion of the habitus, which appears to represent the effect of social conditioning on agents which adapts them to the requirements of the field in which they operate" (Callinicos, 1999: 293). This suggests that Bourdieu's theory is mainly successful in demonstrating how the reproduction of existing structures occurs. It displays an orientation at theorizing the reproduction of the social world, rather than change and can be interpreted with Marx's adage that, "although men make their own history, they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing" (in Jenkins 1992: 70). It also touches upon the fact that actors do not just confront their current circumstances. They are an integral part of those circumstances. Giddens' structuration theory, on the other hand, has been seen as too "processual" by scholars, implying that it leaves no room for the mediating role of culture, and hence discourse, in the process of structuration (Gergen, 2001). Thus, while Bourdieu highlights the role of the body and the constitutive significance of intelligibility in social life, Giddens highlights the regularity of the routine and the

omnipresence of power in everyday interactions. Both scholars fail to acknowledge fully the role of intelligibility for the constitution of practical action (Schatzki,1996: 137).

This engagement with Giddens and Bourdieu's theories is not an attempt to criticize their work. Such a brief sketch of their ideas cannot do justice to the intellectual depth of their thought. Their ideas are introduced as a background on which to flesh out the value of discourse, and hence for justification of the choice of discourse as a sociological approach. This will help us explore the constitutive and constituted dimension of the process of Europeanization and the role of civic initiatives in Bulgaria in it.

6.4. Why Choose Discourse Analysis Methodology?

In this thesis, discursive analysis methodology is employed as a driver of research design and also as the theoretical frame for the analysis of the case study materials and data. The ontology and epistemology of political discourse analysis is central throughout this study of civic initiatives in Bulgaria. It is in place to guide my choice of research topic and it provides the criteria through which

the research is conducted. This theoretical and methodological perspective addresses the interaction of language and society from a post-positivist perspective. My selection of this methodological approach was based on a number of considerations. This Chapter begins with describing the focus and purpose of Political Discourse Analysis, which is the first basis for its selection. Second, I selected this particular discursive approach because of its recognition of the constitutive dimension of causality, and finally because of its critical dimension and explanatory power. This chapter goes on to outline these three features of discursive analysis, since they account for its implementation in this study. In doing so, and throughout this chapter, I make the argument that the broad concerns of political discourse analysis should be linked, as it is in this study, with the methodological criteria deployed in critical social analysis.

6.4.1. Focus and Purpose of Political Discourse Analysis

Yin (2012), Creswell (2009), Silverman (2010) among others, emphasize the leading role of theory in driving the research process. Political discourse theory directs and defines the inquiry of social and political phenomena as the study of discourses and advocates a

methodology of discursive analysis. Having said that the literature abounds on varieties of discourse analysis (Wood, Linda and Rolf Kroger, 2000; Grbich, 2013, Gee, 2011)[92] of which Political Discourse Analysis is only one. For example, Glynos et al. (2009) discuss six key approaches to discourse analysis. These are: (1) Political Discourse Theory (PDT); (2) Rhetorical Political Analysis (RPA); (3) Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA) in Critical Discourse Analysis; (4) Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA); (5) Discursive Psychology (DP); and (6) Q Methodology (QM). These approaches differ in terms of the degree of importance and significance they attribute to discourse.

Political Discourse Theory (PDT) usefully identifies three key dimensions implicit in discourse analysis. These are ontology, focus and purpose (Glyons et al, 2009: 5). Political discourse theory emphasizes ontological reflections, and these have bearing on the level of analysis and on delimiting the object of analysis. Discourse in this perspective is an ontological horizon, a key signifier in constructing the social world. The implicit relativist view of the social world is reminiscent of that developed in Einstein's general

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[92] Wood, L. and R. Kroger (2000:195) observe on the variety of discourse analysis: discursive psychology (DA in Social Pchychology) as described by Potter and Wetherell (1987); Another variety of DA is Conversation analysis (Pomerantz &Fehr,1997). They also include Semiotics or Semiology as rooted in the classical work of Saussure as a discourse analytical approach.

theory of relativity, which has shown that "the world is not like a platoon advancing at the pace of a single commander. It's a network of events affecting each other" (Rovelli, 2018: 15). The ontological premises of discourse are reflected in the dimensions of focus and purpose, which are tuned to the view of the world as "interweaving dances made to different rhythms" (Rovelli, 2018: 13).

Focus, pertains to the level of analysis linked to the objects of study typical of the approach. PDT generally displays a macro perspective. Gee, describing this approach, differentiates between 'discourse' and 'Discourse' to make this point (2011). His definition of Discourses are "characteristic ways of saying, doing and being ...combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing and using various symbols, tools, objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (2011: 29-30)· Unlike in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), where discourse means language – in-use or stretches of language (like conversations, news, stories, ext.) big D "Discourses are always "language *plus* "other stuff"" (Gee, 2011: 34)[93]. In terms of methodological focus, this

[93] Gee (2011: 40) uses the term Discourse" (with a big D) as covering important aspects of what other have called discourses (Foucault, 1966); communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991); cultural communities (Clark, 1996); discourse communities (Bizzel,1992); distributed knowledge or distributed systems (Hutchins, 1995); though? collectives (Fleck, 1979); practices (Bourdieu, 1990); cultures (Geertz, 1973); activity systems (Engestrom, Miettinen & Punamaki

implies that analysis is not limited to language but also includes the performative aspect of social action. Consequently, unlike the linguistic bias in CDA, political discourse theory focuses on practices where discourses are rendered intelligible. Following Wittgenstein's idiom that "the human body is the best picture of the human soul" (Wittgenstein cited in Schatzki, 1996: 54) practices include bodily activities. Discourse thus extends the scope of analysis for it integrates pragmatic connotations of agency. The focus dimension then aligns discourse analysis with the discipline of sociology rather than with that of linguistics. According to Sealey and Carter (2004: 25), work more strongly associated with the former tends to explore 'how discursive practices (may be) constitutive of knowledge', while that linked with the later has been termed 'textually oriented discourse analysis' (Fairclough, 1993: 38).

Discourse analysis therefore is an adequate vehicle to grasp the complexity of the social world commensurable to the complex texture of human subjectivity and very suited to civic initiative analysis. As DuBois recognized the meaningfulness of social life is "seething with emotion, bound up in history and culture, and

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1999); actor-actant ?networks (Latour, 2005), collectives (Latour,2004);and (one interpretation of) "forms of life" (Wittgenstein, 1958).

organised by human beings whose "natures" are so varied, so different, that the effort of the human sciences is perhaps confounded more than it is aided by concepts like "human nature" (quoted in Reed, 2011: 88). Discourse analysis allows the researcher to tap into the creative, sporadic and playful moments of human nature and thus to account for the vagaries of meaning as constitutive of social reality. The broad and deep engagement with the social world is sought through answering questions such as "how, under what conditions, and for what reasons, discourses are constructed, contested and change" Howarth (2000: 130).

The purpose of political discourse analysis is to answer questions such as "is it primarily explanatory or is it primarily critical? (Glyson et al, 2009: 6). For example, while CDA is explicitly critical and Q methodology is linked to description and validation, PDT (together with interpretive policy analysts, rhetorical political analysts) incorporates both dimensions. Political discourse theory has explanatory and critical dimensions. This has important implications for methodology succinctly expressed by Howarth (2000: 130) who states that: "(discourse theorists) seek to describe, understand and explain particular historical events and processes, rather than

establish the empirical generalizations or test universal hypotheses, and their concepts and logic are designed for this purpose (Howarth, 2000: 130).

In summary then the focus and purpose of discourse analysis, particularly in the form promoted by Howart et al (2000) lends itself to social analysis. This version opposes positivist or rationalist approaches to causal explanation of social phenomena. Second, it aims to retrieve meaning through understanding and explanation; and third, explanation is intertwined with problematization. Discourse analysis thus implements an important critical dimension to exploring social meaning making and the politics of language. This aspect involves questioning the power dynamics in the process of construction and naturalization of discourses (Howarth, 2000; Glyson et al, 2009). The following sections elaborate on each of these three aspects.

6.4.2. Discourse and constitutive causality

Another dimension of discourse analysis that ensured its selection here is its rejection of essentialist causal explanations and its

constitutive focus. It advocates reconstructing layers of meaning reflectively to gain a better understanding of social realities, which is central to the methodological approach taken in this study of civic initiatives. Given that my focus was on multiple layers of meaning as people engage with Europeanization and Europeanisation discursively engages with them, linear causal explanations would not have provided the depth I was interested in uncovering in the multiple meaning making that is under construction in the Bulgarian civic space.

Therefore, the conception of constitutive causality entailed in a discursive approach was more fitting A discursive approach aims to grasp the meanings of social life discourse, so relates to the reflective approaches of social and political theorizing and the conception of constitutive causality it embraces [94]. Constitutive theorizing resonates with the anti-essentialist view of the social world (seen as contingent and incomplete) and consists of an anti-naturalistic stance to causal explanation. Within discursive analysis causal explanations (at least not linear ones) are no longer considered

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[94] Kurki (2008: 5) explains that the term reflectivism, coined by Keohane (1988) denotes post-positivist approaches, which while considered somehow 'irrational' due to refraining from engagement in causal analysis in empirical terms have been still recognized as valid by the main rationalist theorists.

essential for the scientific credibility of the research (King, Keohane and Vebra, 1994 in Kurki, 2008). Causality entails establishing regularity and observability and therefore the diligent adherence to the principles of regularity determinism and efficiency (Kurki, 2008).

Consonant with relativist ontology, discourse rejects linear and universal categories in causal explanation. While this jeopardizes the scientific standing of the research as evaluated by mainstream perceptions on causal analysis, discourse does not entirely dismiss the idea of causality[95]. Rather, causal forces are not vested in the positivist program for knowledge. Discourse, as a "framework of consistently related concepts and logic, coupled with distinctive social ontology" (Smith, S. 1995: 26 in Howarth, 2000) incorporates causality following the pragmatist logic and knowledge claims of the epistemic mode of interpretivism. The latter directs social analysis to reconstruction of landscapes of meaning (Reed, 2011), which is precisely the direction I take in interpreting the meanings held and enacted regarding Europeanisation.

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[95] Kurki (2008: 84) observes that unlike many hermeneutic theorists in the reflectivist camp who contra positivist, have accepted the common assumption that it is possible to legitimate to study world politics without conducting causal analysis or using causal terminology, neither Derrida nor Foucault reject the concept of causality. For example she explains that Derrida often refers to 'determinancies' and 'necessities'. These however, are not seen as 'ontologically necessitating'; they refer to relations of logical necessitation within language and are situated within conceptual orders.

My interpretation of meanings of civic initiatives, and the dynamic discursive analysis used here, to deliver this is carried out intentionally given my agreement with Kurki's argument that rationalist or positivist theorizing, and the human premises therein, are reductionist (Kurki, 2008). These earlier positive approaches cannot theorise social reality as a construct to the degree necessary. Discourses as constructs are not susceptible to positivist techniques of observation and measurement, and there is little potential for a scientist to form an objective understanding of them (Chandler, 2007: xiii-xvi). In addition, the mere fact that aspects of social life function mechanistically and hence have regularity does not mean that "we have to model our understanding of social life upon the science that has attended to the regularities of nature" (Reeds, 2011: 64). Even the regularities of nature are not absolute, true and mechanical. Einstein, for example, had to integrate Newton's ideas on time as mathematical and measurable phenomena with Aristotle's observations on the relational nature of time and thus theorize the structure of reality as gravitational field[96]. Constitutive causality

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[96] Time and Space in the structure of reality in gravitational field as articulated in Einstein's general theory of relativity can't be measured solely and ultimately through Newton's ideas of time as "absolute, true and mathematical" which is to be 'deduced through calculation and observation, from the regularity of phenomena". The claim of multitude of times that Einstein develops incorporates Aristotle's observation that 'when' and 'where' are always in relation to

adds a view of the social world as dependent upon arrangements of meanings and representations which themselves arrange and form the forceful causes of social action (Reed, 2011: 161).

Contra positivist, constitutive theorizing is a holistic approach, which does not require establishing regular patterns. Instead it focuses on reconstruction of layers of social meaning. According to Suganami constitutive theorizing, in line with pragmatic logic involves causal analysis "not to correlate of regular patterns but to render events or patterns intelligible" (Suganami, 1996: 134-8 in Kurki, 2008: 157). Causal factors are relative to our "our ''intelligibilifying' interests and stories' (Suganami, 1999: 380 in Kurki, 2008: 157)[97]. As Suganami argues constitutive theorizing "highlights the need for narratives that explain how various conditions or events coming together bring about certain phenomenon (Suganami, 1996: 109 in Kurki, 2008: 157). To this end, investigations explore how, and what forms and for what reasons social agents come to identify themselves with particular forms of meaning as well as the constitution, functioning

something. Time and space are real (my emphasis) phenomena as Newton believed. They however are not absolute. They are not independent of what happens, as Aristotle argued. Time is relational, and as such it is a measurement of change. If nothing changes, there is no time (Rovelli, 2018: 57-58).

[97] The link causality-intellligibility, as Kurki observes also implies that "there is still room for intersubjective agreement as to the relative merits of one type of (normatively embedded) depiction compared to another' (Suganami, 1999:380 in Kurki, 2008:157)

and transformation of systems of discursive practices. In addition, again drawing analogy with quantum physics, which discredited linear and universal categories in measuring time and space[98], constitutive theorizing highlights the importance of historical and specific conventions that structure the production of meaning in particular context (Howarth, 2009: 11). Reed explains that "the investigator must show the working of forcing causes with reference to the meaningful context in which they occur" (Reed, 2011: 161).

Constitutive causality, rather than rejection of causality, entails a deeper engagement with causation. Suganami (1996 in Kurki, 2008) emphasizes the importance of a multi-causal approach combined with a sensitivity to complexity when doing causal analysis. This epistemic mode of interpretation allows us to grasp the casual forces not solely as "pushing and pulling factors" but also as "because" thus capturing "constraining and enabling conditions" (Kurki, 2008: xi). As Suganami (1996: 138) observes causal conditions are not necessarily of the 'same kind', i.e. following the logic of multi-causal analysis in a manner that simply sites causal conditions (CI, C2,

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[98] Rovelli (2018:15) describing how Einstein's theory of relativity challenged the idea of linear and unidirectional concept of time states "the single quantity of time melts into a spider web of times. We don't describe how the world evolves in time: we describe how things evolve in local time, and how local times evolve relative to each other."

C3...). This logic as sometimes implied in philosophical and social science accounts is misleading.

Kurki's substantial work on causality in IR develops an account of constitutive causality as consisting of "conceptual systems that allow us to grasp the underlying causal structures and relations that are involved in bringing about concrete processes or patters of events" (Kurki, 2008: 10). While she successfully theorizes causal analysis as methodologically independent of 'quantitative' or 'regularitive' analysis', her analysis is still forged within the essentialist premises of philosophical realism. She argues for deepening (and widening) the ontological dimension of causality, which depends on the positing of intrinsic causal properties of objects, as is developed in critical realist accounts (Bhaskar 1978, 1979) and on integrating the Aristotelian broad conception of causes[99]. Post-structuralist constitutive theorizing dismisses ontological accounts of causes. Causality is claimed following the pragmatist logic of discourse. Accordingly, the decisions about the truth and falsity of statements are settled within orders of discourse (or paradigms) using criteria

[99] Realist philosophy of social science, while providing a ready counterpoint to the Humean critique of causality "as a concept of the mind imposed upon constant conjunction "still in its constant use of ontological language refers to real mechanisms. This way it brings in an entire framework for investigation of social life according to which mechanisms are expected to be found in all sort of times and places. Consequently, we are expected to model our understanding of social life on the sciences that have attended to the regularities of nature (Reed, 2011: 64).

established by those orders themselves (Wittgenshtein 1953, propositions 240-1). In more practical terms, causality is established by means of theory (Howarth, 2000; Reed, 2011). Theory allows the interpretative investigator to reconstruct landscapes of meanings, "to make the meaningful landscape intelligible to the reader, to render its contours clearly and show its fault line with care" (Reed, 2011: 116). Operationalizing causality in non-positivist epistemic mode of inquiry, such as is attempted in my analysis of civic initiatives here, then relies on theory as providing well-formed criteria of validity that are used to evaluate the knowledge the study produces.

6.4.3. Discourse as an explanatory and critical mode of inquiry

The epistemic mode dictates the conceptual methods by which theory is brought into contact with evidence. It structures the expectations about what such contact can accomplish (Reed, 2011). Discourse Analysis of PDT draws on a range of interpretative and critical traditions of analysis. Researching constructed meanings and practices favour interpretative understanding of the social world and its phenomena. The hermeneutic mode of inquiry places centrality of

the concept of *Verstehen*. Discourse analysis produces understanding through processes of description and explanation.

Description is an important element of discourse analysis (Curtis and Curtis, 2011). The quest to understand requires an extensive and "in-depth" description of the social phenomenon. This analytical move is essential for the recognition of discourses (Gee, 2011: 35). Discourses are fluid and offer a partial and temporal fixation of meaning. Description is conducive to recognizing important moments and patterns in data, which, in turn is important for understanding. Understanding or "grasping what is being said or done" as Peter Winch claimed (1990: 115 in Howarth, 2000: 127) is akin to grasping "the internal relations that link the parts of a realm of discourse". Recognizing discourses then can proceed through thematic analysis of data as a first analytical step. Boyatzis (1998: 1) argues that thematic analysis can be used "to see something that had not been evident to others. It involves perceiving a pattern, or theme, in seemingly random information". Recognizing an important moment (seeing) precedes encoding it (seeing it as something), which in turn precedes interpretations. Organising the various elements that constitute discourse is done through semiotics or

other structural analysis (Grbich, 2013: 169). There is, however, considerable variety about how the gathered ideas constitute a discourse. Semiotic analysis relies on the structure of language (grammar, i.e. metaphors, repetitions, binary opposites, etc.) for the creation and communication of meaning in a specific context (Gee, 2011; Carol, 2013; Curtis and Curtis, 2011).

Despite its significant family resemblance discourse–theory is not synonymous with hermeneutical modes of inquiry (Howarth, 2000: 4). It does not follow Charles Taylor's (1971: 32-3) research program seeking just to reconstitute the common meanings and practices of particular groups and communities. Discourse theory does not simply attempt to retrieve and reconstruct the meanings of social actors, but also engages in explanation. These two modes of inquiry (interpretation and explanation) are not contradictory. As Reed (2011: 161) observes "contrary to a common critique, interpretive methodologies are not set against explanation. Quite the opposite: "methodologies are "interpretive" precisely in so far as they guide us toward this meaning-reconstruction, whereby social mechanisms are finally comprehended in their concrete, sometimes vicious power

because the meanings that form them are brought to light" (Reed, 2011: 161).

In discourse theory the drive to understand and explain involves a critical gaze. Political discourse theory is a type of critical theory (Glyso et al, 2009) and as such is a problem-driven, rather than *method*, or purely *theory-driven* analytical frame (Glyson et al, 2009: emphasis in original). Explanation is intertwined with problematization reflecting the inextricable social and political dimension of language analysis. Discourse unequivocally opens a space for power dynamics since meaning (which practices render intelligible) is contingent, and hence open to contestation. Discourses are power-laden and discourse analysis, in the tradition of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kuhn and Foucault, is a way of questioning the privileging of validity and any objectivity over meaning. According to Gee (2011: 246) discourse analysis is a process of questioning ways of thinking, writing and speaking about particular topics in order to discover the rules, assumptions ways of seeing, hidden motivations, conditions for development and change, and how and why these changes occurred or were resisted. Further, as *problem-driven* approach, political discourse analysis focuses on

the dynamics of construction of particular problems in specific historical contexts.

The implications then for using discourse analysis in this study are that I must provide interpretations of events and practices by analysing the way political forces and social actors construct meaning - within incomplete *undecidable* structures. This indicates that I should pose questions, such as: what are the origins of particular discourses and policies? How can the discourses around civic initiatives be characterized? How, and why, are the discourses received and emanating around Europeanisation and civic actions sustained? When and how do these changes? How can these discourses be evaluated and criticized? (Glyson et al, 2009). At a more abstract level, considering the political as intrinsic to the social provides a lens to examine the social constitution of political processes, and hence the power dynamics involved in reorganising the social order (Howarth and Torfing, 2006: 23). This is of paramount significance to the topic of the research. Researching Europeanization as a social process entails focusing on the social constitution underpinning a political process. Discourse, understood as productive of the social world, allows for examining social

relations and forms of social practices as constituted in and through particular discourses. In this study civic initiatives are interrogated as the repository of democratic political culture, thus a space constituting social capital and enacting the political and social meaning of democratic participation in practice.

Finally, the main contribution of discourse to studying social practices lies in the assertion of social practices as conductive of change, not only enacting and reiterating existent or established forms of social life. Discourse theory, in acknowledging history as marked by radical discontinuity emphasizes both continuity and change (Howarth and Torfing, 2006: 23). Social practices, while embedded in cognitive structures of knowledge, i.e., in a discourse, are not entirely determined by a rigid and non-permeable structure. As sites of constitution of meaning, practices invoke an understanding of agency not subject to a logic of compliance or utility (optimization). Instead, they favour the spontaneous in the initiation of signification. Consequently, in refuting rules in the organising of practices, identities are not based on prior acts of identification but on beginnings.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter highlighted main points for conducting research within a frame that sees the social world as discursive given this is the approach taken in this study of Bulgarian civic initiatives. First, it elaborated on the implications of using discourse analysis for gathering knowledge. Congruent with sociological propositions, discourse constitutes the social world through practices (linguistic and non-linguistic). Further, drawing on Theodore Scahtzki's theory of practices, as doings and saying of individuals, the chapter elaborated on the constitutive and constituted role of practices for the construction of discourse. Practices as the sites of constitution of meaning are containers of knowledge. Practices are constitutive for the social world because they enable people to connect, to hang together though understanding and intelligibility.

Second, the theoretical premises of political discourse theory direct the inquiry of social and political phenomena as the study of discourses and the analytical approach as discourse analysis. The dimension of focus and purpose suggested in PDT approach to discourse analysis impact upon the methodological procedures, which navigate the analysis to describe, understand and explain particular historical events and processes, rather than establish the

empirical generalizations or test universal hypotheses. The focus and purpose dimension of discourse analysis suggest the following commitments in doing social research: first, it opposes positivist or rationalist approaches to causal explanation of social phenomena; second, it aims to retrieve meaning through understanding and explanation; and third and related to this is that explanation is intertwined with problematization. So given that political discourse analysis focuses on the dynamics of the construction of particular problems in specific historical contexts it provides a coherent methodology for analysing civic initiatives in Bulgaria.

Chapter VII: Europeanization as a Discursive Process

"Not only is our explanation of European integration the product of theoretical choice, but also our very conceptualizations of the realities of European integration and governance (what we take to be significant facets of the EU and its predecessors) is bound up with our scholarly choices and theoretical preference. This tendency is remarkably acute in EU studies" (Rosamond, 2007: 232).

This chapter continues to build the intellectual foundation and theoretical framework for the exposition and explanation of Europeanization. Discourse deployed within European integration theory, based on the post-structuralist emphasis on meaning, and, related to this, on the construction of identities through difference is an attempt to think outside the standard theorising in academic debate and its seeming "inability to capture the reality of integration and the EU" (Rosamond, 2016: 80). The chapter also seeks to add to the linkages between ideas and institutions emphasised by social constructivist studies of European integration by expounding on the discursive nature of the process. Nestled within the social ontology of discourse, Europeanization is thus considered here as a discursive

process. It must be emphasised that discourse here will not be deployed as "a pretext for a general rehearsal of a post-modern attack on mainstream integration theory" (Waever, 2009: 165). Conversely, it builds upon scholarly insights within a constructivist ontology of the social milieu as being, arguably, the best theoretical stance to capture and explain the realities of integration as a process (Rosamond, 2016: 80). The post-structuralist concepts are employed to problematise the concept of European integration and to question the logic of the process. Discourse intensifies the constructivist assumptions by arguing that rules, norms, material conditions as well as interests, cannot exist apart from discourse. European integration is envisaged as a discursive entity with a multiplicity of (contested) meanings. In addition, contestation inheres to discourse, it being implicit in any construction (of meaning) omitted by constructivism. Encapsulating the critical dimension in discourse is the concept of the political as the "element of tension" (Esposito, 2108: 208) that threads through all spheres of the integration process, developed through arguments over the political nature of European (collective) identity and the fundamentally political nature of the EU impact, which, rather than seeking consensus is foreseen as creating spaces/ channels for agonistic struggles. Europeanisation as

a discursive process fits into the relatively limited number of works that try to develop discourse analysis as *"a theory of European integration"* (Waever, 2009: 165; emphasis in original).

7.1. Meaning. Europeanization as linguistic structuration

Europeanization is a process that implies causality. Discourse has been widely used by scholars in the social sciences to operationalize causality (Carta and Morin, 2013; Amandine Krespi, 2007; Vivien Schmidt 2006, 2013,). Radaelli and Pasquier (2006: 11) have argued that impacts can be discursively created. Consequently, scholars have referred to the notion of 'Europeanization as discourse' (Hay and Rosamond, 2002; Kallestrup, 2002). To establish causality, discourse, as a concept, pertains to what Wendt (1999: 77-78) called constitutive causality. Thus, unlike causal theories, which ask "why" and to some extent "how", constitutive theories ask "how is it possible" and "what". Therefore, discourse as predicate upon radical constructivism argues against rationalist models of explaining integration, such as those proposed by Moravscik and Vohudova. The former regards norms and subjective beliefs as causally

epiphenomenal to more fundamental (read:material) influences on state behaviour (Moravscik, 1999: 674); the latter, in a similar vein, has emphasised the national interest and the bargaining power of ideas and beliefs as 'transmission belts' for underlying material interests (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006: 395; Shimefenning and Sedelmeir, 2005: 17).

As a form of constitutive causality, discourse operationalises the causal link as circular. Saurugger (2014: 183-184) has proposed a definition of Europeanisation as a 'circular Europeanisation,' as a model that allows for feedback loops and circular movement between the European and domestic levels. Building on Radaelli's (2001) extensive definition of Europeanization as" processes of (1) construction (2) diffusion and (3) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms ......" circular Europeanisation does not consider domestic change in terms of degrees. Rather, it is an attempt to grasp the impact in terms of 'Europeanisation' as 'usage' (Jacquot and Woll, 2010). Thus, it studies how domestic change is induced by European norms, and how this change then

feeds back and influences the revision of exactly these same norms at the level of the EU institutions.

7.1.1. Discourse as circular causality

Discourse as a circular causality is a concept containing structural and agentic properties. As an analytical approach to Europeanisation it has informed a voluminous corpus of studies focusing on discourse analysis. This body of work "takes up key questions in the field of European integration but are not conceived of as 'general integration theory' (Waever, 2009: 165). Situated within the vast umbrella of constructivist ideas, discourse as circularity shares the constructivist emphasis on the mutual constitutiveness of agency and structure. According to Giddens (1984), the dyad is a central dimension in social theory in its attempts to disclose the 'hidden reality of the social world'. Thus, it serves to make explicit which sort of social phenomena are fundamental to our understanding of social processes and how these phenomena are to be accounted for (Campbell, 1981: 3-4). The constructivist dynamics in European integration theory have been explained utilising the structure-agency dyad. (Wendt, 1999; Risse, 2009; Hay, 2002). Scholars

researching Europeanisation have suggested studying Europeanisation as a process of change in terms of structure and agency via the interactive, mutually reflexive relation implied in the terms (Olsen, 2002; Emerson & Noucheva, 2005: 6). Based on the interactive nature of structure and agency implicit in the causality of Europeanisation as circular causality, this study proposes to conceive of Europeanisation as a "linguistics structuration". This phrase belongs to Thomas Diez (1999: 603), reflecting Richard Rorty's argument that reality can only be known through linguistic construction [100]. It expands on Saurugger's idea of 'circular Europeanisation' on the level of theoretical engagement. The constitutive nature of causality in discourse is premised on dynamics of meaning formation, explained through the structure-agency relation.

7.1.2. Discourse as a structure and agency

As a theoretical description for Europeanization discourse places the emphasis on the search for meaning. Meaning emerges from within the structural-agentic dynamics implied by discourse. Discourse has

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[100] This statement is a reiteration of the claims implied in discourse presented in Chapter V. It indicates that reality in its objective form cannot be known or seen to exist outside human interpretation or language. As a result social reality is best understood as a linguistic construct.

two aspects, both mutually constitutive and fluid in nature. It has structural qualities that inform articulations, and it relies on articulations that reproduce its structures in constant struggles over meaning, which can only be temporarily resolved. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). This suggests a constitutive relationship between structure and agency implicated in discourse. Therefore, the mutual constitutiveness inferred by Giddens' structuration theory is also present in discourse. Yet the relationship between structure and agency is complicated, as highlighted by Waever (2009). According to him, discourses have structural qualities in that "they are more than the sum of individual acts, but they are, at the same time, dependent on the latter" (Waever, 1998: 108).

Nevertheless, political discourse theory prioritises structure in discourse. Torfing (1999: 81) asserts that in political theory discourse is used as a substitute for structure, while Waever (2009) highlights the notion that structure refers to the ever-present possibility of fixation of meaning that discourse stands for. Unlike the traditional concept of structure, which is often described as "the general properties (rules, norms and procedures) of a social, cultural and political system" (Torfing, 1999:), structure in discourse points

to "a reduction of possibilities"[101], including the possibility to "stop the sliding of the signs through the construction of nodal points that partially fix the meaning"(Howarth,1996: 103). Thus, Diez (1999, 2001) treats European governance as a nodal point through which various core strands of politics are drawn together in a seemingly coherent worldview where meaning is stabilised (Waever, 2009: 169). Structure in discourse is always contingent, unfinished and unstable; in discourse, one sign refers to another and one definition of the structural properties of discourse could be "a fixed system of differences" (Torfing, 1999: 137)[102].

Despite their playfulness however, discursive structures are able to determine the subject, in the sense of "providing it with a complete and unquestionable guide to how to understand itself, the world and the appropriate forms of social and political action" (Torffing, 1999: 148). The constitutive effects of discourse reside in the substantiation of positions with which subjects can identify. Discourse constructs the identities of actors, for actors do not exist prior to discourse. As a process of establishing a system of relations

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[101] Jorgensen and Philips' (2002:27-28) interpretation of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse
[102] And as such must be carefully distinguished from the concept of system. The latter is defined as 'the complex and relatively enduring relationships that define basic properties of the system and permits its continuous reproduction (Torfing, 1999:137).

between different objects, certain positions are opened up to which subjects can then cleave to. (Actors gain identities via the manifold subject positions made available through discourse). In this sense, unlike Giddens' definition where structure alludes to "the complex and deep-seated patterns of social meanings and relations that guide interaction within a social system", structure in discourse informs social actions. Hence, while structure is merely seen as operating through prescriptive norms of conduct and specific resource allocation, discourse is perceived to influence the cognitive scripts, categories and rationales that are indispensable for social action (Torfing, 1999: 82). Structure in discourse organises social life and structures the identities of actors.

The structural properties of the EU can be regarded as something like a transcendental signifier, as that which points to an ultimate ground, but as Waever (2009: 166) reflects on Derrida's ideas: nothing in discourse "*is* just itself - it only makes sense only by reference to something else, and on we go ...in the eternal play of signs". Constructivism emphasises that the EU deeply affects discursive and behavioural practices, for EU membership entails socialising effects (Checkel, 2001, 2005). As Risse (2009: 148)

contends "at the very least actors need to know the rules of appropriate behaviour in the EU and to take them for granted in the sense that 'norms become normal'". From the political discourse theory perspective, norms and resources are both seen as discursively constructed (Torfing, 1999: 82). This means that facts have to be situated within wider social meanings (or discourse), that their interpretation relies upon the logic furnished by its social ontology and that the resulting interpretations are contingent and contestable (Howarth, 2005: 321).

In addition, agency is an inherent dimension of discourse. Conceiving of Europeanisation as a linguistics structuration is in agreement with Wendt's assertion of causation as constitutive but contravenes his claim that "structures have effects not reducible to the effects of agents" (Wendt, 1999: 139). Discourse theory asserts that discourses are constituted in practices and investigates "the way in which social practices articulate and contest the discourses that constitute that social reality" (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 4). The latter are initiated by social actors following a logic not reducible to appropriation. Social actors move within the logics of hegemony, antagonism and dislocation (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 8). Moreover, the logic of social action can't be dissociated from the

categories of passion and affect. These play a crucial role in securing allegiance to any particular political project (Mouffe, 2000: 95). Further, agency also circumvents the linguistic focus of discursive practices. Discourse in constructivist approaches typically draw upon Habermasian versions of speech act theory and communicative practices (Risse, 2000: 149). As Schmidt and Radaelli (2004) point out, discourse is not just a language. It is a set of ideas and interactive processes. Subject positions are constituted within particular practices and social agency articulates and contests the discourses that constitute social reality.

The focus on meaning implied in Europeanization as linguistic structuration allows us to draw the following conclusions. As a form of circular causality the impact as linear (top-down or bottom up) is problematised. Europeanization gains meaning through 'linguistic structurationism', between a discursive context and articulations where they are seen as mutually constitutive. Within discursive logic, Europeanisation implies examining the impact among the actors involved.

7.2. Multiplicity. Europeanization as discursive formation

7.2.1. The European project as "productive paradox"

Framing Europeanisation as a process of linguistic structuration implies it is essentially a process of signification. While discourse indicates a fixation of meaning, it does not exhaust all of the possibilities. Meaning is not made manifest in any discursive articulation; meaning is located in the context and 'electron cloud' of multiple discourses; to wit, while a discourse tends to impose order and necessity on a field of meaning, the absolute contingency of meaning precludes this possibility from being actualized. Therefore, it is possible to advance a conceptualisation of Europeanisation as discursive formation. As such, it contains a surfeit of signification that manifests an 'uncertainty principle'; meaning cannot be pinned down. As a discursive formation it results from an articulation of a variety of discourses into a relatively unified whole. Yet this space "never fully closes up and falls into place, thus always retains paradoxes, open ends, and impossibilities" (Waever, 2009: 169). Within the three discursive approaches to European integration

highlighted by Waever (2009: 173-174) [103], Europeanisation as discursive formation draws on contributions from the theory of foreign policy as seen in the second discursive approach Waever identifies. It is, however, more thematically coherent with the third project, which he calls "The European project as productive paradox". It shares its focus, which according to Waever is "on how language contains power dynamics and organises social reality or "plays games with actors" (Waever, 2009: 173).

Scholars within constructivist institutionalism have employed discourse in their attempts to pinpoint the variety of discourses deployed in European integration. For example, Diez (1999; 2001), drawing on Austin and Searle's speech act theory, pinpoint European governance as being embedded in different discourses, which enable different readings of the EU. Rosamond (2014: 144) engages with Manners' claim on Normative Power Europe (NPE) as essentially underpinned by ethical liberal values to point out the existence of three complementary discourses within Europe's political

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[103] The other two are "governance and political struggle" and "foreign policy explained from concepts of state, nation, and Europe". The former (Waever, 2009:169) adopts implicitly a discursive approach around the concept of (multilevel) governance. It is organised around different concepts of legitimising European governance, inspired by Kochler-Koch and developed by Jachtenfuchs (1995, 2001,2002), Diez (1999). The latter (ibid:171) is more of a theory of foreign policy and focuses on the analysis of the interplay between national discursive struggles among competing articulations of national traditions on the one hand and the process (or not) of European integration on the other. This group includes the work of Larsen (1999, 2000), Neumann (1996, 2001), and Waever (1990, 1 991,1995).

constitution. He elaborates on the aspect omitted in NPE by Manners, namely the economic dimension or market liberalism and outlines three logics of liberalism: market liberalism, liberalism as the pursuit of peace and liberalism as duty (2014: 140). He suggests treating them as "discourses that both complement and contradict one another", each with their own ethical position, technique and ideational component within a different normative context at the background of public debate. We can agree then with Diez's (1999) argument that NPE, as conceptualized by Manners, carries a particular hegemony of meaning. The interplay of different discourses in the process of Eastern Enlargement has been pinpointed by O'Brennan (2006). His analysis of the institutional dimension of the Enlargement points to the simultaneous existence of three discourses that underpin the decisions of the EU's three main institutions (the Commission, the Council and the Parliament), namely; normative, moral and materialist discourse.

Others, particularly from the domain of philosophy, i.e., Derrida (1992a), Habermas (1981), Balibar (2004), Agamben (2000; 2013), and Esposito (2018), challenge the predominant description of the EU as an economic or utilitarian entity. For them, the European

project is synonymous with political integration. These diverse positions evidence the impossibility of closure and fixity of meaning and hence buttress the argument for Europeanisation as discursive formation. They suggest that we are confronted with a variety of discourses that are in need of clarification, explanation and evaluation. The inner dynamics of attempts to structure discourse merit closer attention. Discourse theory analyses the emergence, construction and logic of actual discourses. Thus, in line with the understanding of "the European project as productive paradox" the focus is on the conceptualization of the integration project and what kind of identity it has, how this interacts with more general changes in the European policy regarding legitimacy, history, as well as concepts of citizenship and politics (Waever, 2009: 173).

7.2.2. European identity: constructivist reflexivity as self/other interaction

The qualities of Europeanisation as discursive formation can be mediated with a discussion on European identity. The interest in identity formation entered the discipline of international relations (IR) with constructivist theoretical reflection. Constructivist-informed approaches have incorporated debates on identity, values

and norms in the field of EU studies (Rosamond, 2016). Although identity is rendered with various vocabularies of constructivism, the common ground has been the (socially) constructed rather than given identity. According to Neumann (1999), constructivist insights enabled theoretical perspectives in IR to adopt self/ other relations. This question, initiated by philosophers of alterity, i.e., Bakhtin, Levinas and Derrida, and extended to the field of international relations by Todorov (1982), Der Derian (1987), Saphiro and Campbell (1992) was firmly shifted into mainstream IR with Wendt's (1992) article "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power". In this work Wendt discusses how states constitute one another's identities by borrowing assumptions from symbolic interactionists[104]. By relying on constructivist insights, Wendt was able to "kit out the issue of collective identity formation in the ritual 'neorealist versus neoliberal' attire" (Neumann, 1999: 31). By integrating the structurationist claim, Wendt pointed out that the dichotomy between these two positions is false, and that they are in fact mutually constitutive.

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[104] for example Simmel's (1970) discussion on the stranger with regard to the collective self.

Constructivist-based arguments highlighting relationality focused on action, or rather interaction, in identity formation. The reflexive dimension has enabled theorisations of EU identity as interactive, thus opposing the existence of an overarching EU identity grounded in culture (Smith, 1992), or as a self-ascriptive symbolic conception of identity as envisaged in the 1973 Declaration on European identity issued by the EU (or EEC as it was then) and approved in Copenhagen[105]. The EU's aspiration to assert its identity on the international scene is illustrated in the following extract from the Common Provisions of the Treaty on European Union (TEU):

"The Union shall set itself the following objectives: to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence" (Art. 2 TEU)

The active nature of EU identity is developed in Manners and Whitman's (2003: 7) theorization of the EU as 'as a form of

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[105] The way European identity was envisaged in the Declaration has been criticized as "potentially flattening as well as a normative character of the concept of identity" and has led to a preference for the terms "identification" or subjectivity" (Bhabha, 1990:207-21; Passerini, 1988, 2002:195 in Stavrakakis, 2005.). Also, as the first crystallization of a project for European identity, the Declaration has been argued to draw upon a "dry, institutional, symbolic conception of identity" (Stavrakakis, 2005: 81).

'difference engine' which drives the construction and representation of the EU in such a way as to introduce and encourage differences which might be characterized as the Interactive International European Identity (IIEU). They stress the notion of EU international identity as one of action, or rather interaction, networking. Delanty (1995, 2005, 2006) develops the self/other interaction in European identity based on Bakhtin's dialogism. According to Neumann, Bakhtin's dialogism provided a starting point for the study of collective identity formation. Bakhtin (1990 in Neumann, 1999: 13) insisted that the subject actually cannot know either itself or the world because meaning is created in discourse, where consciousness meets. This transgression of the conception of personhood as bounded was incorporated in Delanty's (2006) argument on the multi-dimensionality of European identity. He proposed a definition "against reductionist attempts as cultural or political identity based on peoplehood", and argues instead "to see it in terms of socio-cognitive *form* consisting of repertoires of evaluation, discursive practices, a plurality of identity projects which could be characterized in terms of dialogic identity" (Delanty, 2006: 128).

Two important constructivist assumptions about European identity had significant implications for Europeanisation. These are the social

dimension of integration, and the normative logic of EU impact.

The dynamics of integration as cooperation in response to societal problems are developed in the reflexive approach of Eriksen (2005). This perspective theorizes European integration as a process beyond institutions but rather through the lens of society based on the analytical categories of deliberation and problem-solving developed in Habermas' (1981) theory of communicative action. Accordingly, the actors reflexively monitor the circumstances of their activities and base their interventions on intersubjectively accessible reasons. Delanty (2005) too elaborates on Habermas's (2001) argument of cosmopolitanism to develop the social aspect of the process as a civilizational approach to Europeanization. As such, the process encloses four major logics that have been unfolding. These are: cultural interpenetration; trans-nationalisation of the state; articulations of new discourses and imaginaries; and the geopolitical reconfiguration leading to the appearance of several 'Europes' (2005: 129). In this perspective the transformation of Europe is mainly social, and not institutional. In the words of Delanty (2005), "Europeanisation points to social integration rather than system integration"

Within the institutionally-focused literature, the constructivist-

influenced definition of Europeanisation reflects the constitutive effects of norms (Onuf,1989; Kratochwil in Eriksen, 2005). Risse (2009) emphasizes the common constructivist concern with identity construction and the role of norms in this process. The centrality of norms in the formation of an EU identity is developed most notably in Jan Manners' (2002) argument about Normative Power Europe (NPE), which suggested a conceptualization of European identity as rooted in ethical liberal values and of being of an essentially normative nature. Likewise, Schimmelfenning (1998, 1999, 2005) contends that the EU, as an international community of (European) states characterized by shared values and norms of liberal democracy, enlarges to include states that share these values (in Sedelmemeir, 2005: 122). The constitutive effects of international institutions, via the centrality of norms and not solely through material forms, is embedded in Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier's (2005: 5) definition of Europeanisation as "enlargement of an organisation" and a process of *"gradual and formal institutionalisation of organisational rules and norms"* (italics in original*).* These scholarly works stress the socializing of domestic agents, where the latter are seen to be driven by the logic of appropriatedness and not of utility. Thus, they resonate with

collectively-held norms, ideas and values (Risse, 2000: 4).

7.2.3. Europeanization: from normativity to fluidity

As a discursive formation Europeanization is de-centered. It denotes a signifying system where meaning is an effect of the 'play of signifiers', thus precluding the possibility to ground norms in a universal logos. In asserting the contingency of any identity, discourse finds claims of normativity rather problematic. First and foremost, in a discursive social reality, norms are vested in and interpolated within a particular discourse. They are not autonomous, universally legitimated hence, globally accepted principles. Normativity tends to fixate meaning as it is often rooted in claims of universality and hence predicated on essentialist reasoning. However, normativity precludes the play of meaning and organises the process of meaning formation around claims of "ought-to-be". Similar moves impede acts of agency. In particular, in positing a norm, agency is circumscribed; its logic is predetermined as being "tracked" into the direction of meeting the required form. It is inscribed in rational considerations aimed at conforming with what

is believed to be the essence[106]. For example, Neuman (1999: 34)

observes that in Wendt the question of the Other to various degrees

is approached through assimilation or submission. She argues that

Wendt's claim that 'identification is a continuum from negative to

positive – from conceiving of the other as anathema to the self as

conceiving it as extension of the self "(1994: 386) contains the

judgment made of the other; Wendt's approach reflects only one of

the three axes along which self/other relations may be studied[107].

Subsequently, normativity entails moral judgments. In Manners' NPE

approach the notion of reflexivity is a move towards avoiding the

"essentialism of civilizing Europe' (Manners, 2003: 73-74). Manners

argues that while EU norms represent an inclusiveness about what is

or what ought to be normative about the EU, they are not exclusively

European, but reflect universal post-cold war practices of the

international community. This attempt is also present in Manners

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[106] Rosamond (2016: 80) observes that the appeal of constructivism that entered the IR mainstream lies in the middle way between rationalism and reflectivism that its claims offer. Neumann (1992) also comments on Wendt's analysis as cast in rationalist and scientific terms, which precluded the possibility of studying the multidimensionality of identity formation.

[107] Neumann (1999:21) refers to Tsvetan Todorov (1981/1984) work "The Conquest of America: the Question of the Other", where he demonstrated that the relations between Self and Other cannot be grasped on one level. She develops his ideas and argues that political concerns about the question of the other or the problems of alterity in the discipline of IR can be located along three axes: "first of all there is a value judgment (an axiological level) the other is good or bad; secondly, there is an action of rapprochement of distancing in relation to the other (a praxeological level), i.e. I embrace the other's values, I identify myself with him; or else I identify the other with myself, I impose my own image upon him ; between submission to the other and the other's submission, there is also a third term, which is neutrality or indifference. Thirdly, I know or am ignorant of the other's identity (this is the epistemic level) 1982/1992:185)."

and Whitman's (2007: 236) later work where they stress the external dimension of the IIEU. Nevertheless, locating EU properties in normative terms posits a centre imbibed with moral assumptions and a logic of action, which March and Olsen (1989: 159) called the "logic of appropriateness". These have been observed in Europeanization studies to entail a discourse of "one size fits all" (Zielonka, 2013) and associated with hierarchical language and conceptualizations of Europeanization as racialization (Goldberg, 2006). The normative rhetoric of enlargement has been criticized by scholars, for example Foresberg (2011: 185) who points out that the EU not only promotes norms but does so *in a normative way* (the italics are mine). Diez (2005) and Pace (2007) observe that EU tends to treat its norms as absolute and that these are imposed coercively as conditions upon negotiating partners. This resulted in material and ideological asymmetries of the enlargement discourse within the context of Eastern Enlargement where the post-communist countries were seen as takers, not givers, displaying "a traffic of uniformity in one direction from the West to the East" (Zielonka, 2013: 42). Furthermore, there are scholars who have shown that norms are not sufficient to trigger the integration process. According to Sedelmeier (2005: 123) EU enlargement presents a puzzle. He argues that "while

norms are important, the empirical evidence suggests that they are in themselves insufficient to prompt a decision by the EU to enlarge".

Europeanization as discursive formation, is better rendered with the term fluidity rather than normativity. Discursive structures are incomplete. As relational entities, discourses are dependent on and vulnerable to those meanings that are necessarily excluded in any discursive articulation. Discursive structures are then dislocated, meaning that they are susceptible to events or set of events that cannot be represented, symbolized or domesticated by the discursive structure which is itself therefore disrupted (Torfing, 1999: 148). As discursive formation then, Europeanization is predicated upon a constitutive outside. This is what Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 110-111) call a 'discursive exterior' and it means that the necessary moments of a discourse are also penetrated by contingency. The normative understanding of EU identity is de-fragmented and allocates centrality to the external dimension as in "the face of the other summons the self into existence" (Neumann, 1999). This incompleteness prevents structural determination of objective positions within the structure. It undermines the determining capacity of structure. The structural determinants of

normative principles in discursive structure are decentered in the sense of being located in the context of multiple discourses (Howarth, 2000: 109).

Europeanization as discursive formation approach to defining an ontology of Europe coheres with theoretical propositions that highlight multiplicity. A non-reductionist conception of Europe as "multiple Europes" is proposed by Bieybuck and Rumford (2012) who adopt multiplicity as an approach, which contains "elements of ontological creation and transformation" rather than constituting "a site of closure".

"*A multiplicity has neither [unitary] subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature (the laws of combination therefore increase in number as the multiplicity grows)... Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities*"
(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 8–9 in Bieybuck and Rumford, 2012)

Multiplicity is a critique not only of a homologous European meaning strapped by norms but also of a strategy for integration as "the tendency to 'fix' Europe, to stabilize its meaning, to associate it - above all else- with the values and programs of the EU" (Bieybuck and Rumford, 2012: 4)[108]. Employing post-structural terminology this claim can be expressed as "Europe as *masquerading void"*. Implicit in this expression is the impossibility of pinning down a single connotation of Europe. It also suggests the time-space articulation of Europe. In keeping with the assumptions of discourse theory, identity is understood as precarious and unstable, and its meaning is historical and contingent. Delanty (1995: 2) argues that:

"*It is not possible to see European history as the progressive embodiment of a great unifying idea since ideas themselves are products of history. No coherent idea runs through European history from earliest times to the present and the historical frontiers of Europe have themselves shifted several times*"

Discourse theory locates norms and meaning as articulations of a particular discursive position. Meaning is not given but comes into

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[108] The authors, while arguing against the possibility of any singular idea to capture how Europe is understood and practised today dismiss the deconstruction dynamics for they "do not claim Europe is only a text". Rather Europe is real, but also produced in multiples (Biebuyck and Rumford, 2012: 5)

existence in and out of engagement with the social reality. Biyebuck and Rumford (2012: 9) contend that "objects, such as Europe, are 'made' in particular temporal and spatial settings. They are formed within particular modes of reasoning, by specific agents, and under certain political pressures". For instance, the idea of Europe as prevention of war and preservation of a stable peace on the continent has existed since l'Abbe de Saint-Pierre published his famous essay *Projet de traité pour rendre la paix perpétuelle entre les souverains chrétiens* in 1713 (Haller, 2008: 267). The concept was first mooted by the intellectuals of Charlemagne's court as more respectable than that of *imperium occidentale,* but it became a reality at a particular historical conjunction, namely after the impact of the two world wars on European politics and society. In this view the origin, development and implementation of European Unification can be traced back to a desire to create a peace project to overcome the disaster of two world wars that emerged from bellicose nationalism (Guerrina, 2002: 45). Redefining Europe as a project and overcoming the past also involved the economic reconstruction of Europe in the adoption of the Marshall Plan (Waever,1993: 162). The economic underpinnings of the European project, which have led to the predominant conception of the EU as "a market-based régime"

should be seen as mutual cooperation as a response to societal problems (Eriksen, 2006). It is not a fundamental feature of the EU, which is driving its impetus to enlarge, as the rationalist model of intergovernmentalists has claimed (Moravscik,1998).

Furthermore, the current globalization dynamics precipitate new constructions of Europe (Biebuyck and Rumford, 2012). While the global dimension of Europeanization is still to be developed, same literature paints a portrait of the EU as a protector of the nation state in the face of the economic threats of globalization (Castells, 2000). The EU simultaneously functions not only as a facilitator of global flows of goods, idea, persons, etc. but also social justice, environmental protection and human rights (Magone, 2009: 277). Biebuyck and Rumford (2012), deploy the post-westernization idea of Europe associated with Delanty's three civilizational constellations that intersect in Europe; namely, the Occidental-Christian; the Byzantine-Slavic-Eurasian; and the Ottoman-Islamic. These civilizational constellations allow for the possibility of multiple modernities and have contributed to the shaping of 'European modernity in the image not of one modernity but all three' (Delanty, 2003).

Consequently, Europeanization is a process fluctuating historically

and contextually. Scholars from various disciplines have highlighted the role of the discursive context in defining specific meaning. For example, in European integration studies, Waever (1997: 4) contends that the meaning of Europe differs largely between national contexts and shows how it is built around a set of basic concepts. The appropriation of the idea of Europe by national discourses but also by citizens in the same context revealed the non-essentialist image of Europe and has led some scholars to argue about "the nationalising of Europe" (Malbourg and Bo Strath in Delanty, 2003: 477). While this move can be contested as essentialising dynamics, Delanty (1995) clarifies that "it is erroneous to regard Europe as merely a region, for the simple reason that it means different things for different people in different contexts".

Discourse dispenses with the notion of norms and perceives of cognitive ideas as articulations from a particular standpoint. Rather than a firmly established set of principles, discourse offers a perspective on dynamics, of a multiplicity of meanings fluctuating within the nature of Europe. From a discursive vantage point then, Europe as *subject* has a '*failed structural identity*' (italic in original Torfing, 1999: 149), i.e., imagined as a constant process of subjectification (of becoming somebody), which is an attempt to fill

the empty space of the lack through identification (Laclau,1990a: 60 in Torfing.1999: 150). A similar conceptualization of Europe as "characterised by disjuncture, fragmentation and uncertainty rather than 'older images of order, stability, and systematicness' has permitted Biyebuck and Rumford (2012:), drawing on Appadurai (1996: 46–7), to envision Europe as a "fractal cultural configuration" formed out of various polythetic cultures which are (at best) weakly patterned and structured. Also, given the impossibility of any structural determination (of the identity of a subject) of the core concept of Europe, it can be referred to as a floating signifier (Torfing, 1999: 301).

This dynamic view of Europe allows us to pursue an argument in non-essentialist terms. In a discursive space apprehended as language games, Europe gains meaning not from subjective underpinnings but from use in action. Therefore, Delanty disavows claims of Europe as a stable entity or as a sovereign, autonomous object and suggests approaching it rather as an invention. According to Delanty "to speak of Europe as an 'invention' is to stress the ways in which it has been constructed in historical processes; it is to emphasise that Europe is less the subject of history than its products and what we call Europe is, in fact, a historically fabricated reality of

ever-changing forms and dynamics" (Delanty,1995: 3). Therefore, as suggested by Delanty (1995), rather than explaining an idea, with the notion of discourse we can focus on identifying the dynamics implicit in the cognitive space that Europe denotes. These are reflected as political and are addressed in the next section, which explores the contestation dynamics in the European construction.

Conceiving of Europeanisation as discursive formation problematises its impact as one-dimensional. The focus on the contingency of identity and its constitution in action questions the normative logic of the impact as "one size fits all". Integration in institutional terms has been defined as a process where actors shift their loyalties and activities towards a new centre with the authoritative right to regulate interests and allocate resources (Schmitter, 1969: 166 in Eriksen, 2005: 13) Integration in societal terms requires a logic of diversification rather than unification. As Delanty (2005) suggests, integration is different from unity (unification). Instead, it implies a recognition of diversity.

A crucial factor in establishing the meaning of Europeanization is the domestic context of the EU member states. The impact of the integration process has been generally depicted through concepts of

fusion, convergence, cohesion and integration, often used synonymously to imply unification, and thus consensus (Trenz, 2008: 6). But uniformity as such is a misguided perception of the ultimate aim of integration. Zielonka (2013: 5), referring to Delors' address in Burges in 1989, points to the fact that the western European experience shows that engineering does not eliminates diversity, but only modifies it. Europeanization as discursive process requires taking into consideration the socio-political context and its cultural and historical legacies. It also envisages entering into dialogue with the national context as Rosamond (2014) advocates.

A discursive framework challenges the idea of a stable centre and the ideational nature of the resources associated with Europe. Given the impossibility of structural determination and the multiplicity of European discourses, Europeanization demands accounting for the unevenness of the European effect in different functional areas and in different territories. Héritier (2001: 2), in the context of EU policy design and implementation has argued that "the process patterns of Europeanization have not been uniform across the member states, and reflect neither the well-defined will of "unified supranational actors" nor a pervasive, problem-solving rationality which imposes

itself "automatically". Instead, the political reality of European policy-making is "messy" in so far as it is uneven across policy areas and member states. It is also institutionally cumbersome and subject to the dynamics and particular logic of domestic politics. We could, therefore, "potentially expect multiple national impacts of any EU-level policy or institutional initiative; just as domestic change is likely to be caused by a mixture of independent and /or domestically-mediated variables" (Lyngaard, 2012: 86).

7.3. Contestation. Europe as embodiment of the political

Framing Europeanisation as discursive formation is not without its problems; quite the opposite. Asserting the contingency of meaning and Europe as "invention" and "continued pluralisation" while in resonance with the discursive nature of the social world, is a slippery road for social scientific explanations. Discourse as plurality *grounds* the impossibility of closure of meaning in the pragmatics of meaning construction. Thus, the focus is on the dynamics involved in signification and in the emphasis on action when ascribing to a world of *difference.* The critique of normativity in Manners' argument on NPE as its most prominent expression in European Studies is

ventured as a totalising category. Normativity is of course something we can hardly escape or do without; as social beings, normative assumptions are the equivalent of our biological DNA – it is the very fabric of our existence (Frost, 2001). But unlike genes, which affect our phenotype whether we like it or not we can reflect upon, scrutinize, debate and question our normative assumptions. As such, our normative ideas can be amended or rejected in terms of the consciousness within which we approach them. Thus, they can be contested.

In the previous section, the centrality of an external element for identity formation by discourse was posited. To argue this point, that any system of meaning relies upon a discursive exterior that partially constitutes it, necessarily touches upon ontological questions of Self and Other. The constitution of any 'form of life' is predicated upon a relation to a 'constitutive outside' which problematizes any internal purity' (Staten, 1984: 16-17; Derrida, 1976: 44-65; Said, 1995). The significance of the Other in discursive theory is in the logic of action that it prioritizes. Thus, with regard to the discussion on Europe and Europeanisation, Biyebuch and Rumford (2012) observe that it is not the proliferation of Europes which requires investigation; rather, it is

the dynamics of Europe's multiplicity which commands attention, dynamics which, by the logic of discursive theory, follow the pattern of contestation. As a result, Europeanisation as discursive formation reveals the struggles for hegemony in the multiplicity of Europe and therefore the political dynamism imbricated in the European idea.

A discursive reading of Europe *qua* identity, i.e., as floating signifier, suggests that meaning is intrinsically marked by difference. In Derrida's understanding, this meant that it is both established by differentiation and deferred or never quite lined up behind the term that it is meant to capture. Scholars of political discourse theory diverge from Derrida in their explanations of the dynamics of difference. Although they build upon Derrida's insights into otherness and responsibility in identity formation, they emphasize the logic of contestation that the external possesses, rather than the logic of neutralization as per Derrida (Esposito, 2018: 126-127). Given the different route of theoretization, the argument that is made is that of the political dynamics inferred in difference[109]. This

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[109] Scholars have argued about the apolitical nature of Derrida's argument. The dynamics of deconstruction implied by his thought have been considered as "a purely intellectual game, a simple rhetorical exercise" (Esposito,2018:126-127). Also, his concept of multiple identity is criticized for being conceptually undifferentiated and undefined, thus lacking a sufficiently explicit description of the power disparity between the subject and the forms of subjectivity that they denote. Passerini (2002:199 in Stravakakis, 2005) contends that "it limits itself to an underlying quality of tolerance and to expressing possibilities". Yet, the political implicit in his

section presents three ways to think of Europe as the *Embodiment of the Political.*

7.3.1. Europe as co-presence of the opposites

The political emerges with difference, with the aporetical demands it imposes and the calls to respond to them. Derrida's interpretation stresses the non-essentialist logic that underpins the possibility of the political. As Derrida argues, "essentialism precludes the appearance of politics". In "Other Headings", Derrida conceptualises Europe as an identity always established in relation to the Other, thus containing the possibility to "become foreign to itself at certain empirical moments of becoming". As non-identified with itself and hence ambivalent, Europe is bound to enclose conflicting positions based on mutually-exclusive injunctions. As Laclau suggests, "there might be inconsistencies and irresolvable contradictions between the different identifications of the subject; however, these aporias might be perfectly acceptable to the subject". Indeed, the European idea is an expression of struggles with contradictions that has

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writing is not to be derived from a theory of politics. It resides in the dynamics of resistance to all normative philosophies that deconstruction allegedly infers. As Esposito (2018:128) suggests: "Deconstructing the categories of metaphysics means undermining their legitimating function with respect to the practices and institutions that express determined power structures".

evolved through conflict rather than consensus (Delanty, 1995: 2).

Europe then, is "difficult" (Balibar, 2004) and ambivalent (Delanty, 1995). It is difficult for it exists in historical relations and fields of power. Balibar (2004: 155) speaks of "difficult Europe" because for him "it combines the aporia of sovereignty with the revival of the problem of citizenship". These injunctions prove to be difficult bedfellows. In Delanty's (1995: 1) argument on Europe as ambivalent, the conflict that permeates this internal opposition is described via the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion. Hence Europe "is not always about unity and inclusion but also about exclusion and the construction of difference based on norms of exclusion".

Inscribed in the construct of Europe is the permanent tension between the liberal and democratic aspects of liberal democracy. Torfing (1999: 249) emphasizes the persistent conflict between the traditional liberal appraisal of *pluralism, individualism and freedom* and the democratic principles of *unity, community and equality.* According to Frieze and Wagner (2006), this implicit tension in the narratives enclosed in the European project (i.e. liberty, democracy, and statehood) reflects the tension between the self and the polity grounded in the Greek polity. It also has taken many forms and has

spurred ideas about the person, commitment to polity, the value commonality between members as well as the idea of governance as the connection between those who govern and those who are governed (Frieze and Wagner, 2006: 79). Thus Delanty (1995: 1) has commented that "the European idea expresses our cultures' struggles with its contradictions and conflicts. In a more mundane mode, Larsen (1997: 121-2) observes that "the struggle to impose meaning on such a term as 'Europe' is not only a struggle between politicians, but also between the different discourses that enable actors to articulate their position".

7.3.2. The Political emerges with responsibility

Derrida's insights into the meaning of Europe semantically join 'the Other' with 'the Political', where being political means creating a space for the other. Derrida argues that Otherness obliges us absolutely; he conceives of the constitution of the Other in language (rather than rational discourse) as co-integral to co-existence: *"… a civilization must be plural; it must ensure respect for the multiplicity of languages, cultures, beliefs, ways of life…"* he continues *"… respect for this multiplicity and plurality is very difficult, because we must*

cultivate the idiom. What I call 'the idiom' is the uniqueness of the language of the other. We much respect the idiom of each one of us, not so-called national idioms; but each person's idiom; this is his or her way of speaking, of being, of signifying, while at the same time of communicating and translating..." (Derrida in Larsen, 2014: 423-444)

The crucial issue then resides in cultivating responsiveness or the ability to respond to the Other. For Derrida responsibility is the political [110]. Gashé (2009) paraphrasing Derrida, states that "responsibility consists in responding, hence in *answering* to the other, before the other and the law, and if possibly publicly answering for itself, its intentions, its aims, and for the name of the agent deemed responsible".

Europe as a political space is organised not around negation and annihilation of the other, but around engagement with the Other. Therefore, as a discursive space Europe does not allow for crystallization of 'the self' and 'the other' but works on adding rather

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[110] Gashé (2009) explains that while rejecting spiritual determinism, Derrida endorses the concept of the care of the soul as intrinsic to the platonic model of responsibility. As a basis for politics, responsibility implies universally accessible knowledge and a demand of transparency. Responsible decision making is a constitutive element of Greek political life, which "openly declares that secrecy will not be allowed".

than excluding. Europe embodies the political in the relentless pressure to acknowledge and respond to competing claims generated by these discursive forces/motions. Derrida contends: "if something like Europe exists and can be thought at all, it must be a conception that for reasons of structure or principle is open to responding to still more injunctions, including injunctions from other, or non-European traditions".

As the embodiment of the political Europe refers to the (political) act of responding to the heritage of two mutually-exclusive traditions, bequeathed by history, of what constitutes responsibility; the Platonic 'care of the soul' based on knowledge and accountability, and the Christian tradition which claims that "decision making without secrecy remains ultimately irresponsible" (Gashé, 2009: 151). Europe as responsibility emerges in the equation between inheritance and existence that Derrida establishes. According to Derrida "inheritance is never a *given,* it is always a task", it is something still before us, to which we have to bear witness as that which "we *are* in so far as we *inherit*" (italics in original; Gashé, 2009: 135) European identity conceived as responsibility imposes the task

to assume the memory of Europe, but also to radically transform what has been handed down (Gashé, 2009: 136).

Alterity and the ethos of responsibility is what comprises the promise of Europe. As a 'passage of becoming into any other' and a lack of determination it presupposes Europe implies a notion of "reversibility without risks, as at all moments it announces only the same – transition, transformation" (Gashé, 2009). This quality of identifiable and enduring sameness (as a form of self-identity) lingers in Europe's promise. Derrida's dialectics also acknowledge the danger of such a transition and transformation. He argues that "without a threat posed by its promise, Europe would not be a promise to begin with".

7.3.3. The communicative rationality of the political

The German vector of theorizing Europe as political dynamics focuses on the possibility of practical reason opened up by the Enlightenment. The political project of Europe is envisaged as Kantian cosmopolitanism, as premised on reaching a common understanding through the medium of deliberation. Developed in

Habermas' seminal work, it also gives prominence to language, siting it within the domain of rationality, where it plays an indispensable role as an expressive medium. According to Habermas, deliberation designates the rule of reasons, namely, that actors coordinate their actions by giving and responding to reasons through acts of communication. Habermas (1981: 86) argues:

"*The concept of communicative action refers to the interaction between at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extraverbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their action by way of agreement. The central concept of interpretation refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admits of consensus*"

As it has been noted earlier, this view has informed much constructivist thinking about Europe. Risse (2009: 151) in particular has argued about the need to take communicative practices seriously, because they "permit us to try to examine more closely how Europe and the EU are constructed discursively". While he

equates discursive practices with linguistic utterances, the aim is to use language to capture how "agents make sense of the world and attribute meaning to their activities", how they come to grips with the meaning of European integration and how they develop a European public sphere. Habermas' ideas on the political possibilities of Europe have been deployed prolifically in Delanty's conceptualizations on post-European identity. Adopting Habermas' argument on constitutional patriotism (Habermas 1998, 2003) Delanty (2005: 127) developed a framework of rights-based conceptions of post-national European identity. This model is (according to him), the most sophisticated conception of a European political identity, overarching European identity and thus disavowing the cultural underpinning of identity. While culture is particularistic, political identity in principle offers the possibility of universality. The perspective on identity he outlines emphasises participation as being a central to citizenship as rights. A political identity should be cast in argumentative rationality and deliberative processes in order to establish a reasoned consensus with the goal of solving common problems.

Although this perspective attempts to understand society from the vantage point of language, it "lacks a social placement", as Neumann

(1999: 10) puts it. While society is explained by reference to the structures of discourse, it neglects the inherently antagonistic dynamics that exist in human societies, and hence in discourse. Although language is argued to play a constitutive role with regards to norms, customs, practices, and so on, "language affects these only by disclosure, i.e., by lending expression to a part of our pre-understanding of these ends and norms either affirmatively or critically" (Taylor, 1991: 23). In Habermasian "discourse ethics" the self and other are still ideologically lodged in "ideal speech situations" (Neumann, 1999: 10). This conceptual caveat is replicated in Delanty's ideas on European political identity. By insisting on consensus, the communicative rationality of the political is abstracted from power and from the multiplicity of social bonds other than the bond of reasoned discourse.

7.3.4. The political as constituted in language

Delanty (1995), while preserving the notion of norms in his various definitions of European identity, subjects them to critical reflection. He wishes to deconstruct the Platonic–like version of an immutable European ideal, the notion that the idea of Europe has always been

linked to the pursuit of the values of freedom, democracy and autonomy. To this end, he argues that "Europe does not exist except as a discursively constructed object of consciousness". In a similar vein, Agnes Heller (1999: 13) stresses that "the concept of Europe (or the West) stood precisely for this brand of new socio-political *dynamics* or 'imaginary institution of social signification' or 'historical consciousness' or 'forms of discourse'" (Heller,1999: 13). This section develops the idea of the political nature of Europe by elaborating on Delanty's idea of Europe as political consciousness. The claim of the political nature of Europe is elaborated, highlighting its constitution in language as developed by Agamben (2000)'s notion of potentiality.

To think of Europe as potentiality is to reflect upon tradition as being interlinked with that of language. Explaining the philosophical connotations of the term "Potentiality", as developed in Agamben's philosophical essays on that subject, Hofmannsthal refers to *potentiality* as "a moment of thinking in which... the experience of tradition and the experience of language cannot be held apart" or of "being read as it was never written"(Agamben, 2000:x). In the chapter on Potentiality, Agamben's philosophical inquiry delves into

Aristotle's reasoning about the term and its inherent link with impotentiality[111]. Leaving aside the details of the philosophical discussion, we can borrow the logic of the term as interepreted by Hofmannsthal in order to acknowledge the history implicit in the idea of Europe and read it -anew- in linguistic dynamics.

Consciousness, argues Schatzki (1996), is always consciousness *of* (my emphasis) something, for example, in presentation something is being presented, in love loved, in hate hated. As a linguistic event (not discourse) Europe is "saying something about something" (Aristotle in Agamben, 2002) This statement of Aristotle implies that names presuppose actual signification by entering into a relation with a predicate (a second something, a signifier, an intent). Explained by Agamben with the formula "the name of the name is not the name", it means that a subject of language expresses an object that cannot be self-expressed but gains meaning by entering into presuppositions. It is the presupposition that renders the predication possible. Or, expressed differently, if something is not presupposed, the predication or second something cannot be

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[111] Agamben's interpretation of Aristotle's saying "A thing is said to be potential if, when the act of which it is said to be potential is realised, there will be nothing impotential" stresses that the essence of potentiality is constituted in its ability to be in relation to its own incapacity. In potentiality sensation is in relation to anesthesia, knowledge to ignorance, vision to darkness. ...What is truly potential is thus what has exhausted all its impotentiality in bringing it wholly into the act as such." (Agamben, 2002:182-183)

accomplished. Furthermore, "A proposition can only say how a thing is, not what it is" (Wittgenstein in Agamben, 2002: 3). Following this stream of thought, we can argue that as a linguistic event, Europe presupposes actual signification by entering into relation with a predicate, i.e., an object of consciousness. Because of the presupposition enabling the predicative assertion, the latter is not only a signifier or *intentio,* but is also a signified, an *intentum.* The predicate or second something as object of consciousness is rendered possible by the presupposition of the political that the linguistic event of Europe presupposes.

The dynamics implicit in 'Europe as consciousness' can be summed up by the metaphor 'embodiment of the political'. Although "metaphor was treated with some ambiguity in European thinking"[112] (Drulak, 2004: 5), it has been used by scholars of discourse analytical studies with respect to European integration (Waever, 1998; Diez.1999; Rosamond, 1999). The wide use of figurative language in describing Europe and, in particular, Europe as "body politics," has been pointed out by Andrea Musolff (2004). In his analysis of metaphors in the discourses of European integration,

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[112] Drulak stresses the historical dismissal of metaphor as an ornament of language which disturbs clear thinking. He refers to Locke's (1961) speech where he argues for not using any figurative language in serious matters of knowledge.

Musloff stresses the metaphor of 'body politics' to grasp the political usages of Europe (Woll and Jacquot, 2012: 115). Further, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson (1980), he argues that Europe as a literary figure is not only a matter of language (rhetoric) but also of thinking (epistemology) and social practice (ontology). Thus, the wide use of corporeal metaphors such as 'the life cycle of Europe', 'health and illness in Europe', 'the organs of Europe' as metaphors, is not merely evident in the words we use but actually constitute our very conception of Europe. In his analysis of the linguistic corpus of metaphors, Musloff points out that Europe understood as "body politics" is quite a pernicious idea. Implicit in the body-based political imaginary is a conception of one place, demarcated by clear boundaries and populated by a principally homogenous (or at least homogenising) group of people. When applied to Europe, this analogy of the body suggests a certain degree of homogeneity, an 'imaginary of Europe as oneness' (Luomaho, 2002). It is latent in the social reality of the nation state as a non-differentiated totality and in territorial politics linked with collective-identity formations through exclusivist ideologies such as nationalism and racism (Laclau, 1990) and accounted for in arguments on "racial Europeanisation" (Goldberg, 2006).

Musolff's argument on Europe as body politics was underpinned by the ontological connotations of metaphors, premised on Schmitt's conception of politics as an axiomatic distinction between 'us and them' understood as friends and foes. Europe as embodiment of the political inscribed in language is a potentiality for politics beyond Schmitt's exclusionary dynamics. As an overarching political identity however, it does not dismiss the ontological antagonism reflected in Schmitt's argument and omitted in Habermas' communicative approach. Europe as embodiment of the political inheres the dialogic nature of the latter, while preserving the dynamics of contestation in language. These are displayed in the next section, which discusses Europe as liberal democracy.

7.4. European integration as contestation of liberal democracy

7.4.1. The social articulation of liberal democracy

As a structuring force (Diez,1999) Europeanisation's transformative power can be seen as a set of concepts or conceptions that inform and make up a discursive context for domestic actors, policies and institutions (Lyngaard, 2012: 88). In the context of the post-

communist context of Bulgaria, these were rendered with the concept of democratization. In approaching Europeanisation as discursive formation, the EU becomes an empty signifier of a political project comprising multiple discourses, each of which binds together a particular system of meaning or 'chain of signification' around nodal points[113]. Democratization is a hegemonic discourse, i.e., a reduction of possibilities and is formed by *a particular fixation* (my emphasis) of meaning around the nodal points of democracy and civil society in the discourse of liberal democracy (Laclau and Mouffe, 1995: 112 in Jorgensen and Philips, 2001: 26). Having said that, both notions (democracy and civil society) are contingent signs in the variety of discourses in the discursive formation of liberal democracy. This does not mean as Torfing (1999: 62-3) observes that "we have here a polysemic coexistence of different meanings of democracy, as the different meanings tend to negate and substitute each other in the course of political struggle." What it means is that the idea of a meta-narrative of democracy and of grand narratives of civil society is challenged.

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[113] The term nodal point in political discourse theory refers to "a privileged sign around which the other signs are ordered" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2001:26).

The contingency of the concepts of democracy and civil society can be rendered with the term 'non monolithic' (Heywood, 1992). In the discursive formation of liberal democracy this suggests that their meaning becomes elusive, for it will be constituted while interacting with context, subjects' positions and historical configurations. Thus, democracy acquires different contextually-appointed meanings. This claim invites genuinely pluralistic interpretations of democracy, reflecting the defining characteristics of liberal democracy, which, as Robert Dahl (1998) among others has clarified, are also grounded in the heterogeneity of the societies that gave it birth (Philips, 2006: 171). According to Whitehead (2002: 15), the conceptual boundaries of democracy "are malleable and negotiable, because in any particular historical and cultural context they will depend heavily on the status of overlapping adjacent concepts", on adjacent values permeating the cultural landscape; this suggests that "both the centre of gravity and the outer limits of the concept of democracy will be shifted in a corresponding direction". Dismissing the "arrogant search for ultimate truth and ultimate solutions" a democratic system will contain an "authentic plurality of forms of life temporary and permanent, formal and informal, local and central" (Keane, 1988:x). Hence, the contingency of democracy and civil

society as political concepts points to their validity only in terms of the context in which they are generated and employed (Heywood, 2004: 11).

Contingency also denotes the impossibility of eradicating contestation dynamics in the attempt to fix a meaning and construct a particular discourse. Europeanisation conceptualized as a discursive formation of liberal democracy comprises a variety of different discourses that have been articulated in and through struggles for hegemony. The fixation of meaning that each discourse presupposes is driven by the logic of hegemony as the basic unit of explanation in discourse theory (Howarth, 2005: 322). Thus, it allows for the possibility of reversal enabled by contestation dynamics. Because social systems have a fundamentally political character, they are rendered vulnerable to those forces that are excluded in the process of political constitutions. This accounts for the appearance of "illiberal" democracy discourse in the fabric of the EU as articulations of liberal democracy. Rupnink (2018) analyses the emerging doubts about post-1989 liberalism in Central Europe as being a set of circumstances peculiar to Central Europe. He also links it to the wider rise of populism and the rejection of liberalism

in the rest of Europe. The 'populist' European imaginary is found in far-right and reactionary European politics. The National Front (France), the Northern League (Italy), the Party for Freedom (the Netherlands) and the Danish People's Party (Den mark) are just a few examples that articulate the norms of the EU through the prism of nationalist discourse and hence construct "the EU as alien and threatening" (Biyebuck and Rumford, 2012: 9).

A discursive reading highlights the social articulation of democratic and civil society norms. These can't be seen as universal but as dependent upon the experience of the person exposed to them (Schumaker, 2008: 198). Most importantly, it opens up a perspective on creativity that acknowledges the role of social actors; it therefore transgresses views of democracy as being solely and simply a form of government (Dewey, 1927; Delanty,1999). The people dimension is crucial in articulating the norms and values of liberal democracy in the context of Europe as a civic force. As a defining characteristic of Europe, liberalism, the successor of Kantian cosmopolitanism (Pagden, 2002: 12), praises social plurality and cultural difference. Liberal pluralism as the social articulation of democracy resonates

with the plurality of social identities and individuals' projects in the European space.

The social articulation of liberal democracy unavoidably entails conflict within its pluralism. While excluded from liberal social ethics, antagonisms in social relations are an ever-present possibility in a liberal democratic society. In fact pluralism is the source of social antagonism. Diversity paves the way for the expression of multiple identities and the struggle for recognition of their respective projects. It thus exposes the ambivalent nature of human sociability and the social as being riven by conflicting interests and values. A pluralist social order implies an asymmetry of power. These dynamics have led Schmitt (1932) to argue for the irreconcilable relation between liberalism and democracy. According to him, democracy requires a homogenous *demos* and this precludes any possibility of pluralism. The insurmountable contradiction between liberal pluralism and democracy informed his understanding of the political as 'friends and foe relations'. Therefore, as constitutive for modern democracy, pluralism can be a threat to democratic principles if the inherent contention is not given legitimate means of expression (Mouffe, 2005)

7.4.2. Democracy, civil society and accommodating pluralism

Traditional liberal thought has avoided the dis-associative character of the political as understood by Schmitt by grounding democracy in the faith of reason. Liberalism defines democracy as "systems of checks on government envisaged to guarantee the civil liberty of the citizen in systems of regular and competitive elections, conforming to the principles of universal suffrage and political equality" (Heywood, 1992: 27). Implicit in this definition is the liberal perception of democracy as based on negative freedom, i.e., acknowledging legal and physical constraints of freedom and of individuals as governed by reason. Locke's belief in law as a warrant of freedom is replicated in the contemporary rational liberal theories of Rawls and Habermas, who embrace rationalism and negate antagonisms. Although Habermas acknowledges the political "as one of the domains where one should always expect to find discord" (Mouffe,2005) his theory excludes antagonisms, for the latter are believed to "endanger the realisation of consensus, which rationalist philosophers see as the aim of democracy" (Mouffe, 2005: 29). These theorists believe in non-antagonistic pluralism. They declare conflict

as 'unreasonable' and as not to be maintained but overthrown through consensus. Indeed, antagonisms reveal the very possibility of rational consciousness; they thrive on affects and passion (Mouffe, 2000; Stavrakakis, 2005) and gain significance in the recognition of the undecidability that pervades any social formation and the hegemonic nature of any social order. By ignoring the importance of conflict to politics at a normative level, these theorists have difficulties in addressing and accommodating pluralism as genuinely incompatible with one another's individual positions. Philips contends that "contemporary political philosophy positively groans under the weight of diversity, plurality, and difference" (Phillips, 1993: 139).

However, in any discursive social ontology, far from being antithetical to democratic politics, antagonistic relations make up its very core. Contrary to "the idealized view on human sociability as moved by empathy and reciprocity which has provided the basis of modern democratic political thinking" (Mouffe, 2005: 3), the claim of difference as organising the social world pinpoints the "ineradicable dimension of antagonisms which exist in human societies" (Mouffe, 2005: 119). The post-structuralist conception of democratic politics

is close to Hobbes' view of the natural condition of mankind as war, and Mouffe thinks, like him, that the political good is based upon a 'process of pacification' (Mouffe, 1996: 146)[114]. Conflict is a necessary feature of politics. Accordingly, one of the main tasks of democratic politics consists in defusing potential antagonisms that exist in social relations. Hence, Mouffe has developed the notion of "agonistic politics" to make liberal and plural democracy compatible (Mouffe, 2000)[115]. The democratic politics of agonistic pluralism is an attempt to somewhat "domesticate" the notion of antagonism (Camargo, 2013.). Mouffe has adopted the category of "inclusive exclusion" theorized by Laclau to transform Schmitt's category of the enemy into the new category of 'adversary'. The latter comes to be the party that actively participates in an agonistic kind of politics, i.e., an inclusively-excluded (or agonistic) "Other" (the adversary). For Mouffe, agonistic citizens find themselves in the paradoxical position of 'adversaries' or 'friendly-enemies'; they are "friends because they share a common symbolic space but also enemies because they want to organise this common symbolic space in a different way" from one another (Mouffe, 2000: 13). Thus, while they disagree, they respect

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[114] Mouffe is taking on board some of the insights of post-structural theory without surrendering to Jean-Baudrillard's ideas on simulacra, i.e. aligning the possibility of political action to the notion of a blind play of simulacra (Baudrillard in Poster (ed.), 1988: 208-212).

[115] Conceptions of agonistic pluralism are also developed in the works of Connolly (1995) and Tully (2002). Both authors see dynamic cultural values, and lifestyle pluralism as the defining feature of contemporary societies.

each other's right to exist. This theoretical move allows for the recognition of conflict and reconciling it with liberal pluralism as good social relations for a viable democracy. Mouffe argues that "while we desire an end to conflict, if we want people to be free, we must always allow for the possibility that conflict may appear and to provide an arena where differences can be confronted. The democratic process should supply that arena" Mouffe (2000).

The specificities of agonistic pluralism for liberal democracy carry implications for citizen agency. The morphology of civil society fluctuates with the post-structural concerns with difference in liberal societies. These can be organised through several points.

First and foremost, the meaning of civil society will be appointed contextually. Its properties will be contingent and can be referred as 'constitutive metaphor' (Whitehead, 2002: 68). Approached as a metaphor, civil society is a specifically culturally-located linguistic form, which expresses, constitutes and reorders understanding of the target domain for those who are located within that linguistic framework, or who are of that culture (Seckingelgin, 2002). In other words, the metaphor of civil society as a 'language-game' makes

sense, explains, and elaborates certain meanings only to those who can make sense of its source domain. Civil society as a metaphor then is a tool of communication that aims to connect two domains, thus sending an invitation to participate in the discourse (Seckingelgin, 2002). It is not clear however, that the receiver understands the point of expression beyond its aspirational form. Therefore, as a metaphor, civil society is a differentiated concept and there are varieties of imaginaries, as there is more than one historical route to establish civil society (Whitehead, 2005: 78).

The contextual articulations of civil society will also reflect its connection with the nodal point of democracy in any particular discourse on the discursive formation of liberal democracy. Thus, citizen participation as the key norm that defines the term is linked to the theoretical perspective on democracy. For example, the mainstream understanding of participatory democracy adopted by the EU places the emphasis on the citizen's agency in taking part in governance. The effectiveness of civil society within deliberative democracy lies in identifying and constituting agreement about the public good and motivates people to seek it together in the public sphere. Civil society organisations, i.e., NGOs as the forms of civil

society are the channels through which public consensus is to be communicated to state institutions. Civil society then assumes the role of the institutional correlate of deliberative democracy. Its democratic credentials reside in reconciling conflicting interests and values through supposedly 'impartial' procedures and influencing the system, rather than fostering social ties. Hence, in the model of deliberative democracy the focus is not on how civil society is constituted, rather on what is its role in the system.

The agonistic model of democracy focuses on the social constitency of civil society. Underpinned by a post-structural emphasis on discursive ontology, it conceives of the political as embedded in the social. Driven by the claim that "politics is about the constitution of political community and not something that takes place within it" (Mouffe, 1993: 81), agonistic democracy directs an inquiry into civil society via modes of sociality and the dynamics of social interaction, and significance of these for democratic pluralism. Civil society then assumes the image highlighted by sociological accounts as the "geometry of social relations" (Edwards, 2011). The democratic credentials of civil society then are sought in the 'self-construction and self-mobilization of social actors' (Terrier and Wagner, 2006;

Edder,2009; Liebert and Trenz, 2009) in view of the complexities of a social world embroiled in 'difference'.

The focus on the social constituency of civil society relates to deeper social processes that support democracy. These pertain to the democratic role of civil society in substantiating a bond of solidarity, which holds individuals independently of membership in a polity. In fact, "the bond of solidarity with other human beings" is the democratic script of civil society (Eder, 2009: 28). Sociological accounts have pointed out that it is therefore essential to examine how public discourse, instead of "reading off civil society's objective interests or expressing inherent identity, constitutes civil society by representing a particular form of culture and solidarity" (Calhoun, 2002). In Derrida's interpretation, the script contains equality and freedom as the two claims united in democracy. According to him, the two concepts are intrinsically bound but in autoimmune relation. Equality is inscribed in freedom, for "democratic freedom only makes sense if everyone within the demos is equally free". Freedom, on the other hand, is dependent on equality, because "liberty must

take place in the context of liberty for all" (Malqueen and Mattheus, 2013)[116].

Within political discourse theory's concern over pluralism, civil society pertains to the self-determination of social bonds among human beings. In order for these to follow the democratic script of solidarity, civil society must address the emerging challenges in a social world permeated with divisions and conflicts. Starting from the admission and recognition of the multiplicity of perspectives and values and the impossibility of reconciling all of them, the democratic role of civil society resides in providing agonistic avenues for democratic politics. Civil society will emerge as spaces of individuals' agency (of common action) which countenance different positions that are genuinely incompatible with one another. These will present channels for expression of inherent and arising social antagonisms, thus framing the other not as my enemy, but as adversary in a shared common symbolic denominator. This way, civil society spaces will allow for organising the us/them discrimination

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[116] Malquuen and Mattheus (2013) commenting on Derrida's writing refers to them as the canonical problem of relationship between equality and freedom. "Equality hopes to guarantee that each actor within a community has an equal value, most clearly this is seen as the ascription of one equal vote to each individual in a community. Freedom, on the other hand, is a question of each individual's singularity, the freedom to exceed a determination of the same that equality tries to establish. While equality confines every singularity to a measurable unit that is infinitely substitutable, freedom, on the other hand, exceeds this calculation and enables each singularity to be heterogeneous to others. It is a guarantee of the singularity of each individual, enabling every other to treated as (wholly) other.

in a compatible manner with pluralism, i.e., to express conflict without suppressing pluralist positions. The terrain of civil society, rather than organising dissent in a public sphere, will denote a "battlefield on which hegemonic projects confront one another with no possibility whatsoever of final reconciliation" as Mouffe (1992) argues. These spaces, while sharing the consensus relating to democratic ethico-political values that constitute its principles of legitimacy, will present citizens with a genuine possibility to choose between alternatives. The constitutive character of social divisions and the impossibility of final reconciliations will aid in cultivating the multiplicity of social bonds. In allowing for the possibility of identifying with a differentiated range of democratic political identities, these bonds will, ultimately, facilitate the possibility of shared human solidarity.

Connecting the democratic role of civil society with the script of solidarity and the antagonistic dimension present in human relations has two important implications. First, the focus of civil society as citizen interaction will require a larger concept of agency than just deliberation; second, and related to this, is that it will be performatively constituted.

First, the dismissal of universal reason as guiding individuals' agency opens up the political possibilities of citizen agency. The nature of civic agency within Habermasian discourse ethics is verbal communication. The deliberative processes are important as they are essential to the rationality of collective decision-making process. Deliberation is crucial for the formation of citizens' preferences, which are formed through communication and debate. However, deliberative politics ignore the fact that talk is always connected to other processes of social reproduction. In particular, rational reasoning and social interaction as verbal communication sharply circumvents the power of the citizen and the promise of the self-organising of social life (Boyte, 2011). The preference for the vision of the citizen as deliberative ultimately delimits the scope of human capabilities as to their political significance.

The antagonistic model of democracy asserts that the viability of democracy depends on agonistic politics. It thus replaces the Kantian cosmopolitanism in Habermas with the constitutive role of permanent conflict in pluralism. Agonism provides (or rescues, as Mouffe has argued (2000: 149) the Greek sense of term *pólemos*, which is none other than the spirit of war and battle belonging to any kind of politics. Agonism, however, does not exclude deliberation.

Scholars (Camargo, 2010; 2013) have argued for the possibility of assuming a more productive relationship between the antagonistic and the deliberative dimensions of the political as two mutually contaminated moments; two fields that would come to supplement each other - in a Derridean sense - in a way that neither of these two dimensions could even exist without the other. Thus, applied to civil society this suggests a co-appropriation of the instrumentally-driven action of a Kantian regulative democracy with agonistic dynamics, in a project for radical democracy[117].

The agonistic recognition of respectful conflict recognizes dynamics of exclusion as modalities of agency. Agonism pertains to a constitution of a political community, a constantly-negotiated grouping. Therefore, consensus about symbolic connections among citizens entails a lot of exclusion. Political community is hegemonically constructed; agonistic citizens must accept the rule of the democratic game and hence not all demands formulated in a given society will be seen as legitimate. Thus, Mouffe's emphasis upon the persistent need for symbolic and legal exclusions, like

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[117] In Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (1985) Laclau and Mouffe conclude that the project for a radical democracy (is) a form of politics which is founded not upon dogmatic postulation of any "essence of the social," but, on the contrary, on an affirmation of the contingency and ambiguity of every "essence," and on the constitutive character of the social division and antagonism. (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:193, emphasis added in Camargo, 2013:164).

extreme right incitements to racial hatred, child sex abuse, and of politically or religiously-motivated acts of terrorism. This political model also envisages the exclusions of gross inequalities in access to goods and services. The spaces of civil society constituting the political conditions of an agonistic pluralist society will thus be excluding demands of constituencies who are 'deeply at odds' with the values of democratic pluralism (Connolly, 1995: 133).

Second, civil society comes into being through activities, expressions, and individual interaction (Dewey, 1935). As discourse gains intelligibility in practices, so is the constitution of political community enacted. Civil society emerges in practice, for the knowledge contained in the script does not exist for its own sake but for the sake of doing, as pragmatists argue. The constructedness of civil society occurs through a transition from ideal to real only when enacted in practices. Eder (2009: 28) states that "real civil societies are shifting in time as any other social sphere in which human beings act together". It is thus performatively constituted. Dewey, in *The Rise of the Public* (1927) argues that "we must in any case start from acts which are performed, not for hypothetical causes for those acts, and consider their consequences". Civil society is not just a series of

actors, but it is a script (as knowledge) imposed upon and performed by agents.

Articulating or performing the democratic script draws on the creativity of actors. Scholars put forward the idea of cultural creativity as a specified form of representation of civil society (Eder, 2009; Calhoun, 2002). Trenz (2009: 159), within the parameters of the public sphere draws attention to the "creative and constitutive force of public discourse" and defines it as a "discursive formation within the public sphere. Within political discourse theory the process of articulation is full of non-rational components, such as affects and unconscious mechanisms" (Laclau, 2004: 307). Mouffe has also stressed the affectional element in collective identification. She argues that 'passion and affects' play a crucial role in securing allegiance to a particular political project (Mouffe, 2000: 95). She clearly considers 'passion' meaning the passions "which produce collective forms of identification" – as one of the moving forces of political action (Mouffe, 2001: 11). Thus the agency of actors in civil society will also draw on affect and passion in the constitution of democratic discourse. The affectional element in the identification of

actors has been neglected in academic debates on European identity and Europeanisation (Stavrakakis, 2005: 81).

As spaces for cultivating democratic social relations, civil society can't be conflated with the institution of a singular public sphere. Rather than being located in a "bourgeois model of a single public sphere" it will comprise a "nexus of multiple publics" (Fraser, 2005)[118]. These will be spread out as a variety of spaces, which will act as "workshops of democracy" (Balibar, 2004). Various practices as political acts, constituting social relations, will prevent the reduction of civil society to one preferred form, as non-governmental organisations. Practices will be located in a variety of spaces, the multiple loci of civil society, where social ties of solidarity can be nurtured.

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[118] This model of one public sphere and one mode of agency has been criticized by feminist theories. Although openness is basic to the theory of public sphere, they see it as premised on various forms on exclusion; e.g. see it as privileging a certain mode of discourse at cost of silencing others, as rationalist, male, univocal. Also the citizen as discussant of the common world presupposes set of qualities and skills that individuals are to possess; as a matter of rational-critical argumentation it privileges the sophisticated. The public is to be formed by strangers, but strangers must be critical thinking, educated and prone to verbal expression

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the elementals of Europeanisation in the light of discourse theory. It attempted a theoretical perspective on the process as discursive. The chapter proceeded by extending constructivist assumptions to the notion of discourse as the layer of reality where meaning is produced and distributed. The argument was developed through three claims, reflecting three aspects of meaning formation.

The first aspect highlighted the interactive nature of meaning production. In elaborating on the structural and agentic properties of discourse, the causality implied in Europeanisation was presented as circular. Europeanisation as linguistic structuration was also tendered, based on the unstable nature of structure implied in discourse and its ability to inform positions for actors to identify with. Europeanisation gains meaning through 'linguistic structurationism', between discursive contexts and articulations where they are seen as mutually constitutive. Articulations that contain the possibility of change constitute discourse. As structural determinants of discourse, cognitive components set limits to what is

possible to articulate, but they are continuously transformed through the addition and combination of new articulations.

The second aspect of meaning was its inherently playful character. The impossibility of closure of meaning advanced a conception of Europeanisation as discursive formation. Meaning is not articulated in any discursive articulation; meaning is located in the context of multiple discourses, hence Europeanisation as discursive formation stands for a variety of discourses deployed in European integration. This view was developed through a discussion on the relationality of European identity. Based on constructivist insights, the discussion on identity highlighted its constitution through self/other interaction, as well as through time/space articulations. Applied to Europeanisation as discursive formation, these ideas emphasised its properties as a process that fluctuate historically and contextually rather than being normatively driven. This statement indicates that it is a process which displays the multifacetedness of European liberal discourse (i.e. a variety of discourses). It also highlights the role of the domestic context in articulating a particular discourse. Europeanisation as discursive formation points to the unevenness of

impact and to the qualities of the process as one of diversification rather than unification.

The third aspect of meaning covered the contestation dynamics involved in forging a particular discourse. The non-reductionist view of Europe as multiplicity, and of Europeanisation as discursive formation reached via the assertion of multiple discourses is complemented with a focus on articulation dynamics. These were highlighted as contestation, following the logic of hegemony incorporated in discourse. Transferred into the social world, permeated with difference, these dynamics were defined as political. Thus, the multiplicity of Europe pinpoints its political nature, rendered by the metaphor of Europe as embodiment of the political. The impossibility of eradicating conflict was theoretically extended to Europeanisation. The discursive impact of liberal democracy entails contestations of the meaning of democracy. These will reflect the social constituency of Europe as multiple. Pluralism integrated into the political order of Europe as liberal democracy has significant implications for civil society too. These relate to an accommodation of antagonisms in an agonistic way, enabling solidarity's social relations to be the bearer of democracy's script.

Chapter VIII: Methodological Considerations of the Study

Chapter VII dealt with the epistemological premises of radical constructivism and the implications of discourse analysis for the study of political practices. This chapter will elaborate on the research design as the next logical step and the analytical moves undertaken that allow me to answer the research question. It seeks to translate the ontological propositions into specific methodological research procedures in order to answer *how civic initiatives are constituted by and constituted for Europeanization.* It looks at the research design as a case study as well as methods of data collection and analysis. It also outlines my researcher fieldwork practice and *modus operandi*. These are the main methodological considerations of the study.

8.1. Research Design: Qualitative Case Study (operationalization, generalization and reliability)

My research is designed as a case study within a qualitative frame of enquiry [119] . The choice for qualitative methodology is

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[119] Creswell (2009) for example, identifies four research strategies: phenomenology, case studies, ethnography, and grounded theory.

commensurable with the ontological priors of the study vested in the concept of discourse. A discursive approach claims that every social interaction is meaningful and calls for a methodological commitment to a reconstruction of the landscapes of meaning. Furthermore, the epistemic premises of radical constructivism are compatible with the implicit critique by the qualitative methodology of positivist objective knowledge and a positive appraisal of the subjectivist point of view that "social science should be interested in how human beings 'experience' their worlds rather than how physical events impact upon one another" (Froddy, 1993: 14). By focusing on 'lived experience', 'insider perspectives' and contexts (Lincoln, 2009), a qualitative inquiry produces knowledge reflecting actors' multiple understanding and hence contributes to unravelling meanings of a "social kind" (Wendt, 1999).

The techniques employed in the investigation of meaning production in qualitative research design are 'sensitive' to the complexity of the social world. As Wendt (1999: 69) contends, the difference between social kinds and natural kinds is that the former are constituted mostly by people's ideas and hence are subject to manifold interpretations rather than to established universal law. The analogy

with qualitative social investigation then, "is not opening a mechanical clock (and thus looking for a mechanism), nor is the observation of a chess game or the diagramming of action on a football field (and thus identify the fields and its rules), but rather the painting of a landscape". Qualitative methodology is suitable to study the causal and constitutive relations of social kinds within the ambit of the post-structural claim of the existence of knowledge solely in discourse. Moreover, reconstructing layers of meaning highlights the role of the social scientist in the study social constructions (Bryman, 2012) for discourse claims that each interpretation is not value-neutral. Rather, it is vested in a particular position[120].

Qualitative methodology is thus in accord with the aims of discourse analysis to "describe, understand and explain how and why particular discourse formations were constructed, established and transformed" (Howarth, 2005: 319). This position differs from a quantitative approach where the researcher adopts an objectivist stance given her/his aim "to control for and discount subjective understandings" (Curtis and Curtis, 2011: 6). Having said that, in order to avoid methodological sloppiness, it

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[120] It is an approach that is at the intersection between the procedural and political aspects of research (Denizin &Lyncoln, 2013:2-3).

is necessary to stress that while discourse directs the study to a case-centric[121], hence qualitative approach, the latter does not automatically imply a non-positivist methodology. Qualitative methods are compatible with scientific inquiry within positivist stance, as Almond and Vebra (1984) argue and Wend (1999) applies in practice. The approach to doing qualitative analysis adopted here differs considerably from the social analysis executed by these scholars.

Within the sociological focus of the study, the research is conducted as a case study premised on the specific concerns driving the inquiry. The choice of method, Curtis and Curtis (2013: 5) suggest often depends on what the researcher intends to explore. The drive to understand the social phenomenon of civic initiatives and to explain how they are constituted and constitutive for the process of Europeanization determines the choice for case study. According to Yin (2012: 4) "the more your research questions seeks to explain some present circumstance (e.g. "how" or "why" some social phenomenon works), the more that the case study method will be relevant". The case study, as "an empirical inquiry, which investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and with real life

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[121] Curtis and Curtis (2011) follow on Charles Ragin's (1994) differentiation between case-centric and variable-centric approaches as a way of transcending the qualitative/quantitative divide.

context", (Yin, 2009: 18) is an ideal vehicle to elucidate causality implied in the process of Europeanization and hence the link with civic initiatives. A case study of a 'bounded entity' (Yin, 2012: 6) will generate knowledge about the social phenomenon of civic initiatives offering critical insight towards understanding the wider social process of Europeanization. Establishing this link empirically is crucial for asserting the impact of the EU. Radaelli and Pasquier (2006), highlight the significance of research design for claiming causality. Discourse as a problem-driven concept is pertinent to account for the ideational and normative dimension of impact (Radaelli and Pasquier, 2006; Lynggaard, 2012) and has been extensively used to address the complexities of causal change in the social sciences (Crespi, 2007; Dyson, 2000; Lynggaard, 2012).

The case study as method embedded in theory (Yin, 2009: 36) allows us to establish a causal link by bringing theory into contact with empirical data. On the one hand, the theoretical propositions outlined in the general theory on discourse and domain specific theory on the social constituency of liberal democracy allow us to define the boundaries of the case study. They illuminate decisions regarding the substance of the research questions and thus guide data collection and analysis. Furthermore, theory aids in operationalize case study designs and make them more

explicit (Yin, 2009: 24). In particular, theory addresses generalization and reliability as crucial aspects of research design (both positivist and interpretivist). Yin (2009: 15) stresses that a common concern about case studies is that they provide little basis for scientific generalization. In the scientific approaches following Hume, the focus is on the study of the 'general patterns, not the unique" (Kurki, 2008: 97). As Reed argues, "generality, in the realistic mode of resignification" means that "the theoretical conceptualization of causal mechanisms could apply anywhere, anytime" (Reed, 2011: 113).

The case study, as a landscape of meaning, is "general" for the actors that move and act upon it as well as to theoretical propositions. Case studies are not generalizable to populations and/or universal concepts as part of a general, coherent, and referential theory of social life, which has wide applicability, which is the meaning of generality in social and political sciences (Reed, 2011: 112). As Reed (2011: 117) points out "a well disclosed landscape may or may not give hints as to what another landscape from another time and another place will be like. Hence, a landscape once disclosed is not immediately generalizable". The generalisation of case study occurs at the level of theory. The role of theory has been characterized by Yin (2009: 38) as "analytic

generalization" and suggests "a mode of analytic generalization in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study". In designing the research as a qualitative case study, the study aims for a "full and thorough knowledge of the particular rather than claiming a 'sound scientific generalization'" (Foddy, 1993: 16; Silverman, 2010: 128; Torfing, 2005: 330). Within a discursive framework case study, our methodology will aid in generating theoretical rather than statistical knowledge, and hence the drawing of conclusions based on an "approximation of findings" (Stake in Gomm et al., 2000: 5).

In addition, theory is crucial with regard to the reliability and hence for judging the quality of the research. Reed stresses that "social analysis oriented at the reconstruction of deep meanings still seeks validity and verisimilitude in the practices of "ferreting out" these meanings" (Reed, 2011: 113). Reliability, according to Boyatzis (1988: 144) implies consistency of judgment that protects against or lessens the contamination of the project. Likewise, Yin (2009: 45) emphasizes the goal of reliability to be "to minimize the errors and biases of the study". In qualitative information reliability appears in two basic forms: a) consistency of judgment among various viewers; and b) consistency of

judgment over time, events, and settings (Boyatzis, 1988: 144). Given that the intention of qualitative research is to "discover" something about a phenomenon, or its uniqueness, or, to investigate the rich variety of experience inherent in a setting, the question of stability of the phenomenon over time seems almost inappropriate to ask" (Silverman, 2010: 100) Regarding the former, my thesis aspires to consistency across viewers by providing information about the data collection procedures, i.e. standard interview protocol as well as ascertaining information about the units of analysis and units of coding. Attention to theory with regard to defining the domain to which the study findings can be generalized may provide what Yin (2009: 44) calls "external validity". The constraints of theory in regard to interpretation, i.e. epistemic relativism, are also stressed by Reed (2011). The constraints on interpretation are coherence from above and adequacy from below (Reed, 2011: 116). The latter implies that theoretical concepts must be appropriate or adequate to the evidence. The constraint from above (localized verificationism) suggests coherence between theory-fact interpretations, which are brought together in some way that makes sense.

8.1.1. Selecting the cases

According to Yin (2009: 29) a third component, which is important in terms of defining the case concerns sampling. The essential point here is the need for comprehensiveness. Denizin (1994: 52) emphasizes that "case-centered samples are characterized by purposive sampling and data saturation". It is crucial to recruit the participants strategically, i.e. to sample participants who will be able to contribute meaningfully to the research. Comprehensiveness is important for the reliability and validity of any case study. This also concerns decisions about the unit of analysis and the unit of coding. Sampling for comprehensiveness is clearly affected by the unit of analysis (Boyatzis, 1988). The decision about the unit of analysis is critical for understanding how the case study might relate to any broader body of knowledge. It also defines what the case study is about and influences deciding about the population included in sampling. Thus, the unit of analysis both affects the raw information but is also affected by it (Boyatzis, 1988). Together with the unit of analysis, sampling also bears on the unit of coding. The latter touches on "the underlying concept or phenomenon of curiosity" and as such determines the "comprehensiveness of the insight into the unit of analysis". Unit of coding concerns "the assessment of the raw

information in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon of interest" and has a theoretical justification (Boyatzis, 1988: 62-63; Yin, 2009).

In terms of the third component of research design, the thesis delineates the unit of analysis following the research question (Yin, 2009: 30). The project studies civic initiatives, and, hence, the entity on which the interpretation of the study focuses is citizens. Furthermore, the population included in sampling reflects the principle according to which the case study is classified as such (Yin, 2012; Stake, 1995; Bryman, 1988). There are, indeed, an "endless variety of possible 'cases' - depending on what you are interested in" (Stake in Gommon et al., 2002: 7). The study investigates the social phenomenon of civic initiatives as discursively situated within the process of Europeanization, and the population of interest is citizens engaged in formal and informal groups around social issues. The specific focus in determining a case study has been suggested by the first order (domain-specific) theory on Europeanization. It thus examines the impact of Europe on the development of democratic social relations in Bulgaria. In terms of the objective to study the contribution of civic initiatives to an active civil society in Bulgaria

and the EU's significance in their emergence, my research focuses on the dynamics of social interaction, on social relations which civic activism promotes and their democratic underpinnings as the unit of coding.

Based on these considerations, the initiatives chosen were instrumentally (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) or purposefully (Silverman, 2010) chosen. A purposive sampling allows us to "choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested" (Silverman, 2010: 129). Within the sociological frame of Europeanization as a 'bottom-up construction', initiatives or organisations that were embedded in the social were of research interest. Thus, the first criterion in choosing the participants, was to select organisations that were operating at the grass-root level. Studying them allowed me to learn more about the peculiarities of social life in Bulgaria and the constitution of social relations, rather than via top-down, established NGOs, detached from social roots. Theoretically and, increasingly, empirically, it became clear in the course of the research that top-down constitution presupposes a stronger state dimension. As one of the interviewees suggested, NGOs in Bulgaria should be renamed GOs, as their work is entirely linked with, and determined by the state's demands rather than the

ones raised by society. My aim was to do research based on initiatives that were engendered out of informal gatherings of enthused or concerned individuals who got together in order to devise activities around a specific problem they considered critical.

Together with their social situatedness, another criterion that the study employed for selecting the initiatives was the focus of their work. Stake suggests that, "the cases may involve an individual, several individuals, a program, an event, or an activity". Taking into account the impact of Europeanisation as democratisation and the emphasis on building civic society, the project sampled initiatives whose activities were centered along the discursive trope of plurality. In practical terms, this meant approaching individual groups, networks and organisations, which dealt with various forms of otherness; socially marginalized groups on grounds of: gender, ethnicity, age and impairment (physical, mental).

The clarifications above on the population of interest (i.e. unit of analysis) and on the concept or phenomenon of curiosity (i.e. unit of coding) is a crucial step for further methodological decisions. In particular, it is important with regard to the nature of the

information (data) that the research process will collect and, of course, the focus of the analysis.

8.2. Research Techniques:

8.2.1. Data Collection

The project drew on multiple sources on information (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2012) in order to develop as complete an understanding of the case as possible. While relying mainly on interviews and documents, as sources for collection of data, the thesis also benefited from participant observation and social media research. Employing a discourse theory framework demanded an investigation oriented to "expose the symbols and images that constitute social actors' views, the episteme that construct subjects" (Marsh and Furlong, 2002: 27). To this end, firstly, it is necessary to access actors' subjective understandings. The semi-structured interview is "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 29). The study thus adopted semi-structured interviews as the main method to access

the life world as understood and articulated by civic initiatives, to uncover and unfold the meaning of their experiences. Despite the ontological incongruence between discourse and phenomenology, interviews belonging to the latter tradition were used to help to establish the "truth" that civic initiatives asserted. The semi-structured interviews allowed the enquiry to chart the interpretation civic initiatives gave of their experiences.

Having said that, scholars have pointed out some of the limitations of using only interviews for collecting data. In particular, "interview data do not give us direct access to details of naturally occurring interaction. They certainly do not give us access to how people actually perform a wide variety of daily activities" (Attkinson and Coffey, 1996: 19). For these reasons, interview data is complemented with documents available on the websites of the organisations. The research also collected brochures, leaflets, CDs as well as illustrative data (post cards, pictures) offered by participants. Although visual materials were not explicitly sought and thus were not systematically collected, these were considered important evidence as representations of the discourse of civic initiatives.

8.2.2. Sampling procedures

Internet research:

After deciding on the criteria for selection and the methods of gathering knowledge two further issues had to be considered: first, how to approach the initiatives and second, how to select the individuals with whom to conduct interviews. The first step in approaching civic initiatives in Bulgaria was through internet research. So, following the theoretical criteria, the inquiry engaged in online pre-mapping work in order to identify potential participants in the research[122]. As a result of online research I identified a few groups that I contacted via email. The majority of correspondence was through emailing although a significant part of it was done over the phone too. The first groups I contacted in 2015 were: *Factory Ideas, Bread Houses* (in Sofia), *Association Hand in Hand* (in Yambol), *European Roma Association* (in Aytos), the *Voice of Youth* and *Bulgarian Association for Civic Initiative* (both in Burgas). Out of them, Yanina Yanakieva from *Factory Ideas,* Todor Iosifov from *Voice of Youth* and Daniela Bojinova from *Bulgarian Association for Civic Initiative* agreed to allow me to interview them. Nadejda, the founder of *Bread Houses* agreed to cooperate with secondary materials. An

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[122] The contact details, names of representatives and websites (when available) of the organisations mentioned here are presented in Appendix 1.

interview was not possible because of her new-born baby. The other two did not answer either my emails or calls.

In order to understand the general picture of civic activism in Bulgaria, I also consulted the web pages of various NGO organisations. Of particular interest was the website of a residence of NGO organisations in Bulgaria called *ngohouse.bg*. This is a hub housing various activities; as they present themselves: "The *NGO House* is a co-working space built on mutual support and cooperation. If you are a nongovernmental organisation or a proactive citizen looking for an inspiring working environment, networking opportunities and a chance to attend a variety of events and trainings, the house is the right place for you, where all of those opportunities are under the same roo*f".* Through the "house" I recruited *Single Step*, the only initiative in my research that engages with LGBT people in Bulgaria. Instrumental for expanding my knowledge were the web-sites of *Open Society Institute*, particularly the section on civil society programmes, and the *Centre for the Study of Democracy* (both in Sofia), providing information about the institutional aspect (law, policy) of democratic arrangements in Bulgaria.

Crucial for recruitment of most of the initiatives in the research are two NGOs, namely: *WCIF*/ФРГИ (*Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation*) and *FCP*/ФГУ (*Forum Civic Participation*). *WCIF* is an institution funded by the American Foundation for International Development, and the Charles Steward Mot Foundation with the aim of promoting civic activism by not only strengthening NGOs but also developing local philanthropy. It does not work with people on the ground but for local civic initiatives that have availed of its funding, it is a useful resource as they are featured on its website. *FCP (Forum Civic Participation)* is an umbrella organisation for network organisations (initiatives) all over Bulgaria. Their aim is citizen empowerment through participation in the decision-making process on policy formation.

These two outfits served as a gateway towards finding local initiatives on the web. Their websites were important resources for identifying initiatives geographically (locations where they are active), providing information on the nature of their work, and a way of accessing them through phone, email or webpage contacts. I am particularly indebted to Anna Gencheva and Iva Taralejkova from

FCP for their patient co-operation and time while I was trying to set up in the field. *FCP* also provided a database with national and EU documentation detailing the legal and financial extent of citizen participation in Bulgarian public institutions; of particular importance was their "Citizen Information Index" which developed out of their very recent 2015 research. Points highlighted in the research were integrated into the analysis.

I also engaged in social media research and followed up on Facebook suggestions for social groups, initiatives and platforms with whom I tried to get in touch at this stage. *Resistance* is an initiative for the development of civic consciousness and activism; *Friends of Refugees* is a group of people - friends and friends of friends - who actively seek to find ways to support the survival and long-term integration of refugees into Bulgarian society; *Be the Change* is a network of horizontal structures, while "*Move.bg*" is an online platform for connecting individuals, providing them with different opportunities to engage. '*Time Heroes*" has a similar connecting function. My efforts in making contact and requesting interviews were not always fruitful, mainly because some of them are online platforms. Niya from *Time Heroes* and Nikoleta from *Friends of Refugee* (who is now

the director of *Single Step*) gave me an interview. I studied the

documents available on the web page of *move.bg*, and the analysis is

reflected in the findings. These little steps on the terrain were vital

for the selection of the initiatives in the project.

Participant observation:

Data collection also benefited from an opportunity to attend *FCP*

(Forum Civic Participation)'s Annual Meeting on the 17-19 February

2016, and to engage in participant observation. The meeting was

held in Sofia and included representatives from initiatives from all

over the country. The event took place over two days where

brainstorming sessions were conducted around topics designated

and facilitated by the *FCP* team. Within the small working groups

there were representatives of different initiatives and each of them

expressed their views on such topics as achievements and obstacles

that they had experienced during the year, and the way *FCP* could be

helpful for them in their work; they also discussed strategies and

planned their activities for the coming year. This was an extremely

useful event for me in terms of networking and preparation for the

field of study.

Observing the sessions from within familiarised me with the workings of Bulgarian NGOs. Ensconced inside, I learnt about the issues their work aims to tackle, the problems they experience, as well as their accomplishments so far. These are very often not reflected in their official accounts. Participating in this event was also crucial for questioning my assumptions; not categorising but staying open-minded and attuning to the reality 'on the ground'. It was thus very useful in restraining the strong reliance upon academic categories to which my approach is prone, and hence to assure a more accurate interpretation of the data. In addition, this event aided me in establishing contact with initiatives that were interested in participating in my research project. Although it will be dealt with in detail in the section on ethics, it is important to mention at this point the ethical considerations underpinning the project. I made it clear to the organisers of the event and those present there that I was carrying out fieldwork and would only follow it through when I had received an agreement on their part. The initiatives recruited during this event were *Roma Mednikari*, *Association Smile* and *Association Astika*.

Sampling individual participants:

Regarding the second issue of interviewee recruitment, within the selected initiative I decided to divide the individuals in terms of their capacity, namely between organisers/founders of civic initiatives and activists in the organisation. Yanina, the founder of *Factory Ideas*, and Katerina from *CVS* (Bulgaria) made this suggestion to me. These organisations have a strong appeal for citizens to participate as volunteers. As the study delved deeper into the motives, dynamics, and constraints of the constitution of social agency, hearing the voice of citizen volunteers was crucial for the research. In addition, in the sampling of individuals the project was adhering to the principle of multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013: 20). The assumptions of ontological reality as populated with different individuals and the subjective nature of knowledge production influenced sampling individuals in terms of their different positionality. The research thus aimed at pluralism where multiple selves were given a platform to speak (Alvesson et al., 2009: 214). In practical terms this meant paying attention to project representation in terms of age and gender.

The initial phase of recruitment was through e-mail. I sent a letter of invitation to the selected initiatives, where the research was briefly introduced[123]. After receiving an agreement to participate, further information together with the ethical consent form was communicated and an interview with the founder or representative of the organisation took place. Other participants from their own respective projects were recruited through the organisers, who acted as gatekeepers of the process. After the initial phase, recruitment snowballed. The majority of my interviews with citizens were in their capacity as volunteers in *CVS* (Bulgaria) and *Ideas Factory*. Other citizens within organisations were interviewed in their capacity as employees, in *Amalipe Foundation*, *Time Heroes*, *Karin Dom*, *P.U.L.S Foundation* and *Association of Refugee Women*.

In total 18 organisations took part in the research. These are:

Amalipe Foundation (Veliko Turnovo)[124]:

Association of Refugee Women (Sofia)

Astika (Bourgas)

Bulgarian Association for the Promotion of Civic Initiative /BAPCI (Burgas)

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[123] Please see attached in the Apendix.
[124] They are organised alphabetically; in the brackets are the towns where they are located

CVS (Bulgaria) (Sofia)

Hamalogica and Neon (Burgas)

Ideas Factory (Sofia)

Karin Dom (Varna)

Milostiv (Sofia)

Multi-Culti (Sofia)

P.U.L.S. Foundation (Pernik)

Ravnovesie /Balance (Burgas)

Re-Act (Sofia)

Roma Mednikari (Sumen)

Single Step (Sofia)

Times Heroes (Sofia)

Usmivka/Smile (Burgas)

Youth Voice (Burgas)

Interviews done with:

Founders /Organisers	Participants recruited as:	
	Volunteers	Employees
Astika: Liubomir Valkov	*Ideas Factory*: Zori, Silviya, Margi, Anton, Momchil	*Association of Refugee Women*:
Bulgarian Association for the		Alexandra

Promotion of Civic Initiative: Daniela Bojinova

CVS: Mariya, Svoboda, Viktoriya, Ivan, Liudmil

Ideas Factory: Velina Malina

Hamalogica: Lina Fotolina

Milostiv: Velislava

CVS: Katerina

Ideas Factory: Yanina Taneva

Multi-culti: Bistra and Panaiot

Time Heroes: Niya Kiryakova

Multi-Culti: Bistra Ivanova

Neon: Jana

Ravnovesie: Kalinka Baycheva

Ravnovesie: Genika

P.U.L.S: Gabriela

Re-act: Liuben Georgiev

Re-Act: Mihaela

Amalipe Foundation: Ivan Todorov

Romi-Mednikari: Philip Petrov

Roia Mednikari: focus group with seven participants

Single Step: Nikoleta Gabrovska

Karin Dom: Vladimira Petrova

Usmivka: Mitka Georgieva

Conversation with researchers from *Sofia Platform*

Youth Voice: Todor Yosifov

Email communication with Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova *Bread House (Bulgaria)*

Total: 12   Total: 15+ focus group   Total: 7

8.2.3. Conducting the interviews

The fieldwork comprised a total number of 33 official interviews and one focus group. Most of them were carried out in the offices of the organisation. In Sofia, the volunteer interviews took place in the office of *CVS,* a convenient and quiet location in the city centre; others took place in coffee houses in various towns. The average interview length was an hour, which was enough time to cover people's activities and affiliations in the various networks but also to address the questions prepared. The interviews were organised around a set of questions that guided but did not lead the conversation. The research approach to interviewing is best described as *deliberate naïveté* by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 29-31). What is meant by this term is that the interviewer is curious and exhibits an openness to new and unexpected phenomena rather than having off-the-shelf interpretations or lazy pigeonholing. The interviewing consciously tried not to disturb the participant, thus letting her/him talk around the question as a way of filtering her/his ideas and describe as best as possible her/his experience. On some

occasions (as in the case of the focus group with *Roma Mednikari*), I had to prompt with additional questions to clarify an answer.

Two set of questions were prepared: one for organisers of initiatives, and the other for participants and volunteers under the general heading "The many dimensions of civic activism". I considered this conducive "to achieving a metaphor that is 'thick'-replete with multiple levels of understanding" (Lyncoln, 2009). Both of them contained open-ended questions allowing for respondents to answer in their own words rather than in terms of pre-set categories (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 1). The questions proceeded from the general to the particular. This design was for clarity but also "in terms of presumptions about the best way to gain the trust of the respondents so they will answer more intimate questions without too many concerns" (Huges and Sharrock, 1997: 12). There were two general themes: the first set of questions related to the nature (essence) of the organisation's activity. It included an enquiry about ideas, motivation, aims and goals, achieved results; within this there were also questions about the connection with Europe and the impact of their activities on wider society. The second set of questions related to the interpersonal dynamics of the organisation's work: here the

focus was on the dynamics of interpersonal relations that were observed in a project

8.3. Presenting the Participants

Amalipe is an NGO based in the town of Veliko Turnovo (the first capital city of Bulgaria). The focus of the organisation is equality and integration of the Roma people in society. To this end the organisation runs projects with the aim towards both, the preservation of the Roma identity and culture and on the modernization of the Roma communities. The organisation was initiated by an individual from the Roma ethnicity and with whom I had the pleasure to talk extensively about the projects, and the objectives they follow with regard to the issues of the Roma community in Bulgaria.

Association of Refugee Women is an NGO based in Sofia (the capital city of Bulgaria) and was set up by a refugee woman. The organisation is dedicated to the support, integration and adaptation of newly-recognized refugees and asylum seekers in the Bulgarian society. The projects are oriented towards social mediation and the

promotion of multiculturalism as well as humanitarian services through donations, fundraising and counselling.

Astika is an NGO initiated by volunteers in the town of Burgas. The organisation works with youth and runs variety of projects on multiculturalism and sustainable development. The initiator, Liubovir feels very strongly about volunteering and expressed sharp insights on the issues of youth and democratic pluralism. The multiple activities of the organisation have a strong focus on European values and individual development.

Bulgarian Association for the promotion of Civic Initiative (BAPCI) is based in Burgas. It has a strong policy focus and works to promote active citizenship and direct decision-making. The organisation is set by a citizen who believes in "government of the people, by the people and for the people". The small staff group runs initiatives on the ground with citizens but also engages in monitoring and evaluating the legislative environment in Bulgaria. I am indebted to the organiser, Ms. Bojinova, who gave me the first extensive interview on the civic landscape in Bulgarian society.

CVS (Bulgaria) is a branch of an international organisation in Sofia. The organisation follows the official agenda on promoting human rights and culture of peace while focusing on local, i.e. Bulgarian aspects of civil society. Katerina, the very active manager of the projects about refugee integration and volunteering had enormous impact on the insights about volunteering, raising social awareness, the nature of prejudices and racism in Bulgarian society that are developed in the research project.

Hamalogica is a bunch of enthusiastic, smart and active people who are thrilled by the idea of (re-) turning Burgas to become a cultural hub. Fascinated by the old idea of *chitalishte, i.e.* centers of culture and enlightenment in Bulgarian post-Ottoman development, Hamalogica is seeking to revive the image of Burgas as a town of poets and artists. Self-organised the organisation works through volunteers and runs very interesting and various projects in its center (premises), which it accomplished to establish the sea garden of Burgas. Related to their projects, I also got the chance to interview Jana from NEON, which is dance-formation with strong social–personal nexus.

Factory of Ideas is a very prolific and multi-faceted organisation in the Bulgarian NGO sector. The organisation started as motivated individuals who are "citizens of the world while being Bulgarian and Balkan". Playfulness and innovation through art and creativity is a strong focus of their projects, which deal with serious social issues such as discrimination (status, age, gender, ethnic, etc.), environment. The organisation emphasizes innovative approaches to awaken the potential of citizen as the source of social change.

Karin Dom is an official NGO set in the town of Varna by Bulgarian diplomat with the aim to support children with special needs. The organisation is very active working on the one hand to provide services to children with special needs and their families, and to raise awareness in the society on the other.

Milostiv is an informal network of people who inspired by the values of the Orthodox Church, work as a charity to support people in need. While providing services to marginalized and disadvantaged people they also aspire to bring social problems to the surface and thus to reach many people and to prevent social exclusion.

Multi-Culti is an NGO with strong focus on promoting multiculturalism in Bulgarian society. Initiated by Bistra, the organisation runs projects intermingling the different cultural strata in Bulgaria. The initiatives they run are oriented towards promotion of community development and solidarity in Bulgarian society. They envision social change through using arts and culture (culinary), training, research, monitoring, policy analysis, advocacy.

P.U.L.S. Foundation is an organisation with a focus on preventing violence in society. Situated in the town of Pernik (a small town near the capital with vast population of Roma ethnicity) the organisation runs rehabilitation center for victims of violence and human trafficking as well as projects on the territory of the town to protect people from Roma origin against discrimination. The organisation is run by women from the town, who felt the need to provide psychological care as well as shelter for women victims of domestic violence.

Ravnovesie (Balanse) is an organisation working to promote awareness on social equality in the town of Burgas and the wider municipality. They work to assist minority and vulnerable groups as

well as to educate professionals and the wider public on issues of marginalization. The founders, a couple, are motivated to see social inclusion in practice and devise various projects to promote social equality to children from minorities, people with mental and physical disabilities. They also search to cooperate with other organisations with issues concerning the border region, such as trafficking and environmental pollution (Burgas is the city nearest to the border with Turkey).

RE-ACT is an NGO in Sofia, which is set by volunteers to help children in institutional or foster care have a better live. Adolescents with minor criminal offenses are a critical group of marginalization in Bulgarian society and are the special focus of the organisation. The name of the organisation reflects their firm belief for the need for Bulgarian people to become aware of social issues and start acting upon them.

ROMA-Mednikari (Roma Coppersmith) is an NGO in the town of Shumen (a small town in the North with significant population of Turkish origin as well as Roma) which is set up and run by volunteers from Roma ethnicity. The organisation works toward

social inclusion by emphasizing the artisan and culture traditions of Roma population in the town. Their projects aim at building self-esteem of young Roma people, asserting of good practices, promotion of cultural cohesion between the different ethnic communities in the town (Turkish, Roma, Bulgarian).

Single Step is an NGO in Sofia with focus on LGBT people. It is the first organisation in Bulgaria which advocates of the human rights of LGBT people. Together with working with the people from the LGBT community in the direction of recognizing and affirming their sexual orientation and gender identity, they also organise campaigns in society in order to create awareness. The organisation started small but is very active and has become very visible in the public space.

Time Heroes is an on-line platform which works to link organisations and volunteers. Set up by volunteers, the platform encourages networking as the way to promote active citizens.

Usmivka (Smile) is an organisation with focus on human rights and particularly children rights. Set up by a former teacher, the organisation is targeted toward children from minorities and

disadvantaged social groups in Burgas and the villages in the territory of the region. The projects the organisation devise are tapping into the creative nature of young people and stimulate their personal as well as professional development.

Youth Voice is an NGO set by the leader of the youth dimension of the GERB party in Burgas municipality. The organisation runs projects in accordance with the mission of GERB and focuses on the development of active, engaged in debates and responsible young citizens. The organisation is very active in the territory of Bulgaria not only Burgas and runs centers for young people in many towns.

Move.bg. is an on-line platform, which is an initiative of volunteers to promote change and development of Bulgaria. The platform is a forum for question and answers but also to connect people around issues and projects on social innovation, sustainable development and culture of peace.

Bread Houses (Bulgaria) is an initiative set by Maria Grigorova in Bulgaria following the American model of Bread Houses. The initiative started in Grigorova's hometown of Gabrovo and currently

runs multiple projects in the capital and around the country. The focus of the work interlaces the strong Bulgarian tradition of bread making with social issues and causes. The initiative has a well-elaborated program and projects which surpasses the community focus to expand into business and team building programs.

Forum Civic Participation is an NGO which acts as an umbrella of the NGO sector in Bulgaria. The organisation works towards promoting citizen participation in decision-making and has strong institutional focus. The projects are oriented towards creating the favourable institutional conditions for civil society and are engaged in monitoring and evaluation of government policies as well as advocacy work.

8.4. Data Analysis

8.4.1. The Iterative inquiry of Discourse Analysis: Thematic analysis and de-contextualization of data

Political discourse theory (PDT) sees the aim of data analysis as understanding and explaining social phenomena. It does not, however, provide precise instructions as to how the process of

analysing discourse might be carried in research (Grbich, 2013; Howarth, 2000). In fact, in line with its epistemological foundations, poststructuralist research privileges the contingency of meaning, which translates into a rejection of the "purely algorithmic methods and procedures of social science investigation" (Howarth, 2000). This does not mean that "discourse theory promotes a kind of 'methodological anarchism' or 'irrationalism' as some commentator suggest (see Habermas 1987; Bhaskar 1989; Geras 1990; Krasner 1996). Rather it implies that, in each instance of concrete research, discourse theorists have to modulate and articulate their concepts to suit the particular problems they are addressing (see Gashé 1986: 121-4; Laclau, 1990: 208-9). Conducting empirical research in PDT style of discourse analysis, explains Howarth (2000: 134), is "akin to 'applying a rule' in the Wittgensteinian sense of the expression. That is to say, it consists of learning how to use the same theoretical rules differently to suit the particular historical context in which they are to be applied (Wittgenstien 1953: propositions 198-202; see Tully 1995: 105-11)". This also suggests that particular methods are used with regards to the insights they can contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Boyatzis, 1988; Gee, 2011).

Discourse analysis relies on interpretative methodology and critical explanation. Within its concerns to reveal how different discourses produce 'society effects' (Howarth, 2000: 118) discourse analysis engages in "spiralling out through the layers of meaning that construe human experience" (Reed, 2011: 90). The interpretative understanding of social phenomena drawing on discursive commitment pleads for an assembling of many ingredients to form a comprehensive image" (Curtis and Curtis, 2011: 7); it proceeds from one set of social meanings to another set of social meanings; "from the "surface" meanings easily inferred from the evidence, to the "deep" meanings that require much more interpretative work to access" (Reed, 2011: 92). This process of constitutive analysis shifts from the algorithm into the poetic and relies on the openness, flexibility and the cognitive complexity of the researcher (Boyatzis, 1988: 7-8).

The study should disclose the layers of meaning through iterative and investigative inquiry and two cycles of data analysis, namely 'decontextualization' and 'recontextualisation' of data as per Tesch (1990). The first cycle included de-segmentation of data while the second implied data interpretation. As part of the iterative phase of

discourse analysis, de-contextualization of data is a descriptive process, which invokes an inductive approach to qualitative data, and hence, thematic analysis. Within the recognition of iterative inquiry that meaning is constituted by both the researcher and the objects of the research, thematic analysis, as first step, aimed at understanding the raw information, "to internalize it, and reduce it to manageable size" (Boyatzis,1988: 69). De-contextualization involves coding emically, suggesting an effort to minimize the researcher's "impact on the settings and possible over-interpretation of the situation, in favour of highlighting the views of those researched" (Grbich, 2013: 16-17).

Retrieving data through thematic analysis began with listening carefully to the recorded interviews and going over the notes that I kept during fieldwork, a sort of research diary. I kept a record of the contact details of participants, organised my interview schedule, but I also jotted down ideas and noted salient points from my readings, and on the meetings and words of the interviewees and I wrote down quotes that struck me. In this way I began to link emerging ideas. These were further developed through typing up the interviews. I tried to transcribe interviews as soon as possible after

conducting them. This wasn't always possible, but I did my best. I also got help with transcription for the last 10 interviews from a friend who is a journalist. She is well acquainted with the Bulgarian social and political scene and I discussed many of my ideas on the transcripts with her.

As a process of denotation, while reading through the transcripts I was 'pulling out' ideas and particular words connected with them. This way I was able to identify codes as key words, short quotations that were repeating. For example, such key words emerging from the passages were: work, change, action, creativity, innovation, community, knowledge, education, passion, disappointment, volunteering, happiness, etc. The ideas were formulated based primarily on emic coding, thus reflecting the meaning the way participants in the research communicated it. Coding then followed what Saldana (2015) qualifies as "lumping" than "splitting" approach. The "lumping" approach involves fitting data of one paragraph or even passage under a single (broad) code understood as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2015: 3).

Coding or thematic analysis[125], however, is an idiosyncratic process (Boyatzis, 1998: 1), thus depending upon researcher's flexibility (Boyatzis, 1998: 7-8) or what Strauss and Corbin (1990) call "tacit knowledge" referring to "the ability of the researchers to recognize what is important, give it meaning, and conceptualize the observations. Codes therefore were also generated emically, thus, based on the theoretical sensitivity informing the researcher's judgments (Curtis and Curtis, 2011). This process of "grouping segments" (Grbich, 2013; Johansen and Larsen, 2002) as a way to understand raw information was also facilitated by the unit of coding suggested by the research question. Thus, the key words were a stimulus of thinking, which were linked to theory.

The next phase of thematic analysis involved the identification of themes in data. Codes were expanded into themes (Boyatzis, 1988) and the analysis moved to conceptual mapping as higher level of abstraction. This process of "clustering" themes (Grbich, 2013) involved seeing patterns in data and writing descriptive comments alongside the margins thus conceptualizing these groupings into meaningful clusters (Grbich, 2013). Johansen and Larsen (2002: 63) suggest that the advantages of conceptual mapping as way of

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[125] Scholars on research methods use the terms interchangeably. See Johansen and Larsen (2002: 61)

tracking the outcomes of thematic analysis consist in providing a broader overview of the issues that are emerging. The disadvantage is that "these brief words and phrases tend to oversimplify and decontextualize issues and you need to keep going back to the data base to get the fuller story" (2002: 65). On the basis of clustering of themes I organised data into few documents, where codes were organised into themes and sub-themes. Example of the themes and the key words, codes related to them are:

Change: Innovation; inclusion, visibility, confidence responsibility, education, problems, solutions efforts, freedom, support

These themes broadly revolved around: a general impetus for something new, an enthusiasm for *doing* versus *waiting* not extant until now in Bulgarian social space; work also denoted the idea of the right time and moment for change, where change was understood as something *absolutely* necessary; a very strong element of resistance against the status quo, and an emphasis on apolitical engagement, for politics was conceived of in pejorative light.

Work: labour, skills, abilities, doing

Action: help, training, education, care, information, apathy, passion, communication, volunteering, frustration, consequences, results, contestation, resistance, motivation, involvement

State: passivity, irresponsibility, stigma, carelessness, inefficiency, corruption, violence, poverty, communist legacy, powerlessness, tolerance

Europe: knowledge, human rights, promise, justice, travel

Art: creativity, imagination, work, practice, potential, play/fun, artisan, manufacturing

Community: together, society, humanness, happy, solidarity, global, partnership, diversity, interaction, engagement, cosmopolitanism, network, resources

Power: independence, competence, duties, responsibilities, potential,

Bulgaria: knowledge, tradition, missing citizen, local, customs, disenchantment, inertness, nature, culture, oligarchy

Citizens: potential, dialogue, connection, alienation, self-reliance, self-esteem

Education: inclusion, participation, abilities, presence

8.4.2. Investigative inquiry of discourse analysis: Semiotic Analysis and re-contextualization of data

The reconstruction of the discourse of civic initiatives required resignification of the meanings appointed by the participants into a deeper layer. The interpretation of meaning involved "determining how the meaning of signs and symbols are constructed and how they can be read" (Curtis and Curtis, 2011: 245). This was done through semiotic analysis. Semiotics as the study of signs and meaning is far from constituting a uniform approach[126]. In addition, writers of semiotics, such as Barthes, Eco provide very little information on methods[127]. The employed semiotic analysis belongs to the most basic one, namely the two–part sign of traditional Saussurean semiotics. Accordingly, the signifying process constitutes meaning through the binary oppositions of form and content. Hence, meaning 'was seen as laying within the text where the signifier (written word) attributed meaning to the signified (object or concept) in an easily visualized manner[128]. Discourse analysis at the level of semiotics

[126] General semiotics as in Pierce's dictum "instead of Signs' ought I not to say medium" places semiotics as the study of signs in a process of mediation between the world we live in and our minds in which it is reflected or constructed. Umberto Eco (1976:138-41) claimed that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign". Contemporary semiotics as in the work of Winfried (1997:3) stresses that semiotic is "the study of sign processes and systems in nature and culture".

[127] Derrida too argues that semiotics suggest methodology but cannot sustain a method (Chandler, 2007)

[128] Barthes 1972(1957) in Mythologies highlights how meaning is conveyed: At the one end is some sort of material with which to fashion the physical sign. The signifier is the physical form of the sign. It exists in a material way as a spoken or written language, an image, or indeed as any object. The signified content exists within the sign in a non-material, psychological form, as a process of recognition and extrapolation on the part of the reader. A traditional example of

discloses meaning through questioning the relation between an expression (a signifier) and what is expressed (signified) (McHoul, 1996: xvii)[129].

Central to this approach is the use of grammar as a key analytical mechanism (Curtis and Curtis, 2011: 246). While every semiotic analysis adheres to a version of the way signs mediate reality[130], a commonly shared assumption is that signs are not the product of chaos or chance but have to be understood in orderly way. The process of signification constitutes meaning in the relationship between signs, which are rule-bound and hence understandable through grammar. Grammar is the study of the rules of language. Implicated in the stress on grammar is the non-objectivist perception of language according to which, its key component is not form but meaning and conceptualization. It is a claim embedded in the experimentalist understanding that mind is both literal and figurative (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Grammar serves the purpose

Saussurean semiotics is the traffic lights: The signifier, red light has the content (stop). Just as the matter of signifier, the lenses, glowing filaments, etc, was drawn from a continuum of available matter so, on the content side, the concept of coming to a halt was drawn from a continuum of movement concepts, especially those having to do with the crossing paths of vehicular traffic (in Curtis and Curtis, 2011:246)

[129] This process is traced in the Graphic Outline of Semiotic analysis provided in Appendix

[130] This reflects the fact that semiotics originated in linguistics but has diversified enormously to encompass the study of almost anything as a 'system of signs' (Jameson, 1972 in Curtis and Curtis, 2011:246).

of conceptualization; indeed it is taken to be conceptualization (Kovecses, 2006: 11).

The process of semiotics then enquires into the language forms, structures, seeks the way effects are created through metaphors, repetition, comparisons, synonyms, antonyms and binary opposites[131]. In particular, the opposition of signs is a major tool of semiotic analysis. Further, semiotic analysis is a particularly fruitful approach to identify the meaning of signs in context and culture (Grbich, 2013), which demands disclosing the particularities of grammar where the sign is always interpreted as something else. Thematic analysis involved listing themes, patterns and the use of repeated signs and symbols to create a particular meaning (Johansen and Larsen, 2002: 177). Codes as "heuristic devices" (Attkinson and Coffey, 1996: 16), helped me think abstractly about data. Coding was useful to expand ideas into new "pools of meaning"(Marton, 1986 in Saldana, 2016: 30) while semiotic analysis enabled linking denotation (the primary/obvious meaning of a sign) and connotation (all the other meanings of a sign), thus making visible the

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[131] Using grammar to capture the complexities of meaning implies the use of array of linguistic conventions. Together with metaphor, analysis relies on figures such as metonymy, hyperbole, synechdoche, oxymorons, personifications, etc. but also syntactical devices such as antithesis, inversion, repetitions; and prosodic one as rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration and literary ones as irony, eulogy and sarcasm… (Geertz, 1973:213). Hence, it is important researcher to be familiar with grammar as analytical tool (Curtis and Curtis, 2013:207).

interconnectedness of themes as discussed by Barthes with regard to the myth.

In seeking to uncover the meaning "between the lines", I was particularly paying attention to figurative language. I was thus examining data not only in terms of thematic content but also in terms of semantics and metaphorical forms. The category of movement as literal and metaphorical emerged as a main motif (theme) in data. In a literal sense it was rendered with codes of action, such as work, cooperation; as networking; change (the exchange of 'know-how'), and innovation; as personal development; as inclusion, togetherness; as education and culture (art). These, however, were representative or symbolic of something else. 'Movement' suggested an analogy with the social reality as envisioned by civic initiatives. 'Movement' enclosed the properties of conceptual metaphor, which as Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 134) argue "is not only a matter of language (rhetoric) but also of thinking (epistemology) and social practice (ontology)".

Having established movement as the main conceptual metaphor, enclosing the content or cognitive underpinnings of action, within

the construction of discourse, 'movement' assumed the role of signified. Movement as signified pertains to the mental concept implicated in discourse, which was linked with the image of a 'happy life'. The latter describes the vision of social change that civic initiatives embrace. The construction of the discourse of civic initiatives occurs through the interplay between the signifier rendered with the image of 'happy life' and the concept of movement to which it refers to as signified.

8.4.3. Explanation as reconstruction of the social dimension of meaning

The third step of analysis implied theorising about data. In accordance with the theoretical premises of PDT, discourse analysis is a process of description as well as explanation. Semiotic analysis was useful tool to set a boundary of (what is inferred) meaning. However, as Grbich (2013: 177) observes, the precision of structural form signifier-signified may not sufficiently represent complexities of meaning. Indeed, semiotics as a form of analytical induction is still within the descriptive properties of discourse analysis (Geertz, 1972). Discourse carries tacit, implicit or unconscious layers of knowledge, which enables a symbolic organisation of social reality.

Theorising data implied going beyond formal semantics to consider their relation to the social world.

Explanation as interpretation of the social dimension of the meaning communicated in the discourse of civic initiatives, therefore, leaves the descriptive element to delve into the problematization of meaning. The semiotic work of civic initiatives is analysed through the particular problem that the research question addresses. This involved answering how civic initiatives are constituted by the European script of liberal democracy and how they contribute to the development of civil society in Bulgaria. Explanation involved resignification of meaning from one set of social meaning to another set of social meaning. It also implied establishing the causal links through theorization that provides the concepts needed to reconstruct deep meaning and to analyse the findings in light of the problem posed.

In order to render intelligible the social meaning of the discourse of civic initiatives discourse analysis relied on poststructuralist logic of deconstruction and theory as causal explanation. Deconstruction of the discourse of civic initiatives implied boundary removal, thus

putting into free paly the relationship between signs. As a result, textual signifiers did not relate to any clear centered 'reality' or 'signifier' outside text, they simply slid away towards multiple possibilities" (Derrida, 1976: 158). Deconstruction enables the capacity to go beyond superficial meaning, thereby allowing new possibilities of meaning to emerge (Grbich, 2013: 176).

8.5. Ethics

In conducting the research for this thesis I adhered strictly to Maynooth University Ethics policies for social research carried out involving human participants. I gave strong considerations to ethical issues because of the asymmetric power relations that qualitative interviewing entails (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In the approach to conducting research I was aspiring to make the process rewarding for both parties. I was thus aiming at keeping the "balance between the interviewer's concern for pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the interview subject" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 16).

I was thus cognizant of my responsibilities as interviewer. Respecting human dignity has been the main priority throughout the entire research process. In approaching individuals to participate in the research I was acting out of an ethics of respect and equality. Therefore, I recognised the right of each individual to be well-informed about the research. After an initial (verbal or email) consent I sent an official letter, which I called an "invitation", communicating the nature and purpose of the research and the methods of data collection. The letter contained a section on "Declaration of Informed Consent". In the "declaration" I made clear the ethical commitment of the research to protect the right of confidentiality and hence to ensure that anonymity will be respected at all stages of the research, from data gathering to dissemination. I also explicitly stated the right of the participant to withdraw from any stage of the research without any negative consequences. None of the participants considered anonymity and confidentiality to be an issue of importance. So in presenting the findings, when I am quoting somebody, I mention her/his name. I allowed this because I considered that disclosing their names did not put the participants at unanticipated or unacceptable risk.

8.6. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research design as a qualitative case study. It offered a detailed description of the methods of data collection and a justification for the qualitative approach adopted. Case study design conducted through semi-structured interviews and documents analysis are congruent with the discursive bias of the research. Case study as a bounded entity is an ideal vehicle to generate specific knowledge about the phenomenon of civic initiatives offering critical insights towards the wider understanding of the process of Europeanization. This way, within a discursive theorizing of Europeanization, and defined by the unit of analysis, the case study will generate theoretical explanation and generalization of the findings. Case study is defined by the unit of analysis, i.e. the phenomenon of civic initiatives as discursive articulations also affects the raw information and hence the analysis of data. Discourse analysis is conducted in three phases: thematic analysis, semiotic analysis and explanation, i.e. theorization. The first two phases pertain to the descriptive approach to data thus aiming to disclose surface meanings and to capture the discourse of civic initiatives. Discourse at this stage as thematic analysis, allowed me to let participants first "fix" the meaning of their activities, which,

through semiotic analysis acquired new signification in the abstract mapping of discourse that constitutes and is constitutive of their practices. Explanation relates to the third, critical aspect of interpretation, hence to problematization of established meaning with the aim to reconstruct deeper layers of social meaning. Explanation as interpretation of the social dimension of meaning communicated in the discourse of civic initiatives is conducted with regard of disclosing the democratic script of the discourse of civic initiatives and making intelligible the dynamics of social relations it promotes. Linguistic categories were re-inserted into theory in order to speculate about civic initiatives as an empirical case of Europeanisation. The identified semantics were linked to the abstract concept of liberal democracy. The chapter also sheds light on the participants in the research, the researcher's fieldwork and *modus operandi* as well as to ethical issues raised by the research.

Chapter IX: The Discourse of Social Change: Democracy as a Way of Life

This chapter outlines the discourse that informs civic initiatives. It presents the construction of discourse of the script of liberal democracy in the light of John Dewey's perception on democracy as a social ideal and a way of life. As socially grounded practices civic initiatives construct an alternative language in Bulgarian vocabulary around the tropes of moving and multiplying people, which point to their vision of social change envisioned in the domain of sociality. The chapter argues for social constituency of democracy and presents data that supports the conclusions. The evidence collected via thematic analysis is interpreted through semiotic analysis of the notion of movement and its function as signifier and signified. The connotations of movement as the signifier are rendered with the expression of 'moving and multiplying people', and figuratively expressed as 'happy life'. The latter contains the democratic script of discourse as the ethos that informs their function. Movement as the signified of discourse reveals the content that the signifier refers to. It encloses the resources or knowledge claims that infuse the democratic vision.

9.1. Mapping Discourse: democracy, movement and social change

As discursive practices, civic initiatives reside within the discursive field of Europe. Therefore they are involved in language games, which, as Wittgenstein (1953) suggested, implies 'meaning in use', and consist in the recognition of words and objects anew. Civic initiatives offer their interpretation of the liberal democratic script as a particular fixation of democratic meaning; the version they develop is bound to their situatedness in the discursive field, i.e., their location in the Bulgarian social context. Secondly, it is informed by their position within this context. The time frame is also important. They appear at a given historical moment and hence offer a historically-textured articulation of EU norms of liberal democracy. The democratic script that informs their discourse is a reflection of these considerations and displays the insights highlighted by "new liberals", represented most prominently by the pragmatists Charles Pierce (183-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952). The analysis draws on John Dewey's (1916, 1937, 1939) conception of democracy. Three main features of democracy that developed in his work emerge in the discourse of civic initiatives. These are: democracy as associative living; democracy as social inquiry; and democracy as experiment. They integrate

Dewey's unconventional view of democracy as a form of relationship inherent not merely to political institutions but endemic to a wide range of social spheres. In addition, they encompass the pragmatist core of his philosophy wherein democracy is viewed as a social ideal, i.e., an end but also as the means of creating the good society. Finally, these democratic qualities furnish Dewey's perception of democracy as a way of life. In the section 'On Democracy' in *Democracy and Educational Administration*, Dewey writes: "*Democracy is much broader than a special political form, a method of conducting government, of making laws and carrying on governmental administration by means of popular suffrage and elected officers... The political and governmental phase of democracy is a means, the best means so far found, for realizing ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality. It is, as we often say, though perhaps without appreciating all that is involved in the saying, a way of life, social and individual*" (Dewey, 1937).

The first element of democracy as a way of life highlights the social constituency of democracy. Dewey's understanding of participatory democracy was counteracting élitist attitudes that emphasized

democracy *for* the people but not *by* the people, as Garrison (2008) explains. Against the neoconservative belief in the Platonic ideal of a small élite of philosopher kings with the wisdom to rule, Dewey argued for a democracy of the masses. This pluralist approach was commensurate with his belief in the common Man and faith in the possibilities of human nature. Unlike a traditional liberal emphasis on individualism and hence of social and political life as the aggregation of inherently conflicting private interests, Dewey adopts a relational view of individuals. As he puts it, "men are not isolated non-social atoms, but are men only when in intrinsic relations" to one another, and the state in turn only represents them "so far as they have become organically related to one another, or are possessed of unity of purpose and interest" (1988: 7, *EW*1: 231-2)[132]. The implicit liberalism in this broad understanding of democracy lies in his reading of the latter as intrinsically connected to the expression of human individuality. In other words, democracy is a requirement of individual freedom and full realisation of one's potential can only prosper under the democratic aegis. As he puts it in *The Public and Its Problems*, liberty "is that secure release and fulfilment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich and

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[132] The abbreviations for Dewey's work follow Boydston, J.A. (ed.) 1972 as the reference guide adopted by scholars studying the writings of Dewey as outlined by Garrison (2008:17).

manifold association with others; the power to be an individualized self-making a distinctive contribution and enjoying in its own way the fruits of association"(1927). Democracy therefore does not consist only of negative freedom but of positive as well, which Dewey elaborates in his emphasis on education.

The social constituency of democracy is further developed in the next two features of democratic order. The second element that Dewey gives significance to is citizen involvement in inquiries about the social world. According to Dewey democracy is "a mode of associative living" (1916: 87) where the word *associated* suggests that democracy is less about each person doing his or her own thing but more about individuals joining with other to contribute to and enjoy, each in his or her own way, the "fruits" of shared activity (1927: 150). Democracy approached as a social and personal ideal involves research and learning, but inevitably exposes social problems. Common to pragmatists is the expansion of the view of political activity to *social* acts, thereby recognizing that any democratic social order potentially involves challenging the *status quo*. Democracy is therefore constituted in practice. The third theme involves the experimental nature of the democratic order. Buttressed by the empirical leanings of pragmatism, it is a stand

against the fixed and ultimate form of government, i.e., the state, but always subject to revision (Garrison, 2008: 8). Also, it is connected with the democratic ideal of citizens' active engagement in the resolution of social problems, which Dewey developed in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927). Participation for Dewey is linked with individuality (and liberty). He suggests that individuality can only be properly expressed if the individual participates in democratic practices, since social inquiry is a constitutive part of the individual good.

Civic initiatives integrate these ideas in the discourse of social change that they construct. The semiotic analysis of interviews and documents pointed to the appointment or *fixation* of a field of signification around the discursive trope of (social) change. The latter communicates the democratic ideal of civic initiatives, understood as means and ends. Social change acquires meaning through the interplay between the signifier rendered with the image of 'the happy life' and the concept of 'movement' to which it refers to as signified. 'The happy life' contains the script of civic initiatives encoded in the expression 'moving and multiplying people'. It is thus the bearer of democratic symbolism. The signified as 'movement' represents the mental concept that refers to the content of 'the

happy life'. It contains the knowledge claims or the resources of the discourse of civic initiatives.

These emerged through my inquiries into the ideas and motives that guide their activities, as well as about the very nature of these activities as they interpret them. Stated another way, I wanted to understand their motivation, aims and the tools they use to further these ends. Through the interviews as well as through my reading of the materials (online and paper documents) the motif of movement began to crystallise. In further specifications of meaning executed through a theoretical interpretation of the 'sayings and doings' of collected data, movement emerged as a constituting sign in a field of meaning among a general discourse of social change within which they operate. Mapping the discourse of civic initiatives then involved an investigation of the semantics (logical and lexical) of movement. Logical semantics refers to the analysis of matters such as sense, reference, presupposition and implication, while lexical semantics entails the analysis of word meanings and relations between them.

Movement carries literal and metaphorical connotations. Communicated in a literal sense, movement is implicated in the emphasis civic initiatives place on practice. The implicit action, i.e., *doing* in moving constitutes the very *raison d'être* of civic initiatives;

they come into being with the purpose of acting. Their agency is oriented to practical results, and not just rhetoric. Movement in a literal sense is expressed by their focus on project initiation, on change from being in state A to assuming a state B, hence as geared towards accomplishment. It is rendered lexically with the semantics of work. Civic initiatives conceive of the nature of their activities as work. In their mission statements, logos and personal opinions, *work* is the term which they highlight as pertaining to what they actually do. For example *Multi-culti* stresses "we are more than idea. We are actually doing the work". This emphasis is meant not only to denote a focus on praxis versus theory. While the modality of agency they employ is centered on various practices, movement embodies the connotation of efficiency as well. This is perhaps best illustrated by *RE-ACT's* statement, "We cannot stand still. We do not like waiting and we do not share the idea that social issues in Bulgaria will "self-heal" themselves and that civil society, humaneness and the means of mutual aid will be born from nothing". Further, as a literal figure, movement carries the logical semantics of innovation. In their agendas, work assumes a social purpose; it is organised around a social cause and is conducted through innovative approaches. Unlike the replicative models and visions of top-down established NGOs,

civic initiatives are committed to movement through innovation. Although a valid claim for the majority of the organisations which took part in the research, it is explicitly emphasised in the work of *Factory of Ideas*. Their mission statement declares that "The mission of the Ideas Factory is to use innovative approaches in order to awaken the potential for social change in anyone who is willing to become a 'Fabricator'".

Movement also has strong metaphorical properties. As a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) the meaning of movement surpasses the literal motif of action and gains ontological properties. Therefore, movement "provides insights within the familiar framework which can be turned into reality", and "dictates the rules of practice" (Drulak, 2004: 10). As a discursive trope, movement can be interpreted, at the level of semantics, to bridge the current social reality towards a vision that they embrace. Though generated from the current social condition, it is an idea that designates the properties of a new social reality. As a metaphor, movement opens up the meaning not solely to a change of positioning of being in a *state A* to assuming a *state B*. It expands the substance and texture that change entails. The ontological properties of movement relate to

the metaphorical transition to democracy. Its connotations are specified by the signifier, which is the topic of the next section.

9.1.1. The Signifer: Movement as Happy Life

As a metaphor, movement relates to the cognitive script of the discourse of social change of civic initiatives. It embodies the vision of a good life as the end result of their imagination. The script, while in line with a liberal commitment to individual liberty, is presenting a "selective concern"[133] implicated in the thought and acts of civic initiatives. It is thus underpinned by values commensurable with their vision on democracy as locally grown/developed. Values, as Dewey (1924: 27, MW15: 76) argued, are constructed to address problems in one set of circumstances. They can outlive their usefulness, and if "infected" by "the absolutistic logic of rigid syllogistic forms", values can even become a hindrance to practical needs and worries. The civic initiative script of social change points to a value set as a leading guide to what they perceive as being problematic within Bulgaria's social world.

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[133] Dewey insisted that "there is selectivity (and rejection) found in every operation of thought. There is care, concern, implicated in every act of thought. There is someone who has affection for some things over others" (LW 6:13 in Garrison, 2008: 7)

The democratic script is embedded in the common ethos they share. It is evident in the socialising of a particular vision of the world, which they portray as a happy life. Yanina, the founder of *Factory of Ideas* said that civic initiatives were engaged in "exchanges of utopias", which are "different visions of what Bulgaria should be in 10-15 years". She continues: *"For me all these different utopias create different narratives…for example the cliché with European integration; we are to integrate, but what is this in which we are to integrate? And from there the idea of the 'bright West'… but what is our own narrative? Is everything copy-paste? Where is the identity of our own locally-grown decisions? Our utopia is concerned with the sustainable development of community, and not copy-paste. Take, for example the USA aid programs, which dropped a lot of money, which went nowhere, into social engineering which has no bottom-up coverage."*

Civic initiatives are ultimately on the road to construct a new social world, as postulated in *RE-ACT* statement: "we are making the puzzles of the new social reality, as we don't like the one we have". Thus, their 'utopian' view embraces the view of the social as happy life. According to her, "there is a conflict in values, because I think in Bulgaria there are very few people who want to change the system and the society to be happy". By the same token, the platform

move.bg outlines change in Bulgaria "in the direction of transforming our country into a place for happy living and successful professional realisation through 'affirming a culture of constructive dialogue, participatory leadership and shared values'". The vision as endorsed by *Factory of Ideas* is presented in their 'Manifesto'. Reminiscent of Dewey's "socialist" view of liberalism (Garrison, 2008: 3) the Manifesto promotes a vision of:

<div align="center">"Social Change in Bulgaria"</div>

It is urgent to create a new world-

One of justice,

Prosperity and

Oriented towards happiness

The democratic script of the discourse of social change expressed as "Happy life" is associated with the values of community. Thus, the abstract and indefinable connotations of the signifier gain real dimensions in the vision of a community they embrace. Expressed with the metaphor of "moving and multiplying people", community invokes the new ordering of the social as "associated living", as Dewey (1916) has argued. In the words of Yanina: "what we believe for sure is that community building is the *catapult* needed for any

positive social change". Doing or "any context constituting hanging together" according to Schatzki (1996) is intrinsically connected with the question of the nature of sociality. Unlike traditional liberalism, the vision of sociality in the emphasis on community is envisioned here as relational. Reminiscent of the altruism of modern liberals, as in the Green's socialist liberalism (Heywood, 1991: 52), the relational view of individuals underpins the emphasis on cooperation that they place as the way to a happy life. The social view they share is one where the wellbeing of each individual is tied to the wellbeing of the whole. The resonance with Dewey's (1958) observation that all "things" exist in constant interaction is communicated in their view of community as emerging from the interaction of inextricably related individuals. The relational view of community is communicated in the language of civic initiatives as involving "establishing new principles of connectedness, solidarity and sharing". This idea is conveyed by the words connectivity and togetherness, figuratively represented by *Multi Culti* as solidarity:
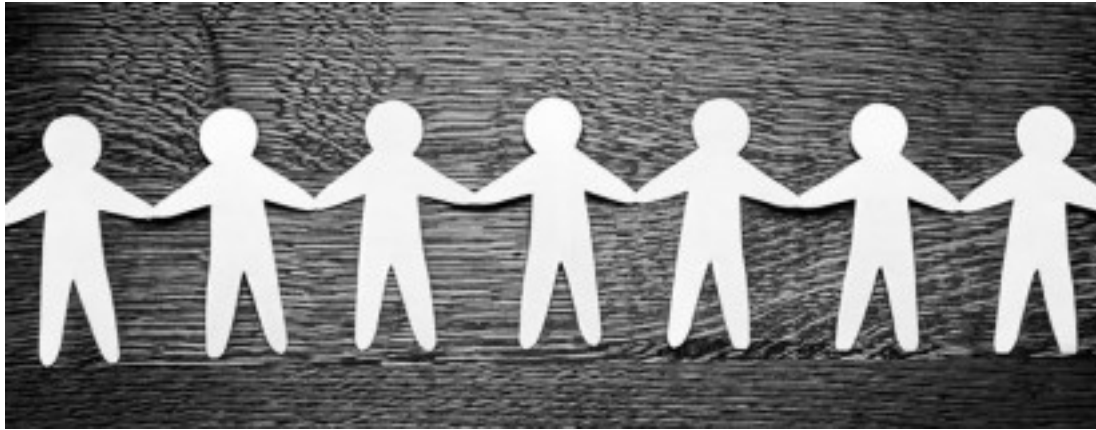
Multi-Culti: Celebrating Solidarity across Europe

Likewise*,* the *Factory of Ideas'* Manifesto[134] claims: "Our survival depends on one single word: 'together'; encourage a culture of cooperation, group intelligence and mutual learning, instead of competition and extreme individualism; connections, nurturing these small ones in networks that defy space and allow good ideas to scale up through horizontal and non-formal decision-making processes that allow for co-operation and the exchanging of experience" In a codified manner, relationality contains the values underpinning the vision of social change, such as:

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[134] It is reminiscent of Dewey's "A Humanist Manifesto" in 1933 affirming the release of human creativity, the pursuit of social justice (the kingdom of heaven on earth), and "a socialised and co-operative economic order" as part of a humanist movement (Garrison, 2008: 5).

"Social intelligence + empathy + effectiveness + supportive environment = things without which we cannot imagine social change"

The online platform *Move.bg* outlines the values they work towards as:

FREEDOM   JUSTICE   RESPONSIBILITY

TRANSPARENCY   GROWTH   ACTING TOGETHER

LOVE
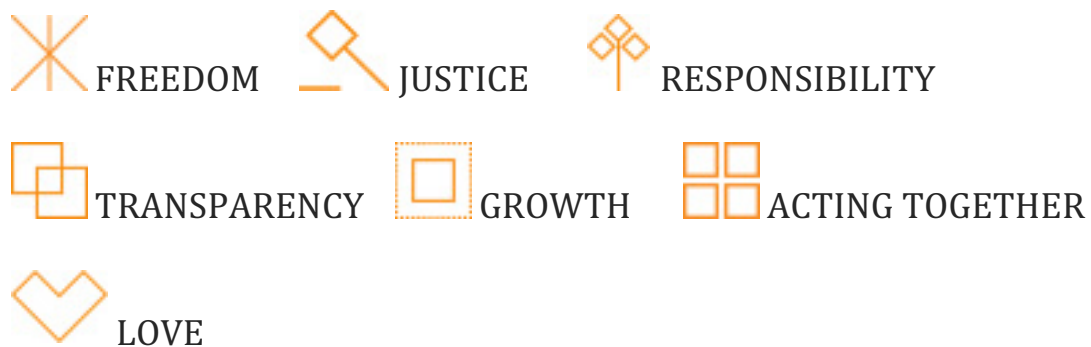
In addition, happy life has its own moral code as the conceptual model of the social world they envisage. The morphology of happy life sheds light on the logic of the ordering of social life and the nature of social relations that are valued. It discloses a particular vision of the social, of the social order as a community that is active and heterogeneous. This proposition is expressed in the metaphor "moving and multiplying people". Community is envisioned to happen through people coming together in their versatility and plurality. The pluralistic and multicultural society articulates a vision of plural democracy as suggested by Dewey's belief that diversity enriches democracy (Neubert, 2009: 95). Quintessentially,

community can be narrated as "unity in diversity" as the motto espoused by the EU.

The multi-cultural vision embraced by participants in the research is expressed in the words of *Single step*: "'together' is differentiated". The organisation explains, "Community is constituted through different communities recognizing their own value in the common whole". The pragmatics behind the conception of community understood as plural in the discourse of social change is expressed by Liudmil, who argues that "unless we get to the heart of the problem which is that we are one society and everyone can be useful, even a racist person, is to acknowledge that it is a waste of money if we have 10% of the population which is not productive and is rotting somewhere. For me this is the process; and we start from somewhere ...I don't know how it will open up, but we are simply trying things...and something, eventually will resonate with our efforts". Happy life is about being able to live as who you are, as outlined in the mission statement of Single Step, to inspire young people to be true to themselves. "Be yourself" is affirming singularity as conducive for freedom, recalling Dewey's positive freedom. In Dewey's view "what is valuable about freedom is not the negative

absence of interference but the positive 'power to be an individualized self' (1927; LW2: 329). 'Happy life' asserts Dewey's belief in popular democracy and the primacy of community over the individual.

Further, 'happy life' is a vision of the social world where the individual is involved in its creation. Community is to be formed by enacting the ethos of togetherness in practice. Like Dewey, who argued that democracy is not an institutional concept that exists outside of ourselves, as a moral ideal, democracy requires actual efforts and works by people. *Factory of Ideas'* view on social change depends on "power that supports civic participation and does not dominate or suppress it; not on the hollow use of concepts like 'democracy' and 'freedom' but a system that organically depends on its citizens". The participatory ideal of the democratic script is enshrined in the vision of "*Single step*" too. Nikoleta states that *"civil society should not only be institutionalised, but it also needs to be constituted informally. And what I mean by informal is that we need to be able to form communities. At the moment in Bulgaria this does not exist. What I am talking about is that people inhabiting a building get together and organise themselves to clean the space around it, let's*

say. These kinds of communities I am talking about." The organisations and individuals put forward the democratic ideal of citizen participation with the message: "Social change must come from the inside!" Citizen participation in the vision of *Multi-Culti* reflects the idea of consent in democratic forms, assuming that those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them. They envisage social change as "all members of this society to possess full rights and to shape it together, according to their views and needs".

The vision of community expressed as 'moving and multiplying people' is predetermined with challenges since its inception. It denotes values, which allude to the urgency of remodelling the current system in the direction of a stronger citizen presence and input. Civic initiatives regard 'the Bulgarian mentality' as the biggest challenge to social constituency. In the opinion of *RE-ACT,* the actualising of the ethos of togetherness is very important in view of the qualities of the Bulgarian social fabric. According to Liubo, the organisations are "working towards a system change in the whole society, which all these initiatives are after; and while the state is pressing from the top-down, all of us NGOs are trying to do

completely the opposite from the bottom-up...in Bulgaria these two types of politics very rarely match; and for us this means to come up with better and more efficient solutions to some problem... for me this is a national or a mentality problem." He further explains that "*even if the material (financial) conditions of life in Bulgaria change, which can happen fast, the mentality in the way of thinking, of perception, of attitudes... these require ages... I don't know, maybe there is research on that... I know it sounds like a dead-end street, but in reality things take time. So organisations like ours are pioneers, let's say. They are pioneers in a vineyard where up until now everything has been run the same way, where who collected the vines, who watered them and who planted them is not clear... In fact we all know who collects the vines in our society*".

This section presented the democratic script of civic initiatives with the expression 'moving and multiplying' people. Implicit in the democratic ethos is their vision of community consisting of heterogeneous and active individuals. The metaphor of happy life contains the symbolic codes of signification of the discourse of social change. Happy life displays the democratic vision as a way of life and pertains to the values that drive civic initiatives. These allude to civic

initiatives belief in the bottom-up actualization of social change and the challenges of the Bulgarian social context to the democratic ethos of togetherness. The next section addresses in further detail the specificities of civic initiatives understanding of social change. By focusing on movement as a referent to the signifier happy life, movement discloses the social reflexivity of these mundane practices.

9.1.2. The Signified: Movement as the knowledge claims of civic initiatives

As a signified, movement contains the knowledge claims or resources which inform the knowledge and practices of the cognitive script of the discourse of social change. Thematic analysis suggests three cognitive resources implied in movement. These are: a) social positionality, i.e., the grassroots or social knowledge of civic initiatives, b) emotionality, or the personal feelings that underpin participants' motivation for engagement, and c) spatiality, which covers the symbolic dimension of their drive for action. Based on the thematic analysis, these were interpreted as 'movement within', 'movement against' and 'movement towards'. As stocks of knowledge embodied in the cognitive script of discourse, movement discloses

the "polysensuality" (de Voulpian, 2008) of civic initiatives. This term evokes the reflexivity of civic initiatives as social agency situated in a social filed of meaning. It thus pertains to their appearance as *selective responsiveness* to the manifold meanings that consist of the social world.

"Movement (from) within": the social intelligence of civic initiatives

The grassroots positionality of civic initiatives informs their knowledge and social power as Dewey contented (1916, 1934, 1937). Dewey believed in the intelligence of citizens and argued that intelligence is capable of exercising a significant role in social affairs and that it would be well if it had a much larger influence in directing social affairs[135]. A commonly shared view by all of the interviewees is that the strength of these organisations lies on the ground. "Moving from within" incorporates the benefits of working on specific terrain, linked to the ability to identify problems of the social and to seek solutions there.

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[135] A firm believer in knowledge Dewey (1934) argued for the significance of the method of physical science demonstrating the action is necessary part of intelligence, namely, that action changes conditions that previously exited. Yet, he warned that the students of society should be cautious against the abstract and purely mechanical notions introduced from the physical sciences.

The social intelligence of civic initiatives is implied in the expression 'movement from within'. This pertains to the positionality of civic initiatives in the social and the grassroots vision of democracy they develop. In Dewey's conception, democracy is not managed by experts but constituted by what he called "social intelligence" (Narayan, 2016). The term designates the social power of knowledge, his belief in ordinary people as the "only safe repository of the powers of society". This 'anti-élitist' position underlines one of Dewey's main critiques of traditional liberals[136]. According to him, "it is false to consider intelligence as individual possession and its exercise as individual right". Liberals must "assume the responsibility for making it clear that intelligence is a social asset and is clothed with a function as public as is its origin in the concrete, in social cooperation" (McDermott 1981: 375, 382 in Boyte, 2003).

The site where the intelligibility of movement is located is the social. Notwithstanding the wide variety of civic initiatives participating in the research, they all share a common characteristic, namely, their grassroots positionality. By this term I mean that their focus is on the

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[136] Another facet of the critique touches on the need to adopt the scientific method in political matters. Social intelligence for Dewey implies the alliance between scientific and democratic method (Narayan, 2016: 78). He believed that "the crisis in democracy" demanded the 'substitution of intelligence that is exemplified in scientific procedures for the kind of intelligence that is now accepted' (LW: 51).

ground, on engaging with "real" people. In the "Who we are" sections of websites as well as through interviews, the social rootedness of their work emerged very strongly. This is also reflected in the agendas they develop and follow. Although they consult local state authorities and EU reports with regard to their specific areas of interest, the focus of the civic initiatives is establishing priorities and objectives based on engagement with people. "I wish to have a real connection with real people, and so I can see the result of my work in more concrete terms" shares Nikoleta, the director of *Single Step.* Nikoleta has significant experience in working in the NGO sector predominantly at policy level. She believes that the "grassroots" or bottom-up approach has the potential for real long-term results compared to the indirect and distant impact of top-down policy.

It is arguable that these outfits can't be classified as 'ideal' grass roots organisations. While most of them started out as an informal gathering of friends (as in *Hamalogica*) or like-minded individuals (as in *Multi-Culti*) and then with time grew and assumed more institutional framing, others have been established from the beginning with some top-down (institutional/structural) influence. The personal element behind the establishment of the organisation

is very strong in *Factory of Ideas, RE-ACT, Time Heroes, Amalipe, Hamalogica, Association for the promotion of Civic Initiative, Roma Coppersmiths, Milostiv, Multi-culti, Single Step, Astika, Ravnovesie,* and *Usmivka.* They all came into being through individuals' passion and gradually developed organisational settings by assuming NGO status. At the time of research, *Single Step and Hamalogica* were still in the process of institutionalising[137]. Yanina, the founder of *Factory of Ideas* explains the dilemma of becoming an NGO institution and being grassroots: "we started as grassroots, but "establishment" is indispensable if an organisation wants to develop, to grow...people think that because we have an office we are not grassroots activists anymore, and that professionalisation distances us from being grassroots. I don't think it is like this. Because we have chosen an organisational culture where we choose our funding which gives us the freedom to be what we are; this is our main value, i.e., to be free and faithful to our beliefs. Professionalisation does not corrupt the spirit of our decisions*." Katerina, who works in *CVS,* adds that

"These type of organisations are sort of 'self-regulating' i.e., nobody tells you from above 'come on there is something to be done and you do it' ...my observations are that usually a group of people get

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[137] This information is based on the research stage, i.e. 2016. Currently, they have all assumed official NGO status.

together, they see, sense or recognise something, call it as you wish, and in a very human way say 'come on let's do something'; while in big organisations or state structures somebody tells you or if you want to take an initiative, stops you from doing so."

Other organisations like *Karin Dom, P.U.L.S, Association of Refugee Women, the Voice of YOUTH* and *CVS* have been established with some (institutional/structural) influence and have been functioning as NGOs since then. This differentiation however, as observed by Katerina, is procedural rather than substantial as all of them are socially positioned, i.e., they work among, with and for the individual. This is not to say that they are detached from the structural context. Their institutional dimension should not be ignored, for they actively engage with state institutions and agencies through advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the social causes and the social groups they work with. Examples of organisations with strong advocacy work are *Karin Dom, Single Step, P.U.L.S., and Association of Refugee Women.* Alexandra from the latter explains: "on the one hand we support the refugees' position and lobby for them; on the other we work with society and individuals' attitudes and perceptions."

Being grassroots, they also share the precarity of funding. The difficulty in procuring financial resources and the insecurity that accompanies it is a disadvantage that impacts their work negatively. Thus, as Alexandra observes, with the project on refugees, "we started a project, and then, although we saw benefits ...it was dropped due to lack of resources". Civic initiatives work with constant pressure to secure financial recourses. While most of them cooperate with state institutions and the majority benefit from some form of state funding, they can't rely entirely on them. There are two reasons for this: some initiatives mention the inconsistency of state funding, which changes with the priorities of the government in office. They cite this lack of continuation in policy as being detrimental to their work. *Usmivka (*children's rights) and *P.U.L.S.* (women's rights) rely significantly on state agencies and the national fund. Their funding does not depend entirely on state resources however, which is the case for *Voice of Youth.* The latter has been extensively supported by the Burgas municipality and has resources procured by the government. Although officially claiming no political allegiance, its founder Todor Iosifov has been actively involved in the group of adolescent members of the GERB party[138].

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[138] GERB stands for Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria. GERB as the initials of the party translates as "coat of arms" in Bulgarian.

Most organisations are more concerned with the independence of their agenda from government financing and hence opt for foreign grants. As a matter of fact, the majority of the initiatives benefit from European funding in the form of Island Norwegian Grants, and also the Europe for Citizens Programme *(e.g., Multi-culti)* and the ERASMUS Program (*Astika*). They are also seeking cooperation with other Balkan and European NGOs (for example, *Factory of Ideas, Multi-Culti, Karin Dom, Astika*). Some of them are benefitting from American funding to promote civil society in Bulgaria. This is how BAPCI and Bread House Bulgaria got started. Another path to secure funding is through donations and fundraising campaigns (*Association for Refugee Women, Karin Dom*), as well as engaging in social partnerships with commercial enterprises. A good example of a similar synergetic approach is *Hamalogica* with the port of Burgas, and *Multi-Culti* with the restaurant sector in Sofia.

We listen, we understand![139]

Being immersed in the fabric of everyday life allows civic initiatives to tune into human relationships. In particular, their work on terrain

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[139] The head-lines are inspired from the mission statement of Single Step

enables them to identify problems by tapping into the sensations, emotions and grievances of ordinary people, and to develop an understanding of what is meaningful for them. Liubo from *Re-act* comments on the importance of developing awareness around issues for their organisation: "identifying the problem, recognising it, hmm... it is at least how it works with me; but I believe that this is valid for all of us, because I see that the volunteers in our organisation, if they don't recognise the problems on which we work, there is no way that we can convince them that we are doing something important (with quality*)".* Social embedding is of paramount importance for *Single Step* in order to collect and record the experiences of LGBT people in Bulgaria. Their work on terrain enables the organisation to get access to young people and their families through interacting with teachers. The situation is particularly acute in small towns, where they are able to reach out and find out about the problems facing young LGBT people. Gabriela from *P.U.L.S* also highlights the importance of social distance shortening as it helps improve their knowledge of family violence in the town of Pernik. The organisation is closely working with students in schools, helping them to set up clubs like "Let's Be Friends". Interacting with students this way, they are able to detect if

a child has been exposed or subjected to the risk of violence at home. Being on ground is vital for their work with the Roma community, and particularly for identifying the problems of women within this community. To this end, they have set up a club focused on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancy in the school.

Factory of ideas develop their projects by engaging in inquiries on the social field. Zori, a volunteer with the organisation explains that: "the teams are given missions according to the interests they express. They don't know exactly what the mission is. So they have four days to do research on terrain, to get familiar with the problem they have to resolve, find out is it like the way we (the mentors of the team) defined it, and what do people really need." Margi, who is also a volunteer, comments on their engagement on the ground and its importance for identifying issues: "*the interesting thing was that we had to go to talk with people and to see how they live; to see whether or not they consider this as a problem, if they wish for something else to take place…this is the challenge, you may not do anything, which is absolutely fine, but if they (the Factory) tell you that in a given gypsy area the unemployment is very high and ask what are you are going to*

do about it; so you go there and find out where it is really a problem and people think that this can be changed or that this is not true; they have found out other ways to make living... so basically you go and interact with the local community to find out what is the problem, and if there is a problem at all."

Through their social work civic initiatives are able to '*hear'* problems undetectable via institutional lenses. The association *Ravnovesie (Balance)* explains this with their flexibility: "Working on terrain...with people not from Burgas, but those from the small towns and villages... and there (Kameno, Gorno Ezerovo[140]) where we have been working for many years we are already "recognisable", people trust as and accept us." Working on the ground allows for imminent, direct contact and informality in their relations with people; they are recognised as trustworthy. This is a significant advantage as it lowers the barriers to communication and makes possible more efficient interaction and hence produces results. In light of the general mistrust Bulgarians hold not just towards institutions but also towards each other, this is a considerable asset of their work. Their resonance with the demands of the ground is

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[140] Small towns around the city of Burgas

recognised also from Liubo who compares the work of *RE-ACT* on children with minor criminality to that of NGOs working on policy: "while big NGOs like *UNICEF* or *Open Society* for instance have more resources and stable structures, we have agility in our actions, and somehow a conscious vitality in comparison to a well-established organisation. I often joke that the office of Open Society smells of mold".

While many state policies are enacted on the surface without consulting the individuals concerned and hence not reflecting the real experience of the citizenry, civic initiatives are able to detect existent issues by working directly with people. For example, they stress the difference between institutional engagement with an issue and their work; *Amalipe,* on the issues with minorities, comments on the top-down (pro-formal) approach, "(in the work of the state)… there is the need for documenting some issue, but not because the specific issue is important or the people of this group need something, but because someone told us to do it". "…and they (the state) are interested in what is here, a yearly report, what activities, how many Roma are in education, statistics…this way (on paper) the state has no problems, but the problems stay here, with us".

Therefore, *Amalipe* withstands their social function: "they (the Ministry of Internal Affairs) asked us to take a position as Agency on social inclusion of Roma within the ministry, but had we done that we would've lost our main purpose and function".

We act!

With their focus of work on terrain, civic initiatives are also more responsive to the demands being voiced. In the words in the motto of *Single step* they do not only listen, but they also understand. Moreover, they act! These two dimensions of their agency are a significant asset of the social intelligence of civic initiatives. In Deweyian fashion, their approach situates individuals firmly in the social context. Furthermore, together with recognising intelligence as collective, they also consider the goal of inquiry to be solving problems. 'Movement within' furnishes the solution-driven orientation of the democratic script of civic initiatives. It is a narrative that provides elucidation of the democratic vision as constitutively connected to social relations. Their revision of participation resonates with Dewey's estimation that "how we come to understand political problems and respond implies a kind of local

knowledge and communal vision that is beyond the purview of experts" (Rogers, 2010: 3).

The esteem of civic initiatives to find solutions begins with finding the link between the personal and social. While recognizing, with social issues, the personal predicament of individuals, the latter are not seen as abstract entities from the social context (as a classical liberal would view it). They thus delve into the structural conditions behind the issues that individuals deal with. In their work with people they establish the link between "the personal troubles and public issues". Wright Mill's (1959) idiom is employed for it allows us to capture the dynamics of civic initiatives' work. Mill used the expression to suggest that many problems affecting individuals and considered as private troubles have their source in the social structure and culture of a society. Likewise, the social intelligence of civic initiatives pinpoints the intertwinement of the personal and the public. The link is established in the emphasis placed upon work. Civic initiatives place the individual at the centre of their focus. Their work is aimed at alleviating personal suffering and hence improving the wellbeing of the individual. Work then assumes the semantics of help, understood as providing assistance with regard to some

personal troubles. Obvious examples of work as helping the individual are organisations dealing with individuals affected by bodily and/or mental conditions. Unlike the top-down format of NGOs who, working longitudinally on projects, remain somewhat aloof and abstracted from the reality of the particular need on the ground, civic initiatives work towards helping people directly with their issues. As the founder of Single Step succinctly expressed it: "they (NGOs) work on changing policies, we work on saving lives!"**.** She also added that "help/assistance is a very important word in our work; emotional and psychological help. This does not relate so much to our vision as to our concrete work".

The groundwork of civic initiatives surpasses the individual level however, in their efforts to link the personal condition with the wider social world. The verbatim understanding of help as assisting the individual is transgressed and furnished with thicker connotations. These are connected with the idea of deficiency and are communicated to the social causes they establish and support in their agendas. Expressed with the idea of "lack", behind the nitty gritty issues of daily life lurk structural deficiencies which make it difficult for individuals to live a happy life. "Lack" emerged as a

common theme in the data analysis. There are many ways of expressing it in concrete terms. Some of its facets are addressed below. In more general terms, 'lack' connects with the logical semantics of work, which they conceive of as being lodged in a *perceived* 'lack' or as Katerina from CVS puts it, "the existence of lack in our society is motivating our civic agency".

Lack assumes structural connotations as in the metaphor of "a missing state". As a concrete example this means not only a lack of information and knowledge about refugees, but also a lack of preparation within Bulgarian society for the arrival of this social group. Katerina, who has been working on refugee projects conjointly with the State Agency of Refugees recognises that a lack of vision of integration is a two-sided process. In this sense, she comments "our project involved volunteers who are curious to find out whether it is all true what they say in the media about refugees". Lack of information also underpins the work on multicultural projects initiated by *Multi-Culti* and *Association of Women Refugees.* Bistra from the former wonders "how is multiculturalism possible without knowledge about the other?" In a similar vein Liubovir from *Astika* is adamant that "lack of information about cultural projects is

a strong motif for the events the organisation devises as possibilities for cultural intermingling". The *Association of Women Refugees* recognises the lack of knowledge in the public space about refugees and therefore is engaged in organising various initiatives to welcome multiculturalism and promote acceptance. One example is the project "Nowruz", which the Association devised and executed conjointly with the State Agency for Refugees and with the support of the Refugee and Migrant Service of the Bulgarian Red Cross. The idea of the lack of information is extended to a lack of understanding, which has been the driving factor behind the appearance of *Single Step.* Nikoleta admits that "while state institutions recognise the pending need to develop procedures to deal with cases of complaints from a LGBT child, they are not sufficiently equipped with either staff or knowledge". There is lack of information about this social group, and a lack of statistics means a lack of knowledge about the specificities of LGBT people, for example about their medical and psychological problems. Similar 'lack' informs the initiatives working with people with dyslexia. Consequently, lack is connected to the lack of institutionalized support and services for LGBT people. As a result of lack of institutional frameworks in how to cope with the

problems these individual peculiarities face, they are being recognised as personal, "family problems", rather than social ones.

Lack therefore assumes more tangible dimensions, such as an insufficiency of professional services, physical shelters or medical care. In the mission statement of Karin Dom, the organisation that works with children with special needs and their families, this is expressed as "to support social inclusion through professional services, advocacy and public awareness". *P.U.L.S.* and *Single Step* maintain call centres as well as physical shelters for women and LGBT people. In the *Association of Refugee Women* these are extended to a lack of basic existential needs such as medical care and daily essentials. The organisation works to set up humanitarian centres to collect donations, like for their project "Medical aid for refugee and asylum-seeking children in Sofia". It also provides educational resources for refugee children with the focus on social inclusion. One example is the project titled "Assisting the process of initial adaptation for seekers of international asylum through social mediation, educational activity and psychological aid, and legal consultation". The idea of lack as pertaining to the missing state can be succinctly expressed with the expression of "lack of care" as

Momchil, a volunteer in *Factory of Ideas* project put it. In his words, lack of care was semantically connected to the environment. He was engaged in a project in the mountains of Liulin (around Sofia), which, although officially given status as a "national park" in the 90s, has never been enacted or enforced. On the contrary "the mountain has become a place for random logging; it is crossed with all sort of vehicles with no restrictions whatsoever"[141].

These examples are illustrative yet not exhaustive of the idea of lack that informs civic initiative work. They allow us to emphasize the crucial point, which is the causal link civic initiatives establish between the personal and the public, hence between individuals' troubles and the Bulgarian social environment. Thus, civic initiatives work to investigate the cause-effect link between the personal and the social. As Liubo from *Re-Act* admits: "It is not only identifying the problem but recognizing it as such because in identifying it you can let it pass by your ears, eyes, and senses. A problem to which you are not sensitive about; but in recognising it, in becoming aware of the issue as a problem, you realize that there deeper aspects; that it is

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[141] The words of my interviewee regarding environmental issues gain further significance when connected to the EU project NATURA 2000 and the Bulgarian state actions in its realization. While the EU legislation to protect natural habitats were transposed in the Bulgarian Biodiveristy Act (BBF, 2012), research on the ground points to the "inadequacy" in defining the criteria of mapping the sites on the basis of prioritizing "investment interest" versus the scientific criteria highlight by the EU (Kavrakova, 2007)

not only what you see at the surface, but it leads to some other problems, i.e., that there is some causal-consequence relation". The idea of lack ultimately directs their agency towards unravelling the social rooting of the personal troubles. They see social problems. Genika shares her experience in working in the Roma quarter "Stolipinovo"[142]: "I see that there is a problem, but also that it is a topic that everyone tries to sweep under the carpet. So nobody speaks about that, nobody sees what *is* there. Even very close friends of mine tell me "oh no… we don't go there. It is very scary". So I decided to go and see how scary it was. And then I see that there are big problems, but also that there is big potential as well. There is a parallel world with which nobody is concerned; nobody works there, but there is a huge need for work to be done."

Consequently lack assumes signification in relation to the wider social context. The lack theme as a metanarrative suggests different facets of deficiency, whose content is defined with what civic initiatives claim as valuable. Premised on their groundwork and the vision of the social and sociality as 'moving and multiplying' people, the deficiency they identify can be metaphorically expressed as

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[142] Stolipinovo is reported to be the biggest Roma ghetto in the Balkans.

'missing people'. This last theme is "the grand" narrative around which movement acquires meaning and constructs the discourse of social change. It is difficult to pin down the exact meaning of the "missing people" motif. It is connected semantically with ideas around lack of engagement, and apathy as a property of the Bulgarian social makeup, or, in more specific terms, as the invisibility of certain social groups because of some specific characteristic physical and/or otherwise. Liudmil, a volunteer in a refugee project with the *Factory of Ideas*, who teaches English and Bulgarian languages to refugee children, expresses the first line of apathy for social agency. In his view, "There are many things that are missing in Bulgaria, but according to me, what we have lost, especially after the changes (the transition to democracy) is the capacity for collective action, this idea that there is something like society, which entails responsibilities". Nikoleta, the director of *Single Step* explained to me the second semantic thread in "the missing people": "Imagine this deficit as a big hole in society where there is a whole group of people, who have access to more and more information, who more and more educate themselves and understand that they are not sick and have the need to live openly", but there isn't the support for them which they need in difficult situations". In her words, lack then is centered on a target

group, i.e., a group sharing socially ascribed properties, which undergird the disappearance of people sharing this group's characteristics from the social space. Engaging in questioning and problematising the personal troubles of individuals, civic initiatives seek to unravel the puzzles of the social. Liubo reflects upon the work that organisations conduct: "we are the little dust particles, trying to move things forward...we can investigate issues from different angles, and when we connect the dots, the puzzle emerges".

The 'understanding' civic initiatives display is an active category. In drawing the personal-public link and acknowledging the social causes of the personal problems, they are engaging in their solution. Like Dewey, who displaced the conception of knowledge with that of inquiry - the latter being connected with the solution to the practical and intellectual problem that sparks the inquiry - their social intelligence posits an imperative to look for solutions. Yanina, the founder of *Factory of Ideas* stresses: "On this road there are no signs and there is no map. There are no ready-made answers. However, there is a real ultimatum to look for solutions. To take this road towards solutions, we must be willing to learn, try, make mistakes and try again". Yet, one line of action on the road to finding solutions

is clear. These are collectively sought. In a Deweyan manner, liberty is considered a constitutive force. Hence, as the root of the problem is the social, therein lays the solution as well. Their collective learning is accompanied by engaging in collective resolutions. In one project of *Factory of Ideas*, called 'social challenge,' participants are recruited through their ideas generated around a social issue. Viki, one of the volunteers describes their role: "We were trying to study a social problem well, so we can define it as a 'mission' to work on. In order to be a mission, it has to be something significant, to be useful, to require a solution and hence be defined in terms of looking for a solution; not like a statement or a concrete fact, but as a question… so one of the missions that I contribute to is connected to an area in which I am interested. This concerns the problems of the elderly." Movement from within thus denotes the common thread they share, namely their practice orientation. This activist, result-driven aspect of civic initiatives is a strong attracting factor for people to join them. Sylvia, who designed the project for children with dyslexia within *Factory of ideas'* social challenges recounts that "when I met the people from *Factory of Ideas* at the forum for social entrepreneurship, I saw incredible people who were not only idealist, but who were also *practical* idealists. They make things

which help their surroundings… with time, I became more and more motivated and engaged because I saw how the formats that the Factory devises bring results."

Collective resolution requires the recognition of these issues by the wider population. Therefore, the first step of collective solution is to make problems public. Civic initiatives expose problems by framing them as social causes, which make up the backbone of their mission statements. The main themes around which their work is organised are: social inclusion, anti-discrimination, multiculturalism, and human rights. They also promote environmental protection and regional development. They thus bring personal vulnerabilities to the public space where they speak about social marginalization and social exclusion. The online platform *Move.bg* is oriented "towards resolving problems with regard to social transformation via asking questions, debating, dialogue. Civic initiatives set the theme to these debates in the public space with their agendas. For instance, ethnicity in *Amalipe* and *Roma Coppersmiths*, statelessness in *CVS* (Bulgaria) and *Association of Refugee Women*, gender and violence in *Single Step* and *P.U.L.S.*; or certain "abnormalities" understood as deviance from social norms, e.g., *Re-Act* on youth delinquency, *Karin*

Dom on children with disabilities, social vulnerability in homeless people in *Milostiv*, *Usmivka* on children from disadvantaged background. These categories are connected with more specific problems, such as labour migration and labour abuse (*Amalipe*), Roma discrimination (*Roma Mednikari*), abuse against women (*Amalip*e), domestic violence (*P.U.L.S*), child care (*Usmivka*), and traffic of women and babies (*Ravnovesie* in the context of the town of Burgas as a border area with Turkey). Some organisations assume the explicit task of raising awareness around these topics. This is a priority in the work of *P.U.L.S.,* which, on their website, stresses its goal to make violence a public issue. The organisation was set up by two women with training in psychology: "...at that particular time at post-totalitarian Bulgaria, ...when violence had not yet become an openly-discussed issue, feelings and experiences of the individual had not been valued; human rights and particularly those of women and children were just abstract ideas and no concern for human suffering had been shown".

Social intelligence as "movement from within" encompasses the social knowledge of civic initiatives. Working on the ground constitutes their power by being able to identify social problems.

Further, it informs the democratic script as problem solving. Highlighting the Deweyan pragmatism within democracy, that *participating* shapes the social conditions that bear upon democracy, Liudmil declares, "Democracy exists as long as we are willing to struggle for it, to work for concrete goals." Moreover, they recognise the multifarious nature of the social, which, as Bourdieu (1972) has shown, consists of the differentiation of fields. For Bourdieu, social space is produced through the partly autonomous yet intricately interconnected field of the economy, the state, the legal system, religion and culture. Civic initiative projects are complex, goal-oriented and deployed within different social fields. The multidimensionality of their agency is an aspect that will be given special attention in the section on discursive agency. Implicit in 'movement as the signified' are additional sets of resources, upon which civic initiatives draw. These cover emotionality and are developed in the expression 'movement away', to which I now turn.

Movement away: the emotional resources of civic initiatives

The democratic script of happy life expresses dissonance fused in the concept of movement. The discourse of social change builds on a

refusal to accept the current social reality. Discord is cast in strong emotional hues. The emotional resources underpinning "happy life" emerged as a result of my curiosity to find out more about the nature of the deficiencies identified in Bulgarian social space. Understanding social action necessarily involves posing the "why" interlinked with the "what". This link is highlighted by John Levi Martin (2011: 11) in his book *Explanation of Social Action*. His work has proved quite fruitful, for it touches on the motives underlying the work of civic initiatives not only as organisations, but also as individuals' involvement in their capacity as volunteers or employees. It thus allowed me to integrate and intensify the "why" perspective while thinking about "what" they were doing. The participants perceived the deficiencies that impelled their social engagement as a state of dissonance between "that which exists and that which might conceivably exist, between the indicative (that which is) and the subjunctive (that which might be)" (Holloway, 2005: 6).

Dissonance is captured by the expression of 'movement away', which points to the ontological incongruity of civic initiatives in the Bulgarian social space. Inspired by Holloway's (2005: 6) expression

"scream for change", the metaphor of movement signifies the experience of dissonance that the signifier 'happy life' refers to. The discourse of social change as chains of signification engages discursive tropes within the semantic spectrum of resistance. Conjointly with the (preposition) "away," movement encapsulates the semantics of disassociation, of detachment from what is, expressed in the words of one of the interviewees, "the way Bulgaria looks is not at all attractive".

'Movement away' refers to the discord between the existing social format and the vision the social civic initiatives embrace. As Viki, who is volunteering with *CVS* states, "there is a moment of discontent because it is a question about problems after all. Since they have been defined as such, these problems point out that 'there is something rotten', which needs to be resolved. And this concerns a person or a group of people...". While the subjunctive points to the vision of the social that they wish to affirm as communal and interactive, the indicative is narrating a hegemonic discourse of passivity. Their impetus for transformation is displayed as engagement with a discourse of passivity; they emerge as a critical

vibration, as a "scream of refusal to accept" (Holloway, 2005: 1-6) the current state of social relations.

'Movement away' captures the democratic connotation through their denial of the status quo. In the words of *Factory of Ideas* this means, "to oppose the common inertness of Bulgarian society". This organisation has placed citizen activation at the heart of its projects, turning them into "fabricators,". *CVS* initiates its projects within the same mode of disagreement. Their projects, as well as the cultural projects of *Astika* launched as an expression of the organisations' perception of the prevailing stagnation, especially among youth. They share the same impetus to instigate agency by turning citizens into "fabricators". Bulgarian citizens' general inertness towards children with disabilities and their families is a strong motivational factor of *Karin Dom*. The vocabulary of encouragement to take the initiative and combat the isolation of social groups is developed with respect to issues of the LGBT community in *Single Step*, to refugees in *CVS, Association of Refugee Women*, and also with the Roma community in *Amalipe* and *Roma Coppersmiths*. Perhaps the name of *RE-ACT* illustrates best this dissatisfaction with the current state of passive citizenry. As Michaela, one of the volunteers in the

organisation explains, "*Re-act*, stands for reaction against idleness …
because people need to do something, to act, to make changes. And if
we, the young people don't do it, who else will? The state won't do it.
It will in some crooked, distorted way, but not in the way young
people who are eager to learn and look for some innovative methods
will do it."

The 'cultural drift' (Blumer, 2008: 6) expressed in 'movement away'
is substantiated by the emotional experiences of individuals.
Emotions help to communicate knowledge, as Seigfreid (2008)
argues. She contends that "inquiry is never pure, passionless
cognition, because we are embodied human beings, we are "thinking
desire". Emotions are rendered in very personal shades, emerging
from passion and enthusiasm, but also a deep sense of discontent,
frustration and indignation. 'Movement away' designates a desire or
passion for something meaningful. Personal engagement in activism
is about personal fulfilment, passionate interaction and the
opportunities that arise therefrom. This has been a leading motif for
the young and retired elderly alike looking for 'something
meaningful' to give their time to. Sylvia, a volunteer who devised a
social project for children with dyslexia within the social challenge

format of the Factory stressed her strong personal motivation to engage, "*I am a teacher of Bulgarian Language and Literature; in my work at school as well as in private classes I have noticed that in the last 5 years, let's say I taught 50 children, and 5 of them did not progress as the rest did... I wondered how me being the same teacher can produce these different results. So I didn't say what a teacher in the state school would normally say, that is, 'so what?, I do what I have to, it is their problem that they don't learn' but instead I took it personally. I began to investigate the reasons for these kids not progressing; I have a personal motivation for participation. This way I learned about dyslexia to find out that there is almost no information about it*". Michaela, a volunteer in *RE-ACT* and working with children with petty criminal offences in foster care shared that, "...yes, nobody speaks about these children... now it's all about the asylum seekers; ...I am very sensitive to this topic: my interest is not financial gain, not even social; ...for me this is a cause, because it makes me feel alive".

In daily life, the motives that participants identified behind their engagement are rooted in their passion for alternative choices, for a wider spectrum of activities and possibilities for engagement.

Mariya, a volunteer with *CVS* states, "according to me, people in general don't believe in existing formats e.g., state institutions, and would rather engage with something coming from an independent source." The passion for intercultural mingling underpinning the activities of *Multi-culti* and *Astika* is what lets them create a social cause. Bistra from *Multi-Culti* explains, "we were missing communication with foreigners from all around the world, and this wasn't possible here yet." The perception that Bulgarians are passive as a national trait was a strong motivating factor for Liudmil to do something: "I hate to hear that we are all like this ...I am also against the common understanding of democracy in materialist terms. In Bulgaria freedom comes after that".

'Movement away' expresses scepticism about the functioning of the state. Existing dysfunction in forms of governance is a strong motivational factor for engagement. It is narrated as frustrations with state institutions, the sluggishness and inefficiency of their work. In a rather humorous manner, a woman activist expressed her indignation rooted in concrete experience with state work and administration. She commented on the sluggish, cumbersome and ineffective procedures of the state which pushed her to look for

other possibilities to pursue her social cause: "*I wanted to be involved in something… there was this opportunity with the Richard Ford Foundation which I wanted to apply for. So I needed to present a document showing I don't have any debts to the state. It happened that I owe 4 stotinki (pennies) and I couldn't get the document because of that. So I went to the ministry of labour and social services department to pay my debt. There they told me that I have to initiate a procedure, write a declaration and wait for a decision allowing me to pay my 4 stotinki debt. And who knows how long this will take…*"

In their focus on resolving specific social problems civic initiatives work together with various state institutions and agencies. Although the narrative they wish to put forward is one of cooperation and support, or "respectful cooperation", their work has come to fill a gap in the state's work. While highlighting productive partnerships with state agencies, *Karin Dom* is in fact substituting state care for children with disabilities. Other organisations account for their motives from a position of outright dissatisfaction with the state. Hence, they emphasise state activities merely mimicking issue resolution. *Amalipe* told me, "The state in this regard dos does not care about the Roma, or, if it cares, it is only on paper, in the books

where something needs to be accounted for, etc.". Similarly, a feeling of scepticism in state procedures for efficiency training in village voting processes stimulated *Astika* to organise additional training sessions: "You know, the politicians need an inactive population so their (the politicians) expectations take place*".*

Interviewees expressed stronger emotions of frustration and disenchantment with state actions. A disbelief in institutional efficiency is widespread. The same emotional undercurrent substantiates the emerging of civic initiatives arising as a reaction to the missing state. Their involvement in action as reaction to state passivity is strongly voiced by organisations working for the integration of marginalized groups. Alexandra from *Association for Refugee Women* claims that, "The NGO sector should complement the work of the state, but at the moment it acts in place of the missing state's integration policy. At the moment there isn't any actively working strategy for integration, and the NGO sector, which works in the sphere of asylum is trying to fill the lack of a similar strategy." Driven by practical concerns about integration Alexandra emphasises that, "It is very easy to close the door on these people, but if all our politics is run like that, there will be always people

'outside' for whom the other will have to pay. We work to host them, to make them active members of this society, members who can work, pay their taxes, have their children go to Bulgarian schools and develop as Bulgarian citizens." In the case of *RE-ACT* supporting the social inclusion of children with deviant behaviour, they notice not just the general lack of resources, but primarily the lack of *any approach* to these children. Assessments of the state's role as being merely insufficient are rapidly moving towards claims of it being an actual obstacle to their work. In their work with LGBT people, *Single Step* observed the mimicking of action that the state authorities assumed during the annual gay pride parade[143]. The state, while nominally in support of anti-violence and anti-hate movements, in its non-prevention of far-right groups hosting events taking place conjointly with the parade was, in fact, acting as an obstacle to civic initiatives' work on human rights[144]. Furthermore, "there has never been a representative of the Sofia municipality at any of the gay pride parades so far" claims *Single Step*. Thus, the organisation questions the state's official rhetoric of support.

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[143] The organisers of Sofia Pride 2018 shared their successful cooperation with the Mayor of Sofia city, Ms. Fandakova, The Mayor committed to providing financial support to the Arts the Sports events for the first time in the 11 event hosted by the city so far.

[144] An example of this claim are the three counter-protests which were to be held against Sofia Pride on June 9, all claiming to be "pro-family" rather than anti-gay. (Sofia Globe Newspaper, 2018)

Some initiatives are born out of feelings of disenchantment and indignation with institutional politics. They are critical of certain state policies and the values they betray. The discontent with the state is expressed by Zori, who shares that, "*somehow the majority of us think that if there was at least a minimal attempt to integrate and provide work for these people (the refugees), and not just offering them shelter and three meals a day; if the state was just trying to involve these people in the real social life of our country, then there would not have been the need for us volunteers to direct our attention to these problems. But since we feel that this is not happening or is not sufficient or efficient, it is necessary for us to put in efforts, so we compensate for the lack of this political norm*". They went on further to question the democratic discourse and commented not just on the decay of democracy taking place in Bulgaria since 1989, but also on the absence of a value system in Bulgarian society and state nonchalance over this fact; thus, a retired gentlemen volunteering in refugee integration projects expressed his motivation for taking part because the initiative supported and implemented democratic values in real life. According to him, "In the transition we lost our values, young people are growing up with no values". Other organisations also question the implementation of democratic discourse by state

institutions by pointing out that the state exercises control *selectively*. In predominantly Roma populations, certain rules become "suspended" in the territory of the ghetto. Thus, drug dealing is not being adequately dealt with and punished as long as it is confined to the Roma ghetto. The passivity of the state in introducing control and inflicting sanctions is also a fact noticed by *Single Step.*

Civic initiatives call for a stronger state presence in ensuring respect and in the application of justice and control. They are channels of indignation as a continuing conduit for the frustration expressed in the various waves of citizen protests. The majority of the founders of these civic initiatives as well as the participants were involved in different forms of protests. The idea for *Factory of ideas* formed out of individuals who were actively involved in opposing state initiatives to privatize the "Irakli" natural resort in the Strandja Mountains. Likewise, the demolition of cultural monuments by the state served as a rallying call for citizen agency in Plovdiv. One interviewee from the town who took an active part in protests against the knocking down of an "emblematic" cinema called "Kosmos" (Cosmic space) spoke about not just the value of this monument and its connection with the town and but also against the

neoliberal logic of state actions: "The cinema is emblematic because of its architectural specificities. It is an icon of architecture from the 1960s and represents one of the unique cultural assets of Bulgaria. In addition, it has a symbolic value; the cinema is linked to memories of personal life histories. It has been a meeting point where, in queues outside, many families began."

Some individuals joined the initiatives as a means of expressing their discontent and disappointment with protests. One of the participants in *Factory of Idea's* social challenge project reflected, "I followed a similar path like these people (the founders). I also took part in protests and saw that there weren't any real consequences to the protests. This, however, didn't put me off and I continued to look for solutions through different means, like taking part in similar initiatives, which work from below".

Along with institutional dysfunction, people engage in action as reaction to the media discourse of fear. Svoboda, a volunteer in a *CVS* refugee project commented, "The other reasons for my participation is a sort of resentment and discontent with what the media, electronic and printed, i.e., the newspapers and the TV are

presenting; how asylum seekers are a very dangerous group coming to commit acts of violence; how they belong to terrorist organisations." Viki shares that" there is an enormous fear and prejudices in people; and this I find difficult to bear". The media discourse of fear is particularly disturbing because of its monopoly in Bulgarian social space. *Single Step* notes that in Bulgaria, media is "unfortunately 80% absolutely an oligarchic, monopolised and controlled market". It thus makes it impossible to voice other opinions or express conflicting positions. As Nikoleta states, "That there are people who are negative towards LGBT people is ok, because they are needed. That is to say that there should be a discourse of antagonism, of conflict, of discussion. But when it is *open*, not when it is politically tainted and thus discriminatory…, this way (as it is now) facilitates the breeding of the values of hate, discrimination, disparaging of the other, instrumentalising the fear of the other, which started very strongly with the first wave of asylum seekers'". Thus, media is the vehicle through which the populist discourse of marginalising groups of people, be they Roma, asylum seekers, LGBT, etc. has become politicised. In Bulgaria, unfortunately, there is no alternative point of view. "The far-right movements and

far right populism flows in Bulgaria through the channels of media" (*Single Step*).

The vision of happy life is predicated on separation from the semantics of stagnation and fear. "Movement away" designates this moment of separation of the meaning of the social from its current articulation. It also expresses the frustrations with the top-down approaches to social change. Implicit in the narrative is the critical view of civic initiatives on the idea of social change as a top-down process as currently executed in Bulgaria. They particularly dislike that "institutions are not always able to take decisions or undertake changes rapidly and effectively, they are not always knowledgeable enough about the problems at a local level". Also, a voice of discontent stresses that "a large amount of our missions which are aimed at social change are linked with struggles against corruption, for transparency at local levels of governance". The movement away to the democratic ideal, where they envisage the creation of "a critical mass of people", they can help with that. The aim is to "make noise, to stir up the minds and hearts of people so they can open up."

Finally, what they aspire to move away from is the "ugly" world. A world, which is "run by pseudo-democratic, free-market logic", where an uglier and more horrific society is taking shape, confidently spreading its tentacles – a society of growing inequality, poverty, hatred, and xenophobia. *Factory of Ideas* further depicts the aspects of Bulgarian reality they dislike: "*A society where resources are concentrated in the hands of a very few, and power, both economic and political, is drawn further away from the majority of people. This is a system void of values, nurtured by corruption, exploitation, violence and heading toward ecological suicide. Poverty, social marginalisation, denial of access to quality healthcare and education, lack of an environment for authentic entrepreneurship and the possibility to develop young peoples' potential; all these are just a tiny part of the serious problems we are facing. They are consequences of this current system, in which we are unwilling to waste any more time and human potential*".

The evidence in the words of civic initiatives interpreted as the "movement away" narrative evokes Dewey's view on the democratic community as constitutively connected to contestation. Democracy as self-governance implies citizens' active engagement in the

revision and development of the institutional structures and values. In the words of Rogers (2010: 4) democracy for Dewey emerges as a force to "counteract the forces that have so largely determined the possession of rule by accidental and irrelevant factors, and in the second place an effort to counteract the tendency to employ political power to serve private instead of public ends".

Movement towards: the symbolic resources of civic initiatives

The discourse of social change also carries inspirational connotations. The democratic script of moving and multiplying people refers to movement, metaphorically as an action or a destination *towards*. This move contains the way civic initiatives imagine the social with reference to a cultural model (Castoriadis, 1987). The democratic imagination pertains to the aspirations implied, and thus to the spatiality[145] of their social vision by virtue of their location in a discursive cultural landscape. Hence movement towards communicates the spatial imaginary that inspires the democratic vision of the discourse of social change.

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[145] This idea is developed in geographical accounts showing that social phenomena, activities and relations have a spatial form and a relative spatial location (Lefebvre,1974; Soja,1996). Massey (1992: 80) in particular has stressed in her work that "the social is also inexorably spatial".

Civic initiatives carry a strong spatial imaginary. It displays their longings for belonging and the direction they are drawn towards. Goffman (1961) in *The Underlife of a Public Institution* has stressed that "Without something to belong to, we have no stable self and yet, total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn to a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personhood often resides in the cracks". Movement towards is infused with global/local syncretism. This statement suggests that there are global inspirations inscribed in the discourse of social change, enmeshed in local idioms. In other words, in the discourse of social change the global and the local are interlaced, they are fluid notions adequately rendered by the term "glocal[146]" and expressed in the slogans of *Factory of Ideas* such as: "Think global, act local!", or "Change in a Bulgarian way". The online platform *Move.bg* also acknowledges this syncretism: "We live in times of fundamental change in the world. Global interconnectedness changes the process

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[146] This term has been used by Bauman (1998, 1999) to illuminate aspects of his concept "liquid society", as representation of the current condition of our world.

in many ways; economically, politically, socially, as well as personally". Similarly, social change in Bulgaria is situated in these global dynamics of change.

The agenda of civic initiatives is embedded in global blueprints. The majority of people who founded an initiative have a sound educational background complemented with significant travel experiences. They possess a wide spectrum of interests which they incorporate into their work. They keep a vigilant eye on current global developments. Alan Sears (in Choudry, 2014: 10) reminds us that "development of deep vision also requires access to things others have learned, in the phase or elsewhere, or from a different positioning in society". Civic initiative organisers as well as participants in their projects epitomise this complex gaze. Reflected in their documents are ideas that circulate the globe and point to issues that have become of global concern. In talking about the nature of their activities and the motivation underlying their participation they use the language of sustainability (social, economic, ecological), multiculturalism and social diversity, social innovation and social entrepreneurialship, synergy between men and nature. These notions, succintly summed up in the expression

"glocal positive social change", also inform their activities. Rather than being mere empty concepts, they are given substance in the causes that drive their projects and in the specific social practices they devise. Two prominent themes with global inspiration emerge from documents and talk. These are human rights and the aspiration to create a "bottom-up" sustainable community of people. The latter developed in their call for individuals' engagement in the creation of community. Human rights on the other hand, are a lexical trope which contains the democratic symbolism of the cognitive script of 'happy people'. As such, human rights are used to explain the presence of Europe in the discourse of social change.

The fundamental principles that most civic initiatives subscribe to are those roots in human rights norms. Their visions stress anti-discrimination, tolerance, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, access to information, access to education and equal opportunities. In the language of *Usmivka*, the organisation works towards the "promotion, protection and observation of the rights of the child". The ethos of *CVS* coverst he human rights dimension. Thus they work to "improve the system of values" in the direction of a culture of peace, anti-discrimination and human rights". To this end *CVS*, as

well as the *Association of Refugee Women* devise projects to promote tolerance as "integration in action". The human rights narrative is also shared by organisations working with the Roma minority, such as *Ravnovesie, Amalipe* and *Roma Mednikari*. Human rights ideas are a distinctive feature of their projects on social inclusion and anti-discrimination. *Amalipe, Karin Dom* and *P.U.L.S. Single step* also strongly emphasised that the focus of their work was on (human)rights. In the conversations with these organisations, they highlighted tolerance as the precondition of solidarity with the other, with the different in our society as being still missing in the Bulgarian social fabric. According to them, the "rights" rhetoric is extremely important because, first, "People in Bulgaria don't understand why LGBT people don't have the same rights as other people; but this is connected to the fact that LGBT people themselves are simply not aware of having any rights." The majority of the advocacy work in civic initiatives then is done through the language and hence the principles of human rights.

Although global, human rights principles have been interpolated into the vision of Europe, of democracy and the liberal values it stands for codified in Article 2 TEU. The symbolic imaginary rendered with the

concept of human rights situates the discourse of social change within the liberal values on individual freedoms and rights. *Move.bg* highlights that "We are united by common values and good ideas. We affirm the European perspective and the democratic path for our country." In the words of Zori, a volunteer with *CVS,* Europe is the guarantor of the right to freedom. According to her, Europe stands for "the freedom… not only to travel, but the freedom to work… the majority of professions have become global, they can be done anywhere, but yes, freedom, and its defender perhaps. There is another level which guarantees the respect for your rights, for your freedom. This gives you the assurance to state firmly 'I want this country to have this freedom'". Civic initiatives see Europe in the Bulgarian context as a warrant of human rights.

This point is crucial, for research has shown stronger trust Bulgarian people have for European institutions than for their own national ones. Ivan Krastev (2014), in his analysis of the waves of protests has stressed the trust Bulgarian citizens placed in European institutions and the support that was sought from foreign ambassadors during those protest actions. The Bulgarian sociologist research presented in the previous chapters has pointed out the mistrust Bulgarian

citizen have towards national and local institutions. As Viki, a volunteer in the *Factory of ideas* stated, "European institutions have earned the trust of citizens". While firmly endorsed by Bulgarian national institutions and enshrined in national law, in real life situations human rights can be elusive. Hence their 'universality' and 'inalienability' turn to what Donnelly (1985: 15) refers to as "the possession paradox". Although Donnelly stresses the need for legal enforcement for actualisation of rights, his phrase underlines the distinction between "*having a right, enjoying* or *having it respected".* Likewise freedom, "the benchmark of the European autobiography" (Douzinas, 2000) is also "a principle, which in principle, does not ground anything. It is founded on a universal value or idea, which in principle negates foundation" (Heller, 1999: 15). Nationalism, for instance, as a narrative of the nation state and the ensuing distinctions between citizens and non-citizens, makes possible for the state and its representatives to refrain from acting in accordance with the postulates of upholding human dignity and anti-discrimination. As a result "the autonomous Kantian subject turns into a mirage" (Douzinas, 2000: 103). Europe is this overriding vision which does not only proclaim these principles on paper but is actively engaged in their protection and enactment in reality.

Europe is a guarantor of human rights also because of the possibilities of knowledge and learning it presents. It substantiates their meaning by contributing to the realisation of the idea of the individual as independent, envisaged by the concept of human rights. According to Donnelly (1985: 33) human rights emerge as "an institution specially devoted to the most complete possible realisation of human potential" (Donnelly, 1985: 33). Douzinas' recognition of the melding of the inalienability and universality of rights when their enunciation is done by the nation state gains pertinence in the context of Bulgaria's educational conundrum. Due to a complex of reasons, chief among them the possibilities to study abroad (mainly in Europe), the high cost of living in the capital conjoined with a general low income level, as well as a mismatch between market demand and educational formation, Sofia University, the leading Bulgarian University, could not fill its educational quota for the 2018 academic year (Markaryan, 2018). There were not enough candidates for even the most prestigious subjects such as law and psychology. This fact would not have been worrisome had it not been situated within the overall picture of the

poverty of the Bulgarian education system and the much-needed reforms highlighted in the reports of the EU Commission.

Civic initiatives establish the link between human rights and Europe in constructing Europe as a space of knowledge. In a literal sense, Europe is considered as an educational resource, as concrete possibilities for training, to travel and learn. While for young people, the participation in projects with possibilities to travel around Europe is associated with Erasmus programmes, for the organisers of initiatives, Europe is the source of opportunities to engage in an exchange of ideas, knowhow and to learn good practices. Europe is the source of examples to follow, which Bistra Ivanova, the founder of *Multi-Culti* sees in the example given by volunteering in European societies. Mihalea, who works with children with minor deviances in *Re-act,* commented on the practices that the organisation developed that were based on EU experience in this area. Thus, together with the financial support that the EU allocates, the organisation benefits from good practices dealing with adolescent criminality. In addition, the organisation sees the advantage of Europe through the knowledge it acquires from the workshops and trainings they attend. In more abstract terms, Europe emerges as a possibility of choice, as

an alternative to domestic circumstances. It is a platform that offers a different angle and allows for comparisons to be made. Thus, Katerina contends that, "European financing is important, but it is also very important to young people to have a platform for comparison, to see a different position. Europe is a choice, European universities are possibilities for education with regard to professional realisation, but they (the students) also develop as personalities. Coming back they also try to import a different way of life, (but) this type of democracy... does not happen easily though."

The figurative connotations of Europe are extended to the constitution as a source of inspiration. Yet, this statement is not to be idealized, as very critical opinions on Europe have also been expressed. For instance, a participant in *Milostiv*, the organisation working with homeless people gives an idea about the current scepticism: "I honestly wonder if it is good or not to be in the European Union. Just thinking how it actually matters... for our organisation. I don't find it good except with regard to education; now one can go abroad and get some free education. Otherwise I don't see how it matters." Also, in view of the economic crisis, Bulgaria is replicating common European economic problems;

Liubomil links Bulgarian neoliberal politics with a common European predicament: "I think that the economic politics in Europe leads to further divisions in society. So we have a system which does not possess a mechanism of redistribution of resources to people, and where people have difficulties in generating resources at the moment. ...so we enter not in capitalism *per se*, but in the neoliberal period of capitalism, which is not helping us".

Democratic knowledge of Europe is recognised as "the unwarranted establishing of the specific values of one society" (Todorov, 1993: 1). Rather than presented in ethnocentric terms, Europe is portrayed as the example of cultural diversity of its societies, as a vision recognising human unity and human diversity simultaneously. In the discourse of civic initiatives this cultural syncretism is expressed in the emphasis they place on being Bulgarian, Balkan, and European at the same time. Yanina from *Factory of Ideas* has stressed this cosmopolitan vision as personal credo but also as one underpinning the ideals of the organization. She states that "yes, I am proud to be Bulgarian, but I also cherish my Balkan origins. Ultimately we work with global ideas as we are also citizens of the world." The common thread that nurtures similar non-essentialist views on identity is

dynamism and the interplay of differences. They are highly critical towards a vision of Europe as a static entity, as a "shining golden cow out there" as one activist put it, which is "somewhere there and to whom Bulgaria is looking with expectations for help". Rather, Europe is projected as a dynamic entity, in a constant process of development. Sustaining a similar 'transitional' vision of identity is possible only when embedded in a discourse constructed on the recognition of human potential and working towards the preservation of humanity, i.e., inherent human dignity through the constant negotiation of difference. Civic initiatives articulate the dynamism of Europe through the interplay of global scripts and local contributions. The glocal script of 'movement towards' brings to the fore global resources as human rights and Europe as knowledge in the aspirations for the revival of local knowledge.

In a very Deweyan manner civic initiatives recognise the contingency of human rights, not as some innate endowment but as social constructions. They work towards cultural achievement of human rights through cultivating the local idiom. As resources of the democratic script, 'Europe as knowledge and human rights' enclosed in 'Movement towards', are locally articulated lexical semantics.

Enacting human rights symbolism locally involves translating the global or universal dimension of human rights into a vernacular. In this way they are reworking and articulating the script, making it accessible and relevant to local specificities. The founder of *Factory of Ideas* expressed their role in "digesting" big concepts: "Perhaps we are engaged in translating very complex themes into simple terms, so that they can be accessible to a broader audience, so people can take part in them; we are sort of digesting". *Astika,* in their local work in the municipality of Burgas are enacting global local syncretism and human rights discourse through what they call "global trends in a local currency"; translating global themes for the local context. An example is their conservation work; raising awareness about global warming by organising a local Earth Day celebration on March 19th. They also organise initiatives encouraging people to save electricity as well as get engaged in cleaning their town. These actions might appear as having minimal effect, but in the post-communist context they carry specific value. Through these seemingly insignificant activities civic initiatives are translating big concepts such as the 'common good' in the cases above and manifesting their socio-political signification. This is important work, for they offer a novel interpretation of the notion of 'common good', which still has

negative connotations in Bulgaria due to the hangover of Party rhetoric during the communist period. Social action has also been discredited on the same grounds. During the communist era people were forced to join communities and engage in social activities devised and sanctioned by the Party. Social change in the Bulgarian context therefore may not imply a 'movement towards' novel schemas but a reversal, towards practices forgotten or discredited by bitter historical experience.

Together with translation of the global language into a local script, the cultivation of human scripts locally is done simultaneously by reinterpreting local Bulgarian practices. One major task consists in unearthing local practices forgotten or neglected in the transition to democracy. The revival of various local customs is essential, because "it is not a process of democratisation, but one of 'transitation'" as Liubo humorously put it. Momchil, a volunteer with the *Factory*, has proposed a socially challenging project aimed at reviving the authentic culture of the Liulin district of Sofia, which is connected with the mountain of Luilin (near Sofia). During the years of democratisation, the area turned into a "corner district of Sofia, (where) there are only shops, restaurants, these sort of things…" and

people lack deep knowledge about the area. Thus, civic initiatives avail of local Bulgarian as well as regional Balkan cultural contexts. A lot of their projects are inspired by these cultural traditions and aim at their revival. For example, a rehabilitation of common work (working together) is developed in many civic initiative activities. Worth mentioning is the *Bread House* initiative launched by Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova. A Stanford graduate, Maria took up her grandmother's bread-making practice in her town of Gabrovo. In kneading bread, she argues "all sorts of emotions and perceptions are being kneaded". *Factory of ideas* has launched the intra-generational project 'Residence Baba' (Granny). This project is a striking example of how the discourse of human rights as respect for human dignity is enacted with regards to elderly people. The project involves cooperation between the young and elderly people. It provides young people with an opportunity to learn traditional crafts and local practices and for elderly women to be appreciated for their work and no longer feel abandoned and powerless. Upholding the inherent human dignity of the Roma population through the promotion of Roma cultural practices (material, artisan, art) is a priority for *Amalipe* and *Roma Coppersmiths.* In their advocacy for

their rights, both organisations delve into the folklore of the Roma minority community.

The discourse of social change underpinned by the trope of 'happy life' constitutes a new meaning of democracy in the Bulgarian social world. The moral code of community suggestive of the EU motto "unity in diversity" is woven in the language of the three narratives of "movement away", "movement against" and "movement towards". These narratives enclose the democratic ethos as articulated in the social relations and their potentiality to contribute to the social institutions to which they are inextricably connected. Civic initiatives communicate the values of 'moving and multiplying' people in the modes of discursive agency they employ.

9.2. Discursive Agency: The Creative Democracy of Civic Initiatives

9.2.1. The social magic of civic initiatives: prefigurative and performative action

The democratic script of the discourse of social change informs civic initiatives' conception of agency. Geared towards the realisation of popular and plural democracy, the agency they deploy assumes a

prefigurative character. Their activities are informed by the experimental feature of democratic life, which according to Dewey (1939) implies "free interaction of individual human beings with their surrounding conditions, especially human surroundings, which develop and satisfies needs and desires by increasing knowledge of things as they are". Hence, they are 'prefiguring' the social in line with the vision and knowledge claims infusing the discourse. Prefigurative activities "mean organising the world now as you want to see it later" (Dixon, 2014). In Bourdieu's language of social practices, their prefigurative agency represents a strategic action, hence following a practical logic, which is "recognisable by the patterns of social practice which they are presumed to produce" (Bourdieu in Jenkins, 2005: 67). The activities of civic initiatives are animated by the democratic script and can be rendered with Dewey's term 'creative democracy'. "Democracy (1939) as a process of experience is a faith in the creative potentiality of individuals: it is a belief in the ability of the human experience to generate the aims and methods by which fuller experience will grow in ordered richness". Creative democracy thus denotes the perpetual adaptation of democratic institutions and practices as "new publics are engendered by social change" (Narayan,2016: 78).

Civic initiatives are prefiguring the social in the direction of 'moving and multiplying people' through enacting the democratic script. Dewey (1939) has argued for democracy as a way of life to constitute "a process of experience as ends and means". While it is an ethos to live by, "the democratic ideal signifies something to be done, rather than something already given, something already made". This means that social change expressed as moving and multiplying people is to be realised performatively. "Performativity works to 'bring into being certain kind of realities', to 'constitute worlds'" (Butler, 2010: 147; Schatzki, 1996: 115). "A democracy exists only insofar as its ideals and values bring it into being" (Sartori, 1984). The prefigurative and performative agency of civic initiatives reflects their commitment to democracy as co-created through a set of practices involving creative civic agency. Hence, the social magic of civic initiatives implies performing the democratic script of citizens' engagement in shared activity, and rests on the recognition and actual exercise of human potentiality.

Innovating the social creatively

Civic initiatives are enacting the meaning of social change in their aim to innovate the social creatively. Their agency deploying from reflexivity, rationality and motivation (Hay, 2002: 95) performs democracy as a meliorist project in Bulgarian society. According to Dewey, "The end of democracy is a radical end. For it is an end that has not been adequately realised in any country at any time. It is radical because it requires great change in existing social institutions, economic, legal and cultural" (LW 11: 298 in Neubert, 2014: 95). The impetus for the change they cherish is fused in *Empatheast,* a forum for social change developed by *Factory of Ideas.* The organisation presents it as follows: "In times of crisis a special need arises to rethink and reorganise our environment in order to meet the social needs and deficits which are visible under the weakened system of governance. These social deficits can be filled and that is why the *Ideas Factory* started working on EMPATHEAST: A Forum for Social Change and Open Education in Eastern Europe. The main objective of EMPATHEAST is to firmly put Bulgaria and the Balkans on the world map of social innovation and social entrepreneurship. As a region which deals with a dysfunctional

political, economic and social system on a daily basis, the Balkans are a unique ground where social innovation can solve old challenges in a new way". The social is to be innovated and the way this is to be done is through using innovative approaches. *Factory of Ideas*' mission is "to use innovative approaches in order to awaken the potential for social change in anyone who is willing to become a 'Fabricator'".

Innovation[147], as defined by New Oxford Dictionary (1998: 947) implies "making changes to something established by introducing something new". Innovation therefore involves transformation of ideas, replacing old, established ones with new ones. It is semantically linked with imagination and invention; in the context of the discussion on the discourse of social change displayed by civic initiatives these are envisaged in the sphere of the social. Thus, the emphasis on innovation points to their agency to imagine beyond existing social conditions as well as to employ social practices that are genuine and original. However, the ability to imagine beyond the visible, the tangible and the comprehensible and hence to invent beyond these categories does not happen *ex nihilo*. As a mental

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[147] As a concept social innovation has gained prominence in business studies. Despite its strong connotations with market relations, growth logic and organisational development, innovation transgresses the narrow definition of a process exclusively related to profit-making businesses (be it products, services, large organisations or single entrepreneurs (O'Sullivan.2008)

process resulting in the production of novel ideas, innovation unfolds out of a long chain of activities, the first and fundamental step being recognition of the intelligence and hence the creativity of individuals.

Civic initiatives' endeavours in social innovation are rooted in creativity. The latter furnishes the idea of innovation with substance. Indeed, if there is one word which sums up civic initiative agency it would be creativity. In their emphasis on social innovation, creativity is the essential component. Scholars have argued that the sustainability of social innovation depends on an engagement with knowledge and learning as "the preparation phase" (Graham Wallas in Hermann, 1989) on the one hand, and on creativity as an inherent human capability (Rosenfeld and Servo, 1991) on the other. Knowledge always presupposed interaction and communication. Creativity for its part involves change, invention, design and originality. The agency of civic initiatives harnesses both knowledge and creativity as intrinsic to human potential, which as *Factory of Ideas* claims is "the only infinite resource on this planet". Their agency is not a replica of existing models but an expression of the human capacity to think, feel and create. Thus it thrives on a diversity of perspectives and welcomes the multitude of standpoints,

interests, interpretations, and values implied in social experience, as necessary resources for action. We can trace Dewey's plea for experience for creative democracy (Neubert, 2008: 93) in their agency, which allows for an inexhaustible abundance of possible perspectives and interpretations. Yanina expresses this view, "Our events are a meeting point for creative people of different backgrounds and experience who share an interest in the development of Bulgarian society. We present the agents of change and innovative ideas. We share ideas, inspire each other and affirm the culture of acting together."

Civic initiatives use different formats and tools reflecting this novel frame of thinking. For example, *Multi-Culti's* creative approach to integration facilitates intercultural mingling through the sharing of culinary practices. In the culinary events they organise they bring together people from different ethnic backgrounds. Creativity is strongly emphasised in the *Factory*'s projects. The imaginative function of civic initiatives is displayed in events they organise such as an "Evening for dreamers", "Utopia box", "Re-think". These projects cover various social fields expressed in *Factory of Ideas*' call for "Re:think city. Re:think education, Re:think economy". For

example, 'Thinking anew' is featured in the project called 'Utopia box', which "unfolded like a lifeguard's tower for our utopias and a real space for the otherwise invisible fantasies about another possible world". It was inspired by "the possible alternatives to further constructions on our Black Sea coast and the specific plans for Irakli and Emona[148]. It arranged for a utopian and at the same time very real journey into the world of eco-friendly architecture, ecological building and inspired art."

Reinventing the social fabric performatively entails setting challenges. A strong example of a challenging project which invites citizens to "Get in the Social Innovation Incubator" is the "Academy for Social Change". The project is a part of the wider *Factory of Ideas'* format 'Social Innovation Challenge' presented graphically below:

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[148] Picturesque spots on the Bulgarian coast

1. find collaborators and friends
2. gather them and register a team
3. get a mission
4. dive in the challenge
5. generate a solution
6. present your idea
7. get in the Ideas Camp!
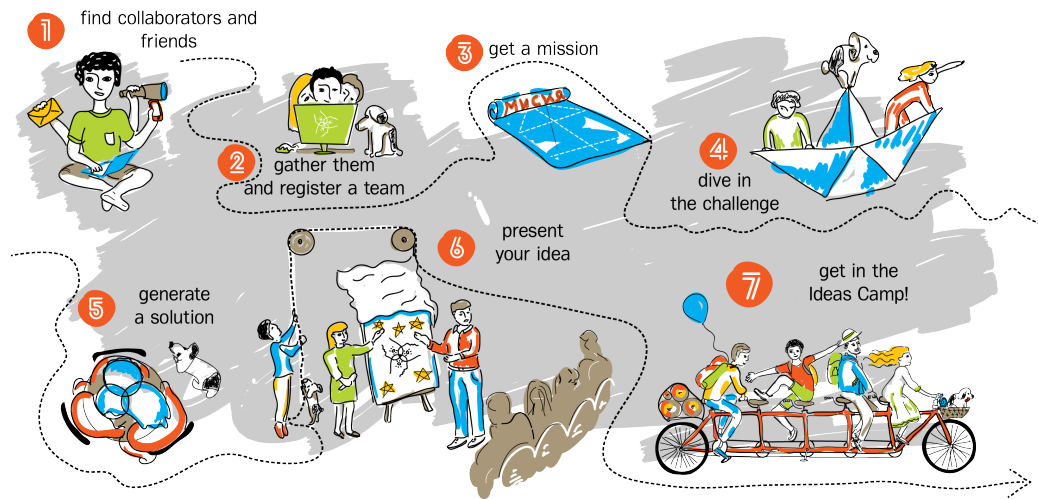
The challenge for organisers involves framing projects that will act as a catalyst for individuals' creativity. This requires coming up with motivating and inspiring ideas. *Astika* explicitly states that they work "to stimulate and create interest in people, to engage them; to encourage them do things; to make people aware of issues, of their potential". A common opinion expressed in the interviews touched on the fact that mobilisation requires a form of identification. Organisers and participants emphasise the fact that "in order to engage one must recognise the issue". The motivational agency of civic initiatives is displayed in devising their activities with the clear aim of engaging people. They acknowledge that for the recognition and identification of an issue to occur, it has to be made visible, and be present in the public space. In addition, it also has to be made

appealing, by which they mean presented in a format that people can relate to personally.

With a view towards stimulating personal engagement, civic initiatives offer a varied choice of different activities and practices for engagement, illustrated by *Astika*'s "fan of activities" (attached in appendix). They hope to offer plenty of opportunities in different venues for individuals to become "Fabricators": "We actively explore how we can catalyze positive change in public attitudes through play". *Karin Dom* emphasises that "we are trying to make initiatives which people can recognise; to like them also so that they can participate. For Marteniza[149] we create campaigns where everyone can make a marteniza and give it to us; we then sell these martenizas to our donors or different markets. There should be some tool, an incentive to attract people to engage in this dialogue. For Christmas we organise a campaign to sell post cards. Everyone can buy cards, which she/he can then give as a gift to someone; this way the message is spreading".

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[149] A Bulgarian tradition celebrating the beginning of the spring on the 1st of March

The projects of civic initiatives are devised in light of the solutions they are advancing. In nurturing individual engagement, they are prefiguring the vision of connectivity. The Forum Theatre devised by *Factory of Ideas* is a format that features "Decision for the People by the People!"

9.2.2. Discursive Tools

The semantics of social innovation are replicated in the discursive tools they use. These correspond to the creative impulse that animates their agency, and hence to performing creative democracy. Thus they enclose a larger concept of agency and of the citizen as envisaged by the liberal idea of participation. Instead of the liberal emphasis on rationality as calculative and utilitarian, the agency of civic initiatives communicates as reflective, imaginative and deliberative. They embrace culture and the tools of the arts as being expressive of the creative potentiality of individuals. These mediums, congruent with the emphasis on social innovation they place are passion driven and play oriented[150]. These qualities, as Waltzer

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[150] The liberal tradition follows in David Humes critique of 'enthusiasm', which he identified in his History of England with the Protestant sects of the 17th century. Hume professed the believe that reason was the slave of passions, but religious zeal was one passion that reasonable men and women would resist. In this tradition any strong emotional commitment is taken to be dangerous, a threat to social stability and political order that allow for mental cultivation, artistic

(2002: 617-618) explains are not compatible with liberal politics. "Politics... in its reasonable and liberal version is a matter of calm deliberation - or, if agreement is, at least partially in prospect, of mutual accommodation, calculated trade-offs, adjustment and compromise. Passion, by contrast, is always impetuous, unmediated, all or nothing." Play however, and the *gesturality* implicit in playful behaviour can actually be the kernel of the constitution of democratic life as Agamben (2000a) suggests. The prefigurative agency of civic initiatives as the enactment of the discourse of social change is illustrated in two discursive modalities of agency and modes of action pertaining to them.[151] The first one is concerned with linguistic dynamics and is displayed in the mode of agency as a shift in rhetoric. The second one is a non-linguistic modality including arts and crafts as the modes of action. This sequencing is chosen only for heuristic purposes; otherwise the two dynamics are interconnected and employed simultaneously as they complement each other in their endeavours in imagining and creating the world.

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achievement. (Waltzer, 2002: 621)

[151] Categories are used in analysis of discursive agency as per Fairclough (1995: 77): Modality refers to type of agency; different medium modes are associated with the particular media (for example, spoken versus written modes)

Language rhetoric: From participation to engagement

One dimension of the prefigurative action of civic initiatives is their organising of the world linguistically. Dewey, like Derrida, shared the view that meaning through language transforms the world (Calcagno, 2014: 222). The pragmatist consideration of language as a tool that enables communication of experiences and relations in a very profound way is adequately observed in the meaning of democracy in Bulgaria: *"Of course, some may be outraged that, taking into consideration the country's missing billions, we are preoccupied with language and the way we speak. Still, language is a mirror, and what the mirror tells us is that the alleged consensus in Bulgaria regarding democracy, market economists and European orientation is actually false, hollowed and made of cardboard. On the one hand, it is a declarative, dolled-up euro-jargon and on the other, macho mockery and folk-style humour. Why do we wonder that politicians cannot lead meaningful dialogue between themselves? Have we seen such dialogue in the public space?"* (Penchev, 2015: 57)

Civic initiatives build their vision of democracy through language. Concomitant with the liberal idea of citizen participation, the

discourse of social change embraces participative democracy and thus foresees citizens as actively involved in making/taking decisions. However, the practices civic initiatives devise surmount the standard of liberal theory participation concerned with "minimal levels of citizen activity and interest, such as electoral participation" (Pateman, 1989: 63). In accordance with Dewey's insistence on practising democracy in "our daily walk and conversation (and) in all the incidents and relations of daily life" (Dewey, 1939) their call to "do democracy" is through everyday decision-making. Civic initiatives communicate the articulation of the meaning of democracy by stressing engagement.

Engagement denotes civic participation, not limited to suffrage (Pateman, 1989). It is rhetoric of social change calling for genuine citizen participation in the constitution of the social world. Their call for stirring the social is summed up in the bellowed motto of Factory of Ideas, "Get Involved!". It is a rather sharp move in the historically inactive and passive Bulgarian social milieu. This sense of immediacy and urgency is also a call to engagement in social practices. Thus the motto of *The Association of Women Refugees* is an invitation to take part in their activities: "We have the power to forget the past! We

have the power to change the future! You can help us to do it!" As defined by Barett and Brunton (2014), 'engagement' construed as psychological denotes having an interest, paying attention, having knowledge, beliefs, opinions, or feelings about either political or civic matters. The linguistic effect embedded in the names of organisations they have chosen is also reminiscent of their call for creating an interest and hence motivation for citizens to join common activities. For example, it is explicit in the "move.bg", "re-act", "single step" and "time heroes".

Non-linguistic modality: From deliberation to play

The social magic of civic initiatives together with a shift in language rhetoric is accompanied with a vast array of non-linguistic modalities of agency. The classic liberal idea of action based on pure reason has posited deliberation as the main modality of citizen participation. Within the creative vision of democracy, which honours the experimental creative aspects of human experience, the preference for the vision of the citizen as deliberative ultimately delimits the scope of human capabilities as to their political significance. Thus they advance their democratic vision through the

medium of art and the shift from the image of the citizen from discussant of the common good towards one of a co-creators of democracy.

The non-linguistic modality of agency approaches social change through play. Placing the citizen as the creator of the 'coming time' prompts a plethora of non-conventional creative and imaginative practices. The performative activities of civic initiatives are constructed within the vision of the multidimensionality of *Homo Activus* that they embrace. As conveyors of human creativity, civic initiatives draw on human potentiality as body and mind. Unlike Cartesian thinking, Mind is not separated from bodily doings, and not granted priority in human agency. The modalities of practices are an expression of the faculties of *Homo Ludens* (Johan Huzinga, 1949), i.e., the Playing Man, and of *Homo Faber* (Max Fisher, 1957*)*, i.e., the Making Man. They are steeped in the idioms of arts and crafts and the element of play is intrinsic to them.

According to Dewey, "Art breaks through barriers that divide human beings, which are impermeable in ordinary association" (LW 10: 249 quoted in Neubert, 2014: 24). Because of its expressive nature, art

carries critical potentialities for creating participation. The democratic implications of art are in its intrinsic abilities to communicate a message. In Dewey's philosophic theory of communication, communication is not announcing things, even if they are said with the emphasis of great sonority. Rather, "communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular, and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to those who listen" (Vessey, 2014: 164).

 Civic initiatives envision a way to address 'serious issues' like the social exclusion of young criminals or ethnic/gender marginalisation through cultural tools. Through arts and crafts, music, dance and fun, serious issues such as civic involvement in decision making or environmental challenges are presented in their mission statements and visions. *Usmivka (Smile)* devised a project aimed at creating civic awareness and responsibility among young children called "penny's battle". This project, like other activities of

the organisation, are inspired by Antoine Saint Exupery's (1943) *Little Prince*. Their approach to "serious" is underpinned by playful activities. The outcome of the battle was aimed at a collection of money in schools, donated to the Maternity Unit in the Regional Hospital of Burgas for the purchase of life-support systems for premature babies. In *Factory of Ide*as, social change is depicted "with a clown's red nose". The format "Creativity for social change" is an example, combining the element of challenge, personal involvement (experience) with play. During activities, informal methods of training, lectures, role plays, presentations, and group work are used. Knitting of puppets is also an interesting approach for teaching grammar and syntax to children with dyslexia: "they (the children) put on the 'hand puppets' and when they (the puppets) start telling them that the subject of the sentence carries a full article it is remembered; but when I say it not so much". Art is given priority as a medium through which *CVS* and *Association of Refugee Women* consider the social inclusion of refugees. Both organisations organise workshops as "art ateliers", where the former focuses on children while the latter mainly centres on women.

Only free man plays argues Huizinga (1949). The anti-authority motif of their agency is further developed in the emphasis on manual work. Various forms of art and artisan-based practices embedded in a rhetoric of work carry the values of labour, manufacturing and producing. Homo Faber and the non-hierarchical way of relating with each other is present in their focus on traditional Bulgarian artisan-based activities, such as bread-making, knitting, goldsmithing and more general engagements in practical work such as bicycle repairs, culinary activities, environmental clean ups, park maintenance or volunteer work with the disabled or aged. Thus *RE-ACT* adopt various work-based activities in their projects with young delinquents; *Roma Coppersmiths* involvement in the social space is focused on the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts in the town of Shumen and the region of north-east Bulgaria. One of the projects of *Factory of ideas* called 'Rugmakers' is aimed at preserving rugmaking as an artisan activity under threat of disappearing. It is a traditional Bulgarian craft done by women. The project aims at reviving it through three interconnected parts: research and documentation for the protection of cultural heritage, education and workshops for the transmission of knowledge, and design and production related to placement of work. Kneading of bread and

establishing connectivity while preserving tradition is employed by *Bread Houses (Bulgaria)* and the *Association of Refugee Women*. The founder of Bread House in Bulgaria, Dr. Nadezhda Savova–Grigorova stresses that "we are kneading, sharing, playing" as the cultural route for social change in Bulgaria.

Civic initiatives practices are thus "a medley of colours" resonating with the vision of a multiple, colourful and moving social world. Fun and entertainment pervade their projects. Some examples pointing to the unbounded fluidity of practices: *Astika*'s projects on multicultural education through arts like the "Carousel" festival of street art. Forum Theatre is a format co-production of the *Factory* in co-operation with artists from Cumbo Circus. *Multi-culti* has launched programs on cooking practices within its scope of encouraging multiculturalism and shortening the social distance between foreigners and the local population. Art and culture as the medium for creative social change are perhaps best expressed by *Hamalogica*'s aim "to inundate the place with culture," for they "believe that culture is not only a common good, but an active tool for growth and the development of cities". They consider "culture and art will be the mediums through which we will promote social

innovation locally". Social innovation includes new decisions, as ideas, products, services, processes, which respond in a more efficient manner to the various social demands; at the same time creativity as the driving force of social innovation is linked to novel practices and a model of 'hubs', which create a space for interaction among artists, institutions and business. Creativity is bringing diverse people together, thus co-creating the social reality they envision.

9.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented the symbolic organisation of social reality as interpreted by civic initiatives. It established the discourse that informs their practices as social change, based on the thematic and semantic analysis of their understanding of their 'doings and sayings'. The idea of social change emerged as the (temporal) fixation of meaning through the interplay between the signifier, rendered with the image of 'happy life,' and the signified, expressed with the notion of movement. The signifier has been analysed as the carrier of the script that informs their action, which, at the level of signs, discloses the vision of sociality and social order in the

discursive trope of community. The linguistic meaning of signs in discourse is interpolated with their social meaning. It expresses the vision of sociality as 'moving and multiplying', and hence of community as "unity in diversity".

The signifier is rendered intelligible via the notion of movement as the referent of the image of 'happy life'. The 'signifying chains' as "movement within", "movement against" and "movement towards" enclose the knowledge claims or resources. Congruent with Schatzki's theory on practices, the three narratives are analysed to pertain to the teleological component of structuring their action. They reflect the social intelligence, the emotions, particular feelings, affects and passions of citizens engaged in civic activism. The metaphor of movement discloses the things that matter to people, and, as Schatzki argued, these structure the stream of their behaviour, omnipresently.

Yet, the discourse of social change does not solely describe their social knowledge and vision of social reality. The performative, discursive agency communicates a shift in the meaning of the extant hegemonic economic liberal democratic discourse. As practices, they

arise from the possibilities that their situatedness in the discursive formation of Europeanisation makes possible. They are contextual articulations of the European liberal discourse, which they modify in the shade of Dewey's understanding of democracy as 'happy life'. They constitute a new meaning of democracy in the Bulgarian social space, which coheres with Dewey's creative democracy as participatory and pluralistic. The meaning is enacted in their activities, and through the dynamics they contain.

Chapter X: The Dynamics of the Discourse of Social Change: Construction-Deconstruction Pragmatics

This chapter explores the power dynamics in the constitution of the discourse of social change. As discursive practices, civic initiatives do not solely represent linguistic events. The intelligibility of social reality as 'moving and multiplying people' is achieved in action, which this chapter presents as construction and deconstruction dynamics. As pragmatic moves, they work towards the realisation of *Homo Civicus* as the representation of active and diverse social constituency. Implicit in the prefigurative agency of civic initiatives, construction and deconstruction pragmatics are essentially political in nature. The last section of the chapter discusses their contribution to substantiating civil society and hence answers how civic initiatives are constitutive to Europeanisation.

10.1. The Bulgarian "Theatre of Cruelty"

10.1.1. The two logics of the discourse of passivity

Social change envisioned via the image of 'happy life' and encapsulated by 'moving and multiplying' people ideally manifests through the active engagement of citizens, but this vision is at odds with the extant reality on the ground, best summarised by the phrase "Bulgarians beyond society" (Slavov et al., 2010). With this phrase, sociological analysis highlighted the very real fragmented social relations in Bulgaria, underpinned by mistrust and apathy towards social action. In the relevant literature, civil society is widely represented as being "weak". Likewise, civic initiatives observe their social milieu as being impregnated with enduring passivity. They initiate construction of their envisioned social world within a social reality interpenetrated with the image of 'the missing citizen'.

Analysis of the data suggests that underwriting this representation of the social world is the operation of two logics: the logic of dependency and the logic of mistrust. They are informed by a set of dispositions of passivity as "durable and transportable systems or schematas of perceptions, appreciations and actions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133). The two logics act to promote "common sense", thereby sustaining the cultural outlook and day-to-day life of people. They inform social practices (bodily, mental activities) as

routinised behaviour and hence constitute the social world or the habitat (or habitus) (Bourdieu, 1979). In particular, they are formative of social relations understood as "the interplay and generation of emotions", for social relations are determined by "emotional habitus" (Calhoun, 2008: 293).

Dependency as a prominent feature in the psychological makeup of Bulgarian citizens emerged as a strong theme from the words of my participants. Dependency, suffused with passivity, is damaging for sociality and manifests via a reluctance to initiate activities. Civic initiatives' call to "get involved" is shaped by the persistence of this reluctance of ordinary Bulgarian citizens to claim and appropriate the public space and hence engage in its governance. Volunteers in the initiatives comment on this inactivity or passivity as issuing from deeply ingrained perceptions of state reliance, from the expectation of the state to provide not just solutions, but also resources. For example, with regard to the social inclusion of the Roma, they comment that "they (the Roma) are just used to this, it is not their fault; it is simply the state that taught them this way: to be lazy. They are used to being given social support, any sort of support". Another volunteer from *Roma Coppersmiths* also stated that, "a large amount

of the Roma … don't have the habits to cope on their own, to rely on themselves, and thus they come to get involved in the organisation… this organisation teaches us not to wait for tomorrow, for someone (to give us something), and expect (something) from here and there, but to do it ourselves".

The logic of dependency implies a lack of an assumption of responsibility. It suggests a citizen stating that "I am not responsible", and that responsibility will be taken elsewhere. Responsibility is predominantly conferred upon the State and its institutions. People consider themselves distant from the State and hence dissociated from responsibility and thus action. The distance is expressed by the common use of the third person plural pronoun "they" for the State. As a result, as Yakimova (in Gruev, 2015: 64) argues "the relation between state and citizens is one of spectator and performance". Where state actions fail, responsibility is to be assumed by the EU, upon which expectations to act are projected. The overall reliance on Europe is seen as "more European resources, more money". In fact, Europe is expected "to take care of the Roma and to increase pensions". These words belong to Svoboda, a volunteer in *CVS*. The persistence of dependency logic is summarised

by Katerina who works as project coordinator of the same organisation: "Ordinary Bulgarians still hold the perception that the state has to do something; however, this state isn't communism, which was taking care of these things (social issues); and it is very difficult for many people to see and understand that you are the state; if you want a change, then you get up and do it yourself. I am not saying that we are to take over the functions of the state, but there are things which you cannot expect from the state to change; for instance, the attitude towards asylum seekers."

While the logic of dependency prevents the citizen from assuming responsibility and hence the initiative to act, the logic of mistrust accounts for the lack of socialisation. It is a logic that simultaneously feeds on and fosters suspicion towards the "other". Fragmentation of the Bulgarian social milieu via dispositions of mistrust is demonstrated by citizen withdrawal into the personal domain. The operation of this logic is made visible in the emphasis civic initiatives place on the absence of connectivity or the presence of fragmentation. An interviewee, engaged in a project on the integration of children with dyslexia, commented on the lack of connectivity channels among citizens: "at the ceremony when we

were given missions (by *Factory of Ideas*) on what exactly each person's work would be, a boy appeared on the stage. I have known this boy for long time, his name is Liubo and he grew up in front my eyes in the area where we live. So Liubo asked for someone to read him the mission statement because he is not able to read due to acute dyslexia. I was totally shocked! We live 200 metres away, I buy cigarettes from him every day, and he doesn't know that I am a teacher who is engaged with this problem; and I didn't know that Liubo had dyslexia."

Inactivity and mistrust act as socialised subjectivity. They form the "temporal background" of which Dewey spoke as "the entrenched traditions and culture customs along with each individual's habits of conduct acquired through cultural participation" (Garrison, 2008: 2). Their influence is decisive in regulating social interaction and framing social relations. Thus, in the words of a volunteer engaged in a project stimulating inter-age communication, "there are so many people with different abilities; people who can knit, cook…, people who can do many interesting things, but there isn't anyone/anything to bring them together in order to produce creative work."

10.1.2. Culture and the idolatory power of communism

Civic initiatives advance the construction of the discourse of social change with the recognition of the deep entrenchment of the two logics in the habitus of Bulgarian society. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is a product of a long and durable training and the dispositions are brought into peoples' behaviours through "a process of inculcation" or the long-term function or effect of pedagogic actions. Pedagogic agency, also referred to as the agency of symbolic violence assures "the individual's willingly submission to being ruled as experiencing the power of symbols as legitimate" (Jenkins, 2004: 107). The two logics therefore are the product of the hidden and subtle power of cultural symbolism that acts to institute the social in the individual (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133). The internalisation of patterns of behaviour is instilled with the work of the institutions of society, i.e., family, church, school, etc. It is a process of control over the power of the individual proceeding through misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1972), consent (Gramsci, 1971) and/or disciplining (Foucault, 1977-78).

Tacitly or explicitly, the participants in the research acknowledged the inculcation of the two logics during the communist régime.

Dependency and mistrust were consonant with the communist impetus to create "a new man" (Schumaker, 2008: 141). This new man was to rely on the state, which assumed omniscience over the citizen's social needs and wants. This way the citizen succumbed to the tyrannical rule of communist logicality, according to which "obedience rather than proactivity was what mattered" (Slavkova 2017: 18). As Keane (1988: 4) contends, "the practical effect of this motto was to encourage the passive consumption of state provisions and seriously undermine the citizen's confidence in their ability to direct their own lives." In Arendt's interpretation, in submitting one's mind to a logic on which one relies in order to engender thought, men were bowing to outward tyranny by surrendering their inner freedom (Arendt, 1968: 171).

The 'missing citizen' that civic initiatives invoke in their narrative calls upon the citizen who is deprived of independence. Citizen enslavement resulted in a "deep entrenchment of scepticism, and the ensuing corruption of human solidarity" that, according to Arendt, were characteristic of totalitarian societies (Arendt, 1951: 583). Thus, although humans are essentially social beings, as Marx has argued and are, as such, "endowed by nature with the gift of action"

as Arendt claimed, they are also prone to fall prey to normalisation practices as the result of anonymous, informal (and formal) social pressures to conform. Walter Benjamin, following Marx, saw the distortion of the socialised character of the human species resulting in the estrangement of social relations or alienation as being due to "humans' inherent susceptibility to 'phantasmagoria'", or to "the miasma of false idolatory forms of reality" (Martel, 2014:xii). The cultural domain of symbols is a powerful resource for the production of phantasmagorias[152]. Foucault (1977) summarises the social production of individuals under the concept of "governmentality", which refers to the development of micro systems of social regulation that exercise normative control over individuals and populations. These constitute more or less explicit and patterned 'technologies of power' devoted to "normalising" individuals.

The two logics of dependency and mistrust have enabled the sedimentation of social relations along passivity, estrangement and apathy. They were integrated into the social structure (Calhoun et al, 2012) and internalized in individual action (Offe,1996). They were capable of self-perpetuation after the years of pedagogy and

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[152] Culture, as systems of symbolism and meaning is arbitrary. It acts as 'pure de facto power' in two senses: in its imposition and its content (Jenkins, 1992:105)

continued after the *official* fall of communism. Goldfarb (1989: 19) contends that, "the post-totalitarian frame of mind became the collective experience of a society". It is worth recalling Derrida's insight that what is discarded never disappears (Calcagno, 2014). Derrida's suggestion is about totalitarianism and despotism as always being there, simultaneously creating the limits of possibility and impossibility, and against which liberal democracy must articulate itself. In the context of Bulgaria they were interwoven in the two logics and had a strong impact on the transition process thereby corrupting the image of democracy.

Slavkova (2017: 19) explains that "against this backdrop, it is important to convey the message that democracy is not the problem. The problem is the long shadow of communist legacies, in combination with the way transition was approached". In the more or less democratic environment of the transition, the logic of general mistrust perpetuates hesitation towards civic involvement. It justifies withdrawal into or remaining in the private sphere, and hence the continuation of forms of socialisation beyond public or common concerns. Dependency logic also feeds upon other sources of powerlessness cultivated by the current state of democracy,

interlaced as it is with capitalist logic (Agamben, Badiou). Neo-liberalism "as a peculiar from of reason that configures aspects of existence in economic terms" (Brown, 2015: 17) was implemented in the Bulgarian social space since the collapse of the Communist market relations. Transition was framed and executed following the neo-liberal logic as "the only possible model to deliver the complex task of deep and radical structural changes" of the system (Slavenkov in Gruev, 2015: 90). As Dawson's 2014 research shows, Bulgarian society has adopted capitalist undertones of democracy but also the nationalist rhetoric of fear, both underpinned and perpetuated by media discourse. Thus, while Wendy Brown analyses how the neoliberal reason can entail degrading the quality of democracy in contemporary societies around world, its implementation in Bulgaria reveals further complexities. Slavenkov (in Gruev, 2015: 90-91) observes the intricate patterns between economic theory and its implementation in practice. According to him, neoliberalism should not be blamed as the *causa finalis* of the difficulties and problems of the transition to free market relations. The reason is that, in Bulgaria, the translation of neoliberal economic policies has been enmeshed with the interests of the oligarchy. Thus, lurking behind the ruling elite executing the reforms were "the interests of oligarchs", which

"have been generally diametrically opposite to the logic of market".
The consequences of this entanglement between the nominal values of neo-liberalism and their local implementation have been detrimental for the public culture that is required to nourish democracy since its initiation. The economization of political life, as described in the introductory chapter challenged the political energies needed to animate the democratic logic. It has particularly imperilled the development and maturity of democratic political subjects, on which the practice of democracy depends.

Civic initiatives' construction of the discourse of social change unfolds within the constructive work of the habitus. Their work towards social change is thus intertwined with de-construction as pragmatic dynamics[153] for it requires disavowing the authority of the idolatrous communist power of symbols. They interfere with the "theatre of cruelty" (Derrida,1978) i.e., society (as interpreted by Ritzer, 2000: 592), where actors are "enslaved interpretators, ...who ...more or less directly represent the thought of the 'creator'". Their deconstructive work tackles simultaneously the two images implicit

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[153] In the interpretative tradition (under the strong influence of Heidegger's work) the construction process of the discourse is interlaced with de-construction for if we accept that the social world is a construct, the possibility of change (induced by dynamics such as alteration, subversion, reversion) occurs through de-constructing (Newman,2007). The practice of deconstruction shares the epistemological trajectory with pragmatism as philosophy of flux (Crotty, 1998), both postulating the state of indeterminacy (i.e. relativism) as endemic to reality.

in the metaphor: on the one hand, the vision of the theological stage as comporting a "*passive*, seated public, a public of spectators, of consumers, of enjoyers" (Derrida,1978: 235 in Ritzer, 2000 italics added); and on the other hand, the ideas of all the intellectual authorities who have created the dominant discourses. As a collective action they attempt to break with the circular power of dispositions that are being produced by society and then internalised and embedded in individual actions. Particularly, they act as a liminal agency (Turner, 1969), removing some of the stable, well-established everyday social relationships in which emotions are invested, and set new groundwork for other emotions, or they create patterns for the appearance of emotional habitat (Calhoun et al., 2012: 294). Their deconstructive–constructive work also contains significant pragmatic hues. These are implicated in *Factory of Ideas'* expression "for citizens through citizens" and in the call for "building the people together to build their power" (Halloway, 2005).

10.2. Technologies of Empowerment: From Citizen as Spectator to Citizen as Actor

10.2.1. Deconstruction Moves: disrupting the authoritative modes of thought

The constructive work of civic initiative proceeds through deconstruction–construction dynamics and takes shape as a commitment to citizens' assuming agency. This implies a series of movements toward constituting the power of citizens, which I describe in this section as "technologies of empowerment", explicitly stated by *Multi-Culti*: "we are somehow empowering people so they can realise their ideas without help".

The constitution of power in the words of Antonio Negri, is an "act of choice, the punctual determination that opens a horizon" and implies "the radical enacting of something that did not exist before" (Negri in Agamben, 1998: 43). In the context of the activities of civic initiatives, constituting power semantically denotes dynamics of empowerment. It proceeds through removing the hindrances of participation in order for humans to "actualize the sheer passive givenness of their being" (Arend, 1959) meaning reinstating the

capacity of the citizen as *doer.* Etymologically, empowerment is connected with different ways of conceptualising power, as well as notions of powerlessness and can be defined as "helping people gain greater control over their lives and circumstances" (Thompson, 2007: 19).

Civic initiatives' work to reinstate the ontological capacity for agency involves deconstructing the symbolic origins (resources) of the two logics as the source of citizen powerlessness. The deconstructive work of civic initiatives consists in counter-posing the normativisation tendencies of social institutions as reflecting the dominant discourse of knowledge and regulating social interaction accordingly. They are critical of the pedagogic actions of the state and social institutions as perpetuating mistrust and passivity. They openly assert that "the political class strongly resist the citizen's active engagement"; for example, in the occasion of any referendum so far "the state has resisted citizen involvement with tooth and nail" (*Ravnovesie*). In addition, civic initiatives displace or decentre the meaning of imposed cultural messages from family and institutional education not only through cultural arbitrariness, but also through

official media discourses. Education[154] and media[155] in particular, in their function as specialised groups of experts (Foucault, 1977) are conveyors of cultural norms, and, through disciplining practices some categories of social actors are constituted as normative and others as deficient or inferior, e.g., straight is normal, gay is perverse. Volunteers in projects aimed at supporting the integration of refugees stress the role of media in reinforcing prejudices against asylum seekers:

"these are very serious things which have a very strong connection to mass media and how they present the whole story. Because all these (the attitudes of ordinary people) are imposed attitudes, not from 'face to face' contacts but from 'seeing' and 'hearing'."

"they introduce this binary opposition of Us-Them; 'They are different, dirty and uncivilised, possessed of a different culture. And Bulgarians think of themselves intellectually, religiously, and even, if you wish, civilisationally at a higher level. Yesterday for instance, a woman told me: 'look, they are uneducated'. And this is true to a certain extent, because a whole generation coming from Afghanistan,

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[154] Education is never neutral; it is charged with promoting particular values (Freire,1998)
[155] Mass media through representing particular way of the world, of social identities and social relations is also working "to reproduce culture and power relations which underwrite its own operation" (Fairclogh, 1995: 67)

a country that has been embroiled in war for so many years has had no chance to get an education and to acquire qualifications. ...but very little is said (in the media) that you don't need an education for working in agriculture, let's say…"

Niya, from the platform *Time heroes,* brings to the fore the prevailing attitude among Bulgarians towards "otherness": "…when we (Bulgarians) are exposed to otherness, for instance you go and meet someone from this different group, you don't come and say that they are not probably a homogeneous group… and that there are some differences among them too, but rather (we say) that they are all the way they are and that this particular person is perhaps an exception."

Media discourse on "otherness" contributes to the compartmentalisation of society through the regulation of social relations via parity–impeding cultural norms. A major deconstructive move for civic initiatives is the subversion of linguistic codes of cultural mechanisms. Media discourse carries strong racial representations[156] through the language of stigma that it employs; the structural element of race in linguistic codes. For instance, the media reinforces racial representations in the use of

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[156] Omi and Winant (2000:125) explain that race is a matter both of social structure and cultural representation. Race thus cannot be analytically explained purely as a structural phenomenon nor as a matter of cultural attributes

'Roma' and 'Gypsy' as derogatory terms in Bulgarian. The stigmatisation of the Roma population as dirty and lazy poses serious problems for their integration into, and participation with, "normal" society. This leads to hierarchies of 'tolerance' and undermines their inclusion efforts. Reinforcing the connection between an attribute and a stereotype contributes to the "evasive tolerance" the Roma organisations speak about:

"Tolerance requires work and struggle. People need to know more about us". *Amaliple* observes that the "intolerance in the country is due to a great extent to the work of journalists, the press, the TV and the language they employ: 'a gypsy killed someone, a Roma person did this and that'. They should say the citizen, the perpetrator committed this and that, why emphasise ethnicity?" The representative of the organisation who spoke with me further explained: "Tolerance is tainted with hierarchy because it gives advantages. It is performed as copying, in pretending to be Bulgarian. There is tolerance in schools where there is at least 35% Roma; there isn't tolerance where there are 10 Roma out of 1000 Bulgarian students. Problems are less when the ratio between the Roma and Bulgarians is almost even or where the Roma prevail".

Civic initiatives also report the deeply discrediting language used in educational institutions in categorising people. For example, a volunteer working with children with dyslexia, commenting on the importance of using unconventional and creative educative approaches in order to maximise the potential of children with dyslexia says: "in Bulgarian state schools no teacher will call the crazy and sick child walking in the class room "your highness", and show patience and treat her/him with respect".

Against these examples of framing people linguistically, civic initiatives' deconstructive work employs dynamics of inversion/subversion of authoritative systems of thought. This involves advancing an alternative system of symbolism steeped in linguistic codes of 'difference as resourcefulness', as people as stocks of knowledge rather than a problem of some sort. Therefore, they engage in struggles to disrupt the fixity between ideological and structural beliefs of racist social representations. The changes in conceptual vocabulary they introduce disturb the connection between an attribute and stereotype, which according to Goffman (1977) is the structural precondition of stigma[157]. They thus

[157] Goffman (1977:205) argued that stigma should be seen in a language of relationships, not of attributes, as a "special kind of relationship between an attribute and stereotype".

challenge the conventional categories of representing social reality by showing that social structures give rise to beliefs. These in turn are implicated in our conceptual vocabularies and inform our means of categorising people.

The change in vocabulary is an explicit goal in the work of *Karin Dom*. They stress the need to refer to children with impairment not as children with disabilities, but as children with *different abilities*. Also, the term wheelchair in Bulgarian as "a chair for the handicapped", hence a totally incapacitated person, is also to be replaced with a less devaluing term. *Karin Dom* have noticed the tendency to stigmatise people with impairment with the stereotype of inferiority. In line with Goffman's (1997: 205) observation that "by definition …we believe that a person with a stigma is not quite human," the organisation comments on the tendency to impute a wide range of imperfections on the basis of a person linguistically characterised as handicapped. So my interviewee said: "that they are unable to walk, speak…does not mean that they are not able to think, which is the general perception about children with physical or mental impairments". Similar efforts underlie the work of *Re-act*, which works with adolescent delinquency and they suggest

reconsidering the category of 'criminal' with respect to children. Likewise *Single step* confronts the conventional reference to LGBT people as "sick" with a notion emphasising personality peculiarities.

The strong linguistic focus of deconstructive dynamics of the two logics challenges conventional categories underpinning how we are accustomed to think. The pragmatics of the empowerment work of civic initiatives has a constructive dimension too. The work of constructing visions (and divisions) in the social world, as Bourdieu argued, supposes a particular kind of capital, which works effectively in the mechanisms of delegation and dispossession. The next sections examine the construction of *Homo Civicus* through modes of delegation or construction of cultural and social capital.

10.2.2. Construction Moves: The creation of *Homo Civicus*[158] through Cultural and Social Capital

Power concedes nothing without demand (Douglas 1985: 204 in Choudry, 2014: 20). Civic initiatives strive to furnish people with the ability to claim power through deconstructing the structural (cultural) reproduction of powerlessness. Claiming power is

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[158] This term I borrowed from Carole Pateman's (1989) philosophical critique on Almond and Vebra's term civic culture. She uses Homo Civicus to refer to the liberal conception of citizen.

premised on resistance but sustaining the reversal of hierarchies requires constituting a field of knowledge. Power and knowledge after all, directly imply one another: there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Turner, 1995; Foucault, 1977). In accordance with Negri's idea on constituting power as a radical enacting of something, civic initiatives engage in construction moves as enacting the democratic script of 'happy life'. Ceasing the logic of dependency implies fostering self-reliance, responsibility, and independence. Civic initiatives decentre the knowledge claims of the discourse of passivity and launch a counter discourse of knowledge production by developing symbolic, social, cultural, and economic practices that enable people to constitute themselves as agents under new terms, taking different positions in the social space than those in which they were previously positioned[159]. The construction dynamics of empowerment are rendered with the concepts of cultural and social

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[159] Here I draw on Bourdieu's conception of the social as social field and its intertwinement with capital. Social field is defined as "a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions", which are determined by allocating of specific capital to actors (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). Fields are defined by the stakes which are at stake-cultural goods (lifestyle), housing, intellectual distinction (education), employment, land, power (politics), social class, prestige. These goods can be principally differentiated into four categories: economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primary legitimate knowledge of one kind or another**)** and symbolic capital (prestige and social honour (Jenkins, 2004)

capital and realised through the mediums of education and socialisation.

Education as building cultural capital

Education is a main theme in the discourse of social change of civic initiatives. Consistent with the importance that Dewey's vision of liberal democracy places on education, the initiatives approach education both as the means and ends for social change. Organisations undertake educative activities because they observe the poor level of education in Bulgaria[160]. They point to widespread incompetence and lack of skills among young people, as the founder of *Astika* comments, "*The situation is scary, because ...the problems are so entangled, and nobody knows where they start. For me, if I am to speculate about the source of these problems, education is for me the main issue. I am very sad that education is in a very poor condition at all levels - from primary school, to secondary and university level. It*

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[160] Statistics show education in Bulgarian as challenge to address (BTI, 2018). The EU Commission 2018 Report observes the "slight fall in the rate of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)" to be 18.2% in 2016. Thus it still remains among the highest in the EU and significantly above the EU average of 11.6%. The Youth Guarantee project of the Commission (2018) also suggests that although measures have been taken to address the situation of young people, the coverage of the Youth Guarantee still remains low. Data points to: early school leaving was 13.8% in 2016 (EU average: 10.7%), with higher levels for Roma and in rural areas (30.3%); the employment rate of recent VET graduates (64.2%) is 10.8 pp. below the EU average. The quality on offer, the attractiveness of VET and links with the labour market remain challenges.

is a tragedy! It is an imitation of education. And these people, when they are illiterate, when they don't know anything, what kind of work can they do?" Further, civic education is the "ideal tool installing the 'never again' mentality to totalitarian regimes", highlights *Sofia Platform* (Slavkova, 2017: 22). Organisations then set out to "stimulate, create interests in people, to engage them; to encourage them to do things; to make people aware of issues, of their potential" (*Astika*).

The educative work of civic initiatives towards replacing the logic of dependency with that of independence consists in investing in people capacities[161]. Individuals' agency is connected with releasing a range of capabilities and depends on education, argues Nussbaum (1999; 2011). In Sen's (1999) view, capability refers to a person's abilities or internal powers but also to "an opportunity made feasible, and constrained by, both internal (personal) and external (social and environmental) conversion factors" (Crocker, 2008: 171-2; Robeyns, 2005). The most common description civic initiatives attach to their activities is as catalysers of civic agency. Their work on empowerment then takes the shape of a wider programme of

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[161] This view on education is central to the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen (1999) and further theorized by Marta Nussbaum (2011). Education is considered as "capability multiplier" by allowing individuals to gain the knowledge, skills and values that will enable substantive freedoms to be exercised in different areas. Education is thus intrinsically connected to freedom (Sen), and to justice (Nussbaum).

investment in people's capabilities as fostering "the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for (a person) to achieve" (Sen, 1999: 75). As human capabilities are expressions of freedom[162], civic initiatives pave the way to citizen assuming agency through fostering functionigs, hence to facilitate "the various things a person may value doing or being" (Sen, 1999: 75).

The road to independence is envisaged through the cultivation of the necessary skills and issue competence. In practical terms, these ideas underline civic initiatives' efforts to provide information and services for citizens. Civic initiatives enhance people's capabilities by supplying essential information on topics for citizens to engage with, and the methods through which they might get involved. They acknowledge, on the one hand, the lack of information in the public space and, on the other, the importance of recognising an issue in order to engage with it. The crucial role of being informed in order to act, is expressed by Katerina, from *CVS*. The organisation is aware of the need *"*for people to become aware, familiar with issues so they could develop a personal element, something that resonates with them to stimulate them to engage". By the same token Sylvia, who

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[162] Sen considers the notion of freedom as a "broader" than well-being and as "related to the agency aspect of a person" (Sen, 1985:203)

initiated the campaign 'Dyslexia is not a disease", comments on the complexity of the lack of knowledge: "In the total absence of information and services, parents of children with dyslexia are left on their own. Likewise, unfamiliarity of teachers with the condition results in total ignorance of the children in classrooms and their stigmatisation as being sick, and hence incapable of working alongside other children." Civic initiatives thus create familiarity by bringing issues to the public agenda, and also by emphasizing and promoting the opportunities for individuals to engage. To this end, they promote volunteering, defined by the founder of *Multi Culti* as "non-constraint engagement with a noble cause" as the antidote to "talk and deliberation". Volunteering is praised as "knowledge in action" (*the Factory*), as "integration in practice" (*CVS*), as the cure to stagnant attitudes of expecting the state to do everything: *Time heroes* praises volunteering "as a way to move out of the frame of thinking that the state is obliged".

There are, however, further layers to the educative work of civic initiatives. These pertain to their activities towards the constitution of the public itself within the vision they embrace. Civic initiatives are also engaged in cultivating the properties of the public as

competent subjects. Their educative activities to create informed citizens could be explained by Almond and Verba's (1989) term 'civic culture'. The term covers individual attitudes and political orientations that foster democratic stability. *Astika* in particular have educated about the election process. In four-day seminars they have introduced citizens to the administrative formalities as well as to the rights and responsibilities involved in casting a vote. *APCI (Association for the Promotion of Civic Initiative)* which is mainly occupied with encouraging citizen participation in referendums, is actively engaged in providing information about referendums and general knowledge about democracy and the role of the citizen.

The notion of civic culture also encloses the development of civic values. These are strongly connected with civic knowledge and civic literacy and are cultivated by strengthening citizen orientations[163]. A main theme that emerged from interviews points to civic initiatives' strong focus on developing citizens' duties and responsibilities. Civic initiatives' work on empowerment as capability enhancement then is connected with pursuing responsibility as a value. Their orientation

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[163] Almond and Verba (1989:15) argue for a three-fold classification of the dimensions of "orientations" or "internalised spaces": cognitive orientations refer to "knowledge of and belief about the political system"; affective orientations to "feelings about the political system", evaluational orientations to judgments and opinions that involve a "combination of value standards … with information and feelings"

towards cultivating an attitude of care and responsibility is not surprising given the Bulgarian social milieu and political climate of uncaringness. The democratic script of social change vests agency in citizens, and therefore it demands they be aware of the consequences of their acts. Dewey (1908) argued that the more diversified the social order is, the greater the responsibility of citizens. Civic initiatives' perspective on community as active and heterogeneous requires making citizens aware of what is at stake being involved in the creation of social ties. Consequently, through their practices, they afford an opportunity for participants to develop accountability for their actions, and hence to nurture responsible behaviour. The work of empowerment as responsibility in cultivating the link between assuming accountability for one's acts is expressed by *Time Heroes'* statement: "The lack of a caring attitude, of the belief that something depends on you; I think that with our work many people are starting to care about what is happening. They stop having expectations that the state is the only subject who will care"

Participants from the Roma community stressed responsibility as a value that they work to cultivate within the community. The Roma

organisations express that "they (Roma) know their rights, but don't know their duties". In the words of my interviewee from *Amalipe*: "Each of us must carry responsibility, to be accountable for our actions. As Bulgarian citizens we must know our rights as well as our duties. We are doing our best for that. Because everyone claims their rights in this country but shuns away from duties". The organisation's support of students from the Roma community places a strong emphasis on cultivating responsibility in young people. They stress that, "when we are showing her/him the way to reach somewhere we give a scholarship to this child, but we demand good grades in return. We give (buy) them books for school but we expect them to care for them and bring them back as (in the state) they received them."

As catalysers of citizens' agency, civic initiatives are also involved in training services with the aim of strengthening the citizen's active faculties. In their centres it is common practice to organise seminars and workshops on a wide spectrum of skills: written communication, leadership, computer literacy, CV and presentation skills for market employability. As much for furthering competences and faculties, these activities are also oriented towards the development of

internal efficiency. They are thus cultivating power as capability (Dawding, 1996) which includes developing confidence, boosting self-esteem and enhancing skills. *Roma Coppersmiths* stress that while learning a craft, their members are also cultivating self-esteem and confidence. The founder of the organisation comments on the benefits the members see: "Participating in all these social activities, their self-esteem begins to change, begins to grow. Because people start looking at them differently, and this motivates them to participate and develop in this aspect". In a similar vein, *Amalipe* also works in establishing the self-reliance of its members: "We wish our members to count on themselves, to be capable of dealing with a situation alone. We show them how to write an official letter, to fill in a form…some civic and administrative skills of how to do things so she/he can be self-sufficient and useful to the people around her/him".

Civic initiatives' cultivation of citizens' capacities is performatively driven. Training capabilities presupposes "letting them express once trained" (Nussbaum, 2000: 86). Thus, their approach to education emphasises experience. They require individuals' active engagement with an issue, their input in research and in solutions. Rendered with

the images of *Homo Ludens* and *Homo Faber* as depicted in the previous chapter, their approach to cultivating civic skills draws on informal and non-formal learning that occurs in the process of *doing*. After all, "empowerment is not something we can do for people (it is a self-contradictory notion). It is something we can do only with them", stresses Thompson (2007: 22). The pragmatic conception of knowledge, not as representational but as a form of action, as something active (Dewey,1930) undergirds the emphasis civic initiatives place on volunteering. People learn a lot in the process of doing things. They encourage volunteering as the format for participation, as knowledge grounded in practice. Thus, their work on education as capabilities enhancement furnishes people with the feeling of beholding (owning) the capacity to induce change. In encouraging participation in workshops and team projects their confidence is boosted and as one of the volunteers in a refugee project expressed it: "these organisations serve as an example that you can change something."

Socialisation as building social capital

The constitution of *Homo Civicus* requires an appreciation of her/his deeply social nature. Since Marx, social science research suggests

that a truly human existence implies involvement in definite social relations (Scott, 2011). Socialisation as the ensemble of the social relations is absolutely essential for the constitution of power, for power is never individual. Power is always social. According to Arendt (1967), power is constituted and displayed collectively, through people's coming together with people, and hence in acting together. Power is also a feature of free people. Arendt envisages the ability to begin and to interact as essentially human characteristics to overcome modes of powerlessness instilled through alienation and isolation. Civic initiatives' endeavours to empower citizens *against* the symbolic violence of the logic of mistrust are displayed in the dynamics of socialisation that they enact. Together with constructing cultural capital, civic initiatives are simultaneously involved in the construction of social capital. The term, as originally conceived by Bourdieu, refers to the various kinds of valued relations with significant others (Jenkins, 2004: 85).

Civic initiatives tackle the extant alienation underpinning the fragmentation of the Bulgarian social fabric through their focus on sociality. They are involved in the context-forming of "togetherness" implicit in sociality (as suggested by Schatzki) rendered with the metaphor of multiplying people in their discourse of social change.

They work towards crafting social connections by promoting social networking. According to Niya from *Time Heroes*, "what makes *Time Heroes* one of a kind is that we deal with an initiative network here. A network of people who are willing to help and know how to do it." Networks as "emerging social morphology" are essential for restructuring society (Castells, 1989: 32). Social observers conceptualised Bulgaria as "a society of networks, of 'spilled power/poverty' in which property or educational credentials are minor resources compared to political power or media power" (Raychev et al, 2000). These networks constitute "the exchange of influence and access, of possibilities for the provision of resources and of positions from which it is possible to speak with the voice of power". Echoing the opinion of these political commentators, the networks civic initiatives are forming are mediums for empowering the powerless through the establishment of "new, never-before-seen networks". The strategic partnerships and networks they forge are experiences as a variety of shared undertakings, which are conducive for the development of common values. They are embedded in the democratic script according to which all the members of the group have an equitable opportunity to receive and to take from others. Thus, in line with Dewey's belief, the democratic ideal as 'happy life'

can make people more social toward an awareness of concrete, beneficial participation.

Creating networks is an essential step to engage people to get involved in collective action. At the same time, social networks are not only a facilitator but also a product of collective action (della Porta and Caiani, 2009: 115-117). Civic initiatives are weaving webs of networks by providing possibilities for socialisation. They encourage individuals to create connections and forge new links by involving them in specific activities, events or campaigns like music festivals, communities of taste, reading groups, alternative cafes, cinema, and theatres. In this way they disrupt the existing set of power relations sustained by individuals' inaction and fragmentation. The quote below illustrates their conscious attempt to look for opportunities in order to build connectivity among people:

"O-o! is a new kind of initiative that, capturing vacated urban spaces and premises due to the economic crisis, connects people with ideas with people who have access to free spaces through cultural blitzes – exhibitions, installations and discussions; the purpose of "O-o!" is to create an independent cultural infrastructure from atypical venues

and a community of seekers who will find their urban environment for

spontaneity."

Establishing channels of communication also includes forging partnerships with state and social institutions. They recognise that "alone we cannot do anything. We are just a bridge between institutions and community. Empowerment happens as a consequence of this". The modalities of action therefore are in the range of looking for venues for cooperation, for partnerships with different agents and institutional bodies. Covering a wide social space, these include establishing connections with state agencies and other NGOs, with media. *Astika* was founded with the aim of supporting and cooperating territorial communities for the benefit of regional development. *Single Step* emphasizes the importance of forming networks with their partners because these are "the channels through which we can access our target group population. For example, the network 'Together in Class' is a group of over 160 teachers in the country"; for us it is very important to talk to an adequate partner, who already have established networks and have access to concrete teachers, children, parents". *Karin Dom* also explains the value of forming partnerships: "We are trying to form better partnerships with media because in order to change, or even,

if not to change, but build society's right attitudes towards these children, to introduce them to the wider socium, is done through informing, through media." So the organisation has established partnerships with various magazines for children and adults, e.g., "The First Seven", where they have publications. This is the way for them to reach and engage the ordinary citizen "through their initiatives, through the information which they share through the internet".

Civic initiatives are conducting their projects on specific issues with respect to the state policies. As mentioned earlier, the state is conceived discursively as 'missing', by which they mean not being able to reach to the heart of the matter, either as recognizing the cause as important or through employing the full range of means. Against this background, they make efforts to maintain close relationships of cooperation with state agencies and institutions. They do so, for they acknowledge the importance and hence significance of structures for citizen empowerment. Thus, important alliances are looked for with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, its departments and affiliated agencies. S*ingle Step* is cooperating with state agencies responsible for health issues, *Usmivka* with those engaged with child protection, while *PULS* interacts with legal and

state bodies in their work with violence against women. Organisations like *CVS*, *The Association of Women Refugees* and *Factory*'s projects with asylum seekers, while highly critical of the work of the State Refugee Agency, acknowledge the potential benefits of cooperation. Nevertheless, they are alert to the plausible hazards of it. By staying focused on their mission and vision, civic initiatives preclude eventualities of co-option, which, as discussed earlier, have tarnished the name of the NGO sector in Bulgaria.

Educational institutions are a main target in their efforts to construct social capital. *Amalipe* conducts its empowerment work of Roma youth through devising programs conjointly with schools. Within schools, they try to form parents' clubs to involve parents in supporting the pedagogic work. Simultaneously, they engage with academia and research on Roma culture and history. *Single step* is deliberately working to establish the bridge between schools and state policy, those responsible for protection of the child and the families concerned, because they recognise that in order for education to be effective it needs to include all concerned parties.

This section presented the technologies of empowerment as the counter discourse of passivity that civic initiatives construct. The construction dynamics proceeded through two main mediums.

Firstly, they engage in building cultural capital as the development of citizen capabilities through education. Secondly, they are involved in building social capital as the antidote to extant alienation through establishment of networks and partnerships. Empowerment dynamics target passivity as socialised subjectivity. They are crucial for enacting the democratic script of 'multiplying and moving people', for as Arie de Geus observes "People change and when they do they change the society in which they live" (in de Voulpian 2008: v). The dynamics of the discourse of social change create a story of political transformation, the meaning of which is elucidated in the next section.

10.3. The a/political dynamics of construction – deconstruction pragmatics

The question that still remains is how these discursive dynamics relate civic initiatives to civil society, and to the process of Europeanization. The following discussion proceeds to answer the question by making the argument for the political nature of civic initiatives. The discourse of social change together with assigning meaning to the activities of civic initiatives also provides a horizon for the construction of particular subjectivities. Construction –

deconstruction dynamics are essentially political moves which as politics of des/identification (Newman, 2005), and politics of inclusion (Young, 2000) are re-working the Bulgarian social milieu. Within their aim of reactivating stagnant social relations, these organisations are animating the citizens' political qualities. These can never disappear in a discursive social ontology. The political can never be eradicated from the social; it can only be subdued in the guise of stagnant social relations and re-emerge in the constituent moments of the foundation of the social. Civic initiatives' technologies of empowerment in questioning the status quo of sociality in Bulgaria represent these acts of institution of the social. Therefore, their agency is directed towards the construction of political subjectivities. Further, the vision of sociality as multiple and moving alludes to the shape of reconstructing social relations in the direction of the democratic pluralism. Consequently, civic initiatives are contributing to substantiating the principles of liberty and equality, and hence to the meaning of civil society. By enacting civil society in practice they are constitutive of Europeanization.

10.3.1. Politics of des/identification

The salience of the deconstructive-constructive work of civic initiatives lies in their social focus. The described technologies of empowerment presume the constitution of power of the citizen not as something to be done *to* people, but as "the radical enactment of something that did not exist before" (Negri, 1998: 43), as done *by* people (my emphasis). This statement implies two assumptions. First, it suggests that any constitution is dependent on the idea of contestation; and, second, that construction of the citizen as actor builds on the recognition that subjects are not 'something given, something already there' prior to society, which Dewey (1920) argued[164]. Further, it implies that subjects are constituted in discourses, hence in action (Laclau and Mouffe, 1990: 30). In particular, subjects emerge through acts of identification and/ or dis-identification (Newman, 2005). These two presuppositions inform the dialectical aspect of the social work of civic initiatives which finds expression in the deconstruction dynamics. The latter, through the reversion of extant symbols of power contested the knowledge claims of the extant discourse of passivity. As modes of intervention,

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[164] Dewey (1920) criticizes classical liberalism for conceiving of individuals 'something given, something already there' prior to society and for viewing social institutions for coordinating the individuals of pre-social individuals. Instead, he argues, social institutions are 'not means for obtaining something for individuals. They are means for creating individuals"

disruption, transformation and resistance to the *status quo*, deconstruction enables a dis-identification of the subject, where the subject "no longer identifies with his 'natural' place of subordination within this order", thus constituting a new subjectivity (Rancière, 1999: 36).

Moreover, the construction of *Homo Civicus* as empowerment through education and socialisation dynamics leads to the development of democratic symbolism. The linguistic tropes of independence, self-reliance, difference and connectivity enshrined in the counter-discourse of civic initiatives act as codes of identification, thereby enabling the transformation of subjectification. From this perspective, we could argue that the movements centered on cultivating cultural and social capital are essentially movements of democratisation[165]. They encourage the reconfiguration of social relations along the lines of liberty and equality. Cultural capital assists in the development of civic culture through increasing political competence and the development of civic capacities. Dewey (1916) saw education as "the best vehicle through which to change society". His view is underpinned by his

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[165] Democratization dynamics are linked to the type of culture to be found in the country (Gill, 2000). Almond and Verba's (1965) studies saw a link between a 'civic culture' and democratic forms. The link between education and changes in values and perspectives are important in democratic system.

idea of democratic liberty, emphasizing personal growth, a type of individual development that can only occur as we contribute our special skills to a common cause (Fishman, 2012: 231). Education as the "opportunity to gain enlightened understanding of public matters" is incorporated in Dahl's (1989) definition of democracy too. According to him, civic education does not need to be confined to formal schooling. He argued for independent associations as opportunities for discussion, deliberation and the acquisition of political skills (1989: 98). The educative work of civic initiatives facilitates increasing independence of the individual, which allows for and guarantees the singularity of each individual[166]. It maximizes freedom of the individual through furnishing her/him with capabilities, hence assuring citizens' role as an active agent capable of constructing the social world.

The contribution to the development of civil society consists in stimulating individual interaction. Freedom and equality however, are mutually dependent. As a democratic principle, "liberty must take place in the context of liberty for all" argues Derrida (in Mattheus, 2013). The socialisation work of civic initiatives avoids a "disembodied" vision of the citizen and instead proposes the concept

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[166] Freedom is a question of each individual's singularity (Derrida in Mattheus,201 3)

of the citizen as saturated with *difference.* In forging relations across the social space as a remedy to social fragmentation, civic initiatives are also problematising sameness and prioritising multiplicity. These considerations are fused into the events and activities civic initiatives organise. A concrete example of activities linked with a vision of community as multiple is the big social event "Empatheast" organised yearly by *Factory of Ideas*. It is aimed at social innovations developed and implemented by the community. In 2015, the main theme was services for people with impaired hearing. With the aim of remedying the current situation, an online platform for gesture translation and translation from speaking to text was developed in order to help the social inclusion of people from the 'silent community'. Civic initiatives' efforts towards socialisation through the reworking of social relations in the direction of activity (liberty) and multiplicity (equality) can be analysed as the politics of justice (Young, 2000).

10.3.2. Politics of justice as distribution: educating the singular Self

The educative work of civic initiatives addresses restructuring social relations along equality lines. In cultivating cultural capital they are engaging in a politics of distribution of resources to ensure that all

people are equally and adequately qualified to participate on an equal footing with others in social and political life. However, working towards attaining civic culture does not exhaust their political role. The emphasis on cultivating capabilities to increase human functionings stems from their knowledge of vulnerabilities experienced by social groups, based on gender, age, ethnicity and abilities. Informed by the social conditions and disparities stemming from them, their approach surpasses the limitations of civic culture[167]. Against the "undifferentiated" conception of equality (Keane,1988: 12), obliterating the obstacles in front of individuals which prevent them from appropriating educational resources and converting them to functionings, civic initiatives adopt a pluralist or a strong principle of equality. According to Dahl (1989), it implies a recognition of the equal intrinsic worth of human beings. Therefore, the educational work of civic initiatives aims at the emancipation of those who are marginalised, excluded and oppressed[168]. They engage in a politics of justice (Young, 1990), intended at redressing marginalisation as "a systemic removal of a social group from the

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[167] Civic culture ignores the inequalities in social and economic life (Patteman, 1989: 78). Thus, it reiterates a central argument against liberalism in the literature, namely that its focus on "merely" political equalities overlooks or even encourages gross inequalities in social and economic life" (Philips, 2006:171).

[168] Iris Young (1990) differentiates five main aspects of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Marginalisation refers to the systemic removal of a social group from the mainstream of everyday life, and includes material disadvantages, exclusion from the division of labor, institutional segregation and denial of citizenship rights" (Young,1990: 7-9).

mainstream of everyday life" (Young, 1990: 7). Their work thus implies a politics of redistribution, and the recognition of marginalisation as a form of injustice essentially working under the guise of misrecognition and maldistribution (Fraser, 2000; 2005).

The educative approach civic initiatives display/adopt reflects individual and group differences. Youth constitutes a specific focus of the educational work of the majority of civic initiatives. The organisations are strong advocates for the development of policies aimed at youth inclusion. Moreover, they stress the need for the practical engagement of youth in social work as the antidote to widespread unemployment among this group. They work towards inclusion of youth through providing services aimed at enhancing their capabilities. Thus, the majority of them offer programmes and training to young people with the purpose of facilitating their employability. Together with the development of special skills for the market, civic initiatives work in the direction of the promotion of civic knowledge. Their centres are spaces for networking among peers, for sharing and debating issues, for consolidating a "youth voice".

Bulgaria's youth is, needless to say, not a homogenous group. The education of youth is tailored to the specific social conditions and

inequalities that these generate. Thus, the educative work of Roma organisations reflects the specific difficulties that community experiences in Bulgaria[169]. Due to financial hardship and lack of motivation, the organisation actively tries to ensure children don't quit school and keep attending regularly. The aim of educating the community is to "show them the different side of the coin, to wake them up".

Education is aimed at expanding possibilities. Thus, their activities aim "to show this brother Roma that when he educates himself, he acquires the right to choose. He can leave the status quo, the ghetto that somebody imposed on him. And then to see that there is a different way of life… with the education he got." The activities of *RE-ACT* include educational work with regard to young offenders and the trauma experienced by this group. The educational approach of the organisation reflects the awareness of their vulnerability. In the words of my interviewee: "Most of these kids come from dysfunctional families and have experienced neglect and in some cases violence since early childhood. We, unlike the state rehabilitation schools, approach them with care. Our programmes

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[169] The EU Commission (2018:30) Report highlights the Roma and students with lower socio-economic status to have difficulties in accessing quality, inclusive education; thus, despite the positive initiatives of the BG Government in this regard, effective measures to improve school retention have not been developed yet. Also, Roma Community constitutes the majority of the unemployed in the country

aim to teach them skills so they can go back to society as a 'fully-fledged' citizen."

Other organisations such as *Karin Dom, Usmivka, Ravnovesie, Hamalogica* have devised educational programs specifically for youths with physical and /or mental impairment. In fact, the majority of organisations include educative work targeting the disadvantages associated with disability. The design and structure of educative programs are directed towards expanding the functionings of peoples' impairment. A functioning, as the theorists of the Capability Approach defined it relates to the active realization of one or more capabilities. "Functionings, argues Nussbaum (2011: 25) are beings and doings that are the outgrowths or realization of capabilities". While educational services are cultivating skills to cope with the condition, the general approach acknowledges "that certain impairments preclude valuable experiences, does not mean that they make life less rich or valuable overall" (Wasserman, 2001). From this perspective, rehabilitation is not an attempt to fit the normativity exercised by the official medical discourse of social regulation of the body. It is an approach based on the recognition of their different abilities and, thus, as capable of participating on a par with the rest as full and equal members of society. The people working with this

community express recognition of "the vivid imagination of the child in the classroom, who would not follow the structured rhythm of the class...it is recognition of the different skills "not like the normative one, that we all have to have". These words belong to Sylvia reflecting her work with children with dyslexia. She further adds that: "As a matter of fact, children with dyslexia have a higher IQ, they are more curious and inquisitive".

The dance initiative *NEON* engages in educative activities aimed at increasing the internal capabilities of individuals with impairment. Jana, the choreographer of the performance "Celebrate" (the body), firmly believes in the need for appreciation of the different potentialities of people with some form of impairment. She argues for the importance of encouraging this group of people because the experiences of their bodies ought not and should not preclude them from doing artistic work: "I want to make them take part in the performance, to make them think, to engage them. But at this stage this is extremely difficult, as very often when I mention thinking, they reply 'but, we cannot think'. This is shocking – as if they refuse to try. And this is due to the system, because they are left to become like this. I want to see a similar body moving; I believe it can do many things - just they don't know this yet. At this stage I don't know it

either, but I know it can. I have seen performances by people with disabilities and know how far we can go. They can be actors too, but in Bulgaria this is still different".

The educative work of civic initatives as a form redistribution of resources also resonates with the subjective personal experience of impairment. Thus, their activities, together with providing the material support to correct disadvantages of the lived body, are also addressing the relativist experience of "socially internalised norms on the relative standing of social actors" (Fraser, 2009: 113). They observe the enormous difficulties people with disabilities have to express themselves, to believe in their potential. Individuals committed to working with people with forms of disability acknowledge the importance of "helping them fight for their self-esteem. They need to know (children with dyslexia) that they process information differently and have many other advantages". Janaaslo stresses the work her team does to help redressing internalised perceptions: "*Movement, even when examined as working body dynamics, is often to a great extent, linked with personal expression. Movement somehow provokes many issues. Bodywork is interconnected with mental work. They (people with disabilities) at a very base level have huge problems establishing a contact, to cross*

over this space to the other; to claim themselves (their existence). They are so self-enclosed that they cannot make contact even when shaking hands... So I had a session where we worked only on meeting a person, a stranger. I gave them physical tasks to shake hands, ...the physical starts with eye contact, that to meet a person is to look in the eyes and the shaking of hands follows. Then we move to next level, that is to hug someone you don't know..."

Initiatives provide education addressing issues associated with women's' specific conditions too. A key priority of *Amalipe*'s work with women is health. For women from the Muslim community who don't dare visit a gynaecologist, the organisation prepares health questionnaires every 6 months, organises focus-group discussions with them, and, if necessary, visits the family or engages in personal conversations about "how to get rid of this burden, what they can do about it." My interviewee shared that "working with women is somehow harder, as it is a matter of deeply-engrained, unspoken attitudes that women live by" and that they are "disturbing this one way, the linear model they live in... because she isn't able to see anything else but this*". PULS*' work with women focuses on education about human rights and gender violence; they are also informing women about the possibilities of institutional support and

real assistance during crises in the shelters they provide. *The Association of Refugee Women* targets the community of migrant women. They provide "practical civic education", meaning delivering courses on Bulgarian language, information about Bulgarian health services and administration. They are also very active in bringing women from different ethnic backgrounds together in seminars, lectures and fun activities.

10.3.3. Politics of justice as recognition: educating the wider community

The redistribution of resources is only one side of redressing injustice. Equality research has shown that in focusing on the symptoms of material or educational disadvantages, distributive justice ignores the underlying structural causes, namely oppressive and exploitative economic, social and political relationships among groups (Williams, 2001). The social conditions of marginalisation are strongly voiced in disability research where impairment is seen as "simultaneously and ontologically both personal and public" (Wiliams, 2001). Civic initiatives' politics of recognition are targeting the social production of devaluation. They aim to reverse the social response to difference by educating the wider community. According

to Young (2000: 115) claims of inclusion are grounded in assumptions of difference as a political resource. Thus, the politics of inclusion involve maximising "the social knowledge available to a democratic public, such that citizens are more likely to make just and wise decisions." Civic initiatives working with vulnerable groups based on ethnicity, ability and gender conduct significant work on educating the corresponding professional community and wider society. All initiatives interviewed reported this double focus of education. While they provide services, i.e., resources for redressing marginalisation as personal capabilities, they also conduct work as "therapy on the society" in their function of rectifying misrecognition.

Karin Dom incorporates the two dimensions of education in their work: one is services for children with mental and/or physical impairment; the other is education for the wider community. While they provide education for the family and the child's siblings, they are also strongly involved in transmitting information, in sharing know-how with the medical community, with social services and the assistants to families with Down's syndrome children. Consulting the teaching community is also part of their educational activity. It is important to teach the educators because "it is important that the

teacher knows what kind of abilities the child has, what she/he can do so they know how to approach the child, and how to react to certain behaviour." *Single Step* has espoused the difficult work of supporting the LGBT Community, to advocate for their representation in society. This task also boils down to cultivating the knowledge foundations of the social as receptive rather than discriminating. The educative challenge of ethnic groups is not less demanding. Their therapy on the social is also happening at many levels and with many actors involved. *Amalipe* explains that: "with social workers and teachers we employ good practices, seminars, forums at which we aim to show, to prove that Roma are not a "pest". Educating the social also includes education of state actors. Genika is on the opinion that "the perfect way is for things to take place at many levels. It doesn't matter how hard it is; as close as you are to people while drinking your lemonade in Stolipinovo[170], in the same way there should be work done on the political level. Even the politicians should be educated by such people, and by such initiatives, because regardless if we want them or not, they are present in the (social) space and we cannot ignore them. Whether we like their actions or not, we cannot disregard them."

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[170] The biggest Roma ghetto in Bulgaria (on the Balkan peninsula as my interviewee claimed), near the town of Plovdiv

10.3.4. Negotiation of Sociality through Spatiality

"The secret to maximising democratic liberty requires the maximisation of complex equality among citizens" argues Keane (1988: 13). The work of the politics of inclusion as redressing maldistribution and misrecognition ultimately touches upon the configuration of social relations. Scholars have stressed that subjectification as a formative power of the self (Foucault, 1977) as well as social relationships (Weber,1920) arises out of social interaction. The socialization of individuals into democratic orientations (liberty and equality) requires the establishment of social relations of cooperativeness and social trust. According to Almond and Verba these are "essential components of the civic culture" and are developed in social interaction (1989: 490). As political action, this demands arduous work upon oneself and 'the other' (Soja,1996: 118). Civic initiatives deploy the dynamics of experiencing oneself and 'the other' differently through the metaphor of space. Space as a category is "colonised by social activity" (Soja, 1996: 118) and carries strong political connotations. These, according to Massey, are based on the assumption that "space is relational, and we must understand it as the sphere of the

possibility of the existence of multiplicity, the sphere in which distinct social trajectories coexist". It is, therefore, the dimension that obliges us to think how to live together, how to build a democracy based on respect for the other (Massey, 2012: 7).

People act within space on the basis of the spatial ideas they acquire through socialization (Soja, 1996). The spatial morphology of socialisation of civic initiatives consists in devising social practices as "spaces of appearances". According to Judith Butler's interpretation of Hannah Arendt's argument on political action, "the space of appearance is a space which is not tied to location, but it is the alliance of people acting and speaking together". Their activities stimulate interaction, as a result of which the subject becomes established in reality. Subjectification is premised on self–disclosure which is only possible in the presence of the other. People appear as subjects solely through being recognized by the other. Thus, Genika reflects on the missing voice of the Roma, and its significance for the appearance of the community: "*For me it is very significant that the voice of these people (living in Stolipinovo) is not present in our world. Or is present in a horrible way. Very often it is coloured in the most horrible, negative hues in the media. In reality, we have no knowledge about what the people living there are like, what their problems are,*

their dreams… If there are problems in our society stemming from them, where do they come from and why? What are their roots?

The topology of spaces of appearance as employed in the civic initiatives' work transgresses verbal interaction and includes appearance as visibility. This resonates with Butler's articulation of Arendt's thought whereby she integrates the body as the site of convergence of linguistic and non-linguistic forms of agency. Civic initiatves open spaces of appearance in their practices through their efforts of cultivating cultural and social capital. Rather than a singular public, their activities recognise the co-existence of multiple publics. Their projects call for the mingling of different people. The events they organise are aimed at establishing connectivity between different clusters of population, not as repressing or rehabilitating difference but as creating opportunities of communication and hence of asserting different singularities. In the words of *Multi-culti*: "*We organise many cultural-culinary events and we noticed that there are many people who own foreign restaurants, over 20 in Sofia. We have very strong communications, many media partners and through them we work for their economic integration. The foreigners are not a "letter with no sound", and thus the beneficiaries of some policies. Thanks to our work, they are starting to initiate their own projects*". In

the work of *Factory of Ideas*, the intermingling of separate categories or clusters of population gained prominence in the project "Residence Granny". Devised to establish intergenerational connectivity, in the words of one of the volunteers: "You know, what they (the factory) did with 'Residence Granny' is something superb: to socialise elderly people and at the same time to encourage the engagement of children labelled as deficient is a great thing. It was like a meeting between generations." *Roma Coppersmith* emphasises the 'community as multiple' they are working towards: "*We are not communicating only with Roma; we have a lot of Bulgarian, Turkish, Armenian friends. So we are not a closed organisation/community and we don't get together with these people only to work; we mingle (converse) with everyone regardless who they are. The important thing is to be active, to work, to work together. Being from a different ethnos is not important.*"

The spatial movement of invisibility to visibility allows for creating an image of community as *open,* thus challenging segregation and racialisation processes. A volunteer working with the Roma community in Stolipinovo comments on the impact of segregation as creating ghettos as a state of exception[171]: "Ghettoes are lawless

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[171] The state of exception as originally developed by Carl Schmitt is further extended to bio-politics by Giorgio Agamben (1998; 2005) and refers to situations of suspension of the law; the

places. For example, Bulgarians go there to sell drugs, because these are Duty Free. The politicians' idea is more like: 'As long as you don't do it outside the ghetto there isn't a problem...do whatever you wish to...'". The work of civic initiatives then is to support the visibility of different social groups, as expressed by Philip, the founder of *Roma Coppersmiths*: "When we organise an event we invite representatives of all ethnic communities; this way we become somehow closer... our volunteers get to know the Turkish community, their rituals, culture, and then we invite them ... this way things get smooth, easy ... we must reciprocally involve each other in the participation in different initiatives."

Spaces of visibility emerge through their recourse to work as modality of agency. In convening people around practical, goal-oriented tasks, such as arts & crafts, theatrical performances etc., civic initatives enable transgressing the existential fear of the Other spelled out by Sartre[172]. They assert the potential of visibility as a way of redressing preconceptions and prejudices. Philip acknowledges that "There are prejudices, of course; we cannot claim that we can eradicate all this, but there is a change in the attitude

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most quoted case is "suspending" human rights with regard to categories of people as a natural quality of state sovereignty

[172] In his play "Huit-clos" (1944) or "Closed Doors" Jean -Paul Sartre exclaims "L'enfer c'est les autres" or "Hell is others", as reference to his idea on perpetual ontological struggle of being caused to see oneself as an object from the view of another.

towards the (Roma) Community; when we are out on the streets, organising events, they conceive of us differently; when you say 'the association' the whole town has a positive attitude towards it". Direct, unmediated (immediate) experience of Otherness, made possible by the physical proximity of work, has been shown to reduce prejudices and stereotypes and stimulate development of trust and cooperation (Estlund, 2000 in Boyte, 2011). Civic organisations, in creating workshops and events make 'the Other' visible and potentially enable socialisation into democratic equality. Unlike socially imposed, i.e. top-down approaches, stimulating equality hierarchically, civic initiatives support socialisation into equality through egalitarian modes. Space conceived as the reworking of sociality makes it possible to converge (reunite) subjectification processes with civic consequences. Enabling movement from invisibility to visibility corresponds to the movement from private to public. Making 'the other' appear is conducive to establishing the social relations of trust. Similar moves enable the consolidation of citizen power and hence "acting together in concert". The political activity of civic initiatives then culminates in cultivating the social foundations of civil society. Their activities are enacting solidarity as the secular and universal social bond that

holds together human beings regardless of existing differences, which Eder (2009: 24) has highlighted. Nurturing the discursive trope of responsibility in constituting social relations of equality and diversity, civic initiatives are developing civil society *in praxis.* They are articulating democracy not as governed by technical rules but as performative (Matinya, 2009)[173].

10.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the political dynamics in the construction of the discourse of social change. The political transformation civic initiatives induce is in the realm of social relations analysed as constructive-deconstructive moves integrated in the metaphor of the technologies of empowerment. The deconstruction aspect involved disempowerment of the symbolic power of the sources of powerlessness of Bulgarian citizens identified in the operation of the logic of dependency and the logic of mistrust. As socialized subjectivity they were inculcated during the communist period and continue to regulate social interaction (as weak) and frame social relations (as fragmented). The deconstructive moves of civic

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[173] Elzbieta Matinya (2009) coins this term with regard to the collapse of Communism in 1989. She employs it to stress that it did not happen overnight but through gradual societal work that had led to the emergence of democratic politics in Central Europe. Performative democracy refers to "a broad spectrum of performative initiatives - cultural, social and political as forms of civic agency or "indigenously inspired enacting of democracy by citizens"

initiatives are disrupting the authoritative modes of thought in the conceptual vocabulary of the social institutions of education and media, as carriers of the two logics.

Empowerment also included construction dynamics. Constitution of the power of the citizen involves production of a counter discourse summed up in the image of *Homos Civicus*. The constructive dynamics are rendered with the concepts of cultural and social capital and realised through the medium of education and socialization respectively. Cultural capital is conducive to the emergence of civic culture because it works to produce competent citizen and the congruent individual attitudes and behaviour. Social capital contributes to reinstating connectivity among citizens by promoting of networking as possibilities for socialization.

The deconstructive and constructive moves are finally analysed as political acts. As politics of dis /identification and politics of inclusion, they are working to re-activate the social by fostering the development of politically conscious social agents. In reworking social relations in the direction of liberty and equality they are contributing to the development of civil society and thus to Europeanisation.

Chapter XI: Conclusion

This study aimed to answer how civic initiatives are constituted and constitutive for the process of Europeanization in Bulgaria. The research question was approached through three sub-questions, which the three parts of the dissertation addressed. These were: a) what is the meaning of Europeanization?, b) what is the discourse of civic initiatives and how it is constructed?, and c) how civic initiatives contribute to the development of civic society in Bulgaria? The main argument developed in the study suggests that civic initiatives are engaged in democratic politics through reconstruction of social relations. Against the state discourse of economic liberalism their agency enacts the egalitarian trust of democratic politics.

The reflexive link implied in the question was studied through a sociological perspective and a case study methodology. A sociological account oriented the inquiry towards examining Europeanization as a social process, thus refining the methodological choice to explore civic initiatives as a case study of Europeanization from below. Within this research design the question was answered through two analytical moves. It included a theoretical line of inquiry and domain

specific one as interlinked. Elaborating on their connection has been considered essential for answering the research question. Therefore, the contribution of the study to academic knowledge is envisaged on both layers, i.e. in developing a theoretical account of Europeanization as a field of discursivity, and in exploring the role of civic initiatives for the advancement of European integration in Bulgaria.

The thesis accommodates a significant theoretical dimension. Theory provides the logic, the concepts and hence the criteria of validity of the research. Within political science as the main domain of research, Europeanization has been described as a process of change in a member state of the EU and has been defined with the notions of impact and causality. Further, while political science outlines the properties the concept as dynamic and relational the focus it places on impact is on institutional adaptation, while causality is measured mainly through transposition of policies. From the sociological approach adopted, the study chose discourse as the vehicle through which to examine the social impact of Europeanization and the causal link with civic initiatives. Following political discourse theory (PDT) and its recourse to the post structural intellectual tradition,

discourse was defined with Wittgenstein's expression "language games". Unlike usages of discourse as speech, narrative (*parole*) this definition integrates and hence relies on the properties of language as "symbolic systems and codes of signification invoked in the production of meaning". It thus reflects the semiological principle of difference in meaning construction and alludes to the relativist logic of language. In emphasizing meaning and its unfixed, temporal and open to contestation qualities this definition accentuates on both, the semantic and the pragmatic aspects of discourse. Also unlike frequent use of discourse in Europeanization research as 'discourse analysis', discourse as language games is an ontological category. An understanding of social reality as discourse has enabled theorizing the social world and its processes as symbolic, as carriers of knowledge and coming into being via process of meaning production, hence through action (practices). The post structuralist understanding of discourse as interweaving meaning and practice is premised on its radical constructivist epistemology. The materialism of radical constructivist's position while recognizing the existence of the real, i.e. objective world argues for its gaining meaning solely through discourse. This implies a rejection of the possibility of extra

discursive, independent existence of practices. The practices of civic initiatives are constituted by and constitutive for discourse.

This theoretical reasoning provides for answering the research question at two levels. At the level of causality, discourse allowed for answering the foundational or theoretical puzzle on the constituted and constitutive nature of human interaction. Based on the differential logic of language the radical constructivist epistemology of discourse enabled theorizing causality implied in the process of Europeanization as circular. The study engaged in a theoretical exploration of Europeanization as a field of discursivity, hence as a field of signification. As a process of knowledge, Europeanization denotes a "reservoir or surplus of meaning" which suggests that it does not advance one particular understanding of the process, but instead different types and variations of knowledge. Adopting discourse as a theoretical tool allowed for a critical approach to Europeanization. Discourse discredited essentialist and normative understanding of its meaning which had informed a prevailing understanding of Europe's impact as "one size fits all". Conceptualizing Europeanization as discursive advanced the position of the non-equivocal nature of the European project of

liberal democracy and hence, of its contextual and inherently contested nature. Moreover, discourse also accounted for the dynamics of change implied in causality. As meaning is always in flux, a certain discourse's knowledge is a momentum of fixation of the play of its elements; within the wider social world it gains dominance, i.e. hegemony until its cognitive scripts are articulated by social actors from within their different contextual positioning within discourse. The empirical findings on the role of civic initiatives in Bulgaria supply evidence to the role of social actors for the realization of the democratic ideal.

Methodologically, as constitutive causality discourse allowed for exploring the causal link implicit in Europeanization through disclosure of landscapes of meaning. As a field of discursivity, Europeanization exhibits structural properties, which are contained within the cognitive scripts of liberal democracy as associated with the idea of Europe. These are not located in a pre-given identity, but are knowledge constituted in action. Civic initiatives as social acts are embedded in the discursive logic of process. They appear in the context of Bulgaria as discursive practices within Europeanization, thus as articulations of its cognitive scripts. The case study

illuminates on the layers of meanings in the discourse of civic initiatives, which it renders intelligible through theoretical concepts. The latter provide the validity for the findings about the social implications of the discourse of civic initiatives.

This theoretical thinking was integrated into answering the substantial question. Discourse as semantics (the semantic aspect of discourse) was explored in order to capture a particular meaning implied in Europeanization and that carried by civic initiatives. It covered the impact dimension of Europeanization, which within the context of Bulgaria has been rendered with the notion of democratization. Democracy building has been the kernel of the EU political projects and a driving force behind the EU enlargement process. Together as being the constitutive element laid down in the EU constitutional treaty, framing the EU role as promoting democracy has also been suggested by the local context of the state ascending to EU membership. In the Bulgarian context of post-communism democratization implied rebuilding the discredited state and social institutions. This followed the logic of consequences implied in political conditionality as the main mechanisms of democratization. The institutional focus of the transformation

reduced the immense political significance of the EU to checks and balances in the process of rule transfers from the EU and the CEE states' adaptation to policies. Consequently, Europeanisation took the shape as "largely shallow, giving rise to formalistic, short-term and technocratic reforms rather than sustainable and transformative domestic change" as Börzel (2011: 13) has argued. These insights provided the rational behind the domain specific layer of the research question. The study pursued to answer how civic initiatives are constituted by the EU discourse of liberal democracy and how they are constitutive for it. Within the perspective of sociology it initiated an inquiry in the citizen or bottom up dimension of Europeanization. The substantial question was addressed methodologically through two sub-questions. First it proceeded through investigating what is the discourse of civic initiatives in order to answer how they are constituted. Second, their constitutiveness to Europeanization was inquired though answering how they contribute to the development of civil society in Bulgaria. The research argues for the potential of civic initiatives for substantiating active civil society in Bulgaria by reconstructing social relations in accordance with the principles of plurality and individuality.

How are civic initiatives constituted?

The first part of the question addressed the problem with their constitutive nature. The constituted aspect of civic initiatives is argued on the basis of the discourse of social change, which they construct. As discursive practices of Europeanization civic initiatives are articulating the liberal democratic script of the EU political project. The discourse of social change (as knowledge and practice) is informed by the semantics of active citizens that liberal democracy carries. They are simultaneously re articulating the script from their particular contextual and positional standpoint. They are fixing the meaning of the empty signifier of democracy from within their location at the grass roots in a Bulgarian social and historically loaded context. The script of the discourse of social change rendered with the metaphor moving and multiplying people is analysed as re articulation of democracy within the ambit of new liberals and by relying on John Dewey's understanding of democracy.

This conclusion was reached through iterative and investigative inquiry, which enabled disclosing layers of meaning that construe the experience of civic initiatives. The descriptive phase involved thematic analysis, which captured the surface layer of meaning and

proceeded through conceptual mapping of raw data gathered from interviews and documents. The interpretative phase of the analysis drew on semiotic analysis of the codes of signification involved in the production of meaning of the discourse of social change and subsequent theortisation to illuminate the problems that inform the work of civic initiatives. As a field of signification the discourse of social change constitutes meaning through the interplay between the signifier rendered with the image of happy life and the signified expressed with the notion of movement as the image's referent. Movement emerged as a main theme in data and the analysis investigated how its meaning is created and communicated. Two layers of signification of movement were outlined, namely literal and figurative. In literal sense, movement points to the perceived need to act, to move, to participate in social life which civic initiatives postulate. They form as organisations and design projects in order to do work. Still within literal connotations, movement also underscores their drive to innovation underpinning their approaches to action but as also innovation as the ethos permeating action. In a figurative sense, movement has been interpreted as a discursive trope serving to bridge at the level of semantics the

current state of social reality to a vision which civic initiatives embrace.

Within semiotic analysis the signified movement denotes the mental concept to which the signifier "happy life" refers to. Movement contains the knowledge claims or resources, which inform the knowledge and practices of the cognitive script of the discourse of social change. Based on thematic analysis three cognitive resources implied in movement were identified. These were: a) social positionality, i.e. the grass root or social knowledge of civic initiatives, b) emotionality, or the personal feelings that underpin participants' motivation for engagement, and c) spatiality, which covered the symbolic dimension of their drive for action. These (knowledge claims) were analysed as 'movement within', 'movement against' and 'movement towards' and were argued to be "animated by the democratic spirit" as envisioned by Dewey. As stock of knowledge embodied in the cognitive script of discourse, movement displays Dewey's understanding of democracy as a way of life.

a)   Implied in the expression 'movement from within' is the social intelligence of civic initiatives. Their social positioning at the grass

roots informs their knowledge and social power as Dewey argued. Their location from within the social determines their knowledge as organic and it is where their advantages reside. Being immersed in the fabric of everyday life allows civic initiatives to tune into human relationships, to 'hear' problems undetectable to institutional lens. A central claim that their voice from within expressed was the idea of deficiency conveyed with the metaphor 'missing people'. Further, they come to existence with the aim to respond to individual's problems. In a Deweyan fashion they engage in inquiry of the social rooting of personal vulnerabilities. Analysed with Mills' idiom as 'personal troubles and public issues' the social focus of their engagement with individual problems underlines the democratic script of the discourse or social change and runs through the social causes they frame.

b) The emotional resources were presented with the figure of 'movement away'. They covered a spectrum of feelings of dissonance as an ontological condition, of expressing discord between an indicative and a subjunctive mode of existence. Individuals' motivation for designing civic initiatives and participating in specific projects was expressed in a complex language carrying heavy aspirational overtones. These ranged from the impetus for personal

fulfilment, from having passion for doing something meaningful to language expressing discontent, resentment, indignation. The latter were echoing as a referent to the existing disfunctioning form of political governance in the predominant democratic discourse of Bulgaria. The emotional resources inhere the democratic symbolism for they emerge as a critical vibration, as a "scream of refusal to accept" and hence to oppose the common inertness of Bulgarian society.

c)   The third cognitive thread informing the mental concept of movement is that of spatiality. Rendered with the metaphor "glocal" 'movement towards' contains the symbolic resources as infused with global-local syncretism. The global blueprints of the discourse of social change emerged in the theme of human rights and the fundamental principles of anti-discrimination, and individual's social and political rights (social individual freedoms to act (speak, travel, learn, participate in social and political life) that data contained. Although highlighted as global universal values these were simultaneously associated with the themes of Europe as an example of cultural diversity, thus recognizing simultaneously human unity and diversity. Europe also appeared as the possibility of choice, of knowledge. Moreover, as claimed by Dewey that the democratic ideal

of human rights is a demand to be realized, civic initiatives associate Europe with the warrant for the enactment and protection of human rights in Bulgaria. Europe however is seen as dynamic, and hence in a constant state of development. The local input is crucial for a particular meaning of Europe to get fixed. Civic initiatives articulate the democratic symbols of human rights in the light of local resources. They engage in translating the principles in vernacular language, but also draw on locally "grown" democratic practices. 'Movement towards' reveals the democratic ethos of civic initiatives. It embodies the script of human rights as enmeshed with local practices as sources of inspiration.

The democratic ethos of civic initiatives informs the image of social change they create. This image is analysed through the code of happy life as the signifier of the discourse of social change. Happy life as signifier relates to the knowledge claims elaborated with the notion of movement. It also points to a particular vision of social world and to the foundations on which it is formed. These are expressed with the metaphor "moving and multiplying people". Implied in the metaphor is a vision of a community as an actively engaged citizen. The world as constituted by the citizen they dream of is one

expressed with linguistic tropes of togetherness and solidarity. The social participatory ideal they embrace elucidates the bottom up vision of the democracy and is described with Dewey's understanding of democracy as a mode of associated living. Moreover, their function as visionaries is not restricted to the imaginative and abstract aspect of discourse. The social magic of civic initiatives is found in their constituting the meaning of discourse in action. The discursive agency of civic initiatives is realizing the democratic ideal through enacting the cognitive script in practice. Civic initiatives prefigure the image of "moving and multiplying people" performatively. They assert that social is to be innovated and the way to do is through using innovative approaches. Two lines of action have been suggested, which incorporate a large concept of agency congruent to a large view of the citizen. First, civic initiatives prefigure social change innovatively through introducing change in language rhetoric thus proposing a linguistic shift from participation to engagement. The second change is considered in the modality of agency. The tools civic initiatives employ are a wide range of creative practices incorporating the element of play. Posing the citizen as 'fabricator' of the social world civic initiatives embrace culture and the tools of arts as expressive of the creative potentiality

of individuals. They are passion driven and play oriented. Following Dewey's belief in the agency of ordinary individuals, the tools have been argued as a means of creative democracy. The study suggested that in light of the symbolic system and practices the democratic sensibility of the script "moving and multiplying people" can be considered as organic democracy. Finally, the discourse of social change as an articulation of the discourse of liberal democracy challenges the existing status quo of social dynamics of apathy towards social action and retreat into the personal sphere instilled with the communism social engineering and energized by the official rhetoric of neo-liberalism. Against the prevalence of economic liberalism which the latter embraces, the discourse of social change of civic initiatives endorses the liberal ideals of individuality and tolerance, of singularity and pluralism.

How are they constitutive?

The discourse of social change introduces a new language of democracy in the Bulgarian social world. It carries a new grammar of conduct organised around the new moral codes of connectedness, togetherness and movement. The morphology of this democratic

language outlined the structure of democracy as happy life expressed with the metaphor moving and multiplying people as the constituents of its sociality. Civic initiatives also take on a role in creating the syntax where they facilitate the arrangement of these linguistic tropes in a well-connected, organic, bottom up experiences. Together with the script civic initiatives constitute the public, which is demanded by the script. Represented with the metaphor *Homo Civicus*, their constitutive work is seen in building the liberal conception of the citizen. By virtue of working towards remodelling social relations along the principles of multiplicity and movement they are conducive to substantiating the civil society project in Bulgaria. These dynamics contain their contribution to promoting Europeanization, which has been concluded to reside in facilitating the embedding of the civilizational choice of democracy in the mental makeup of individuals.

This argument/conclusion was developed through focusing on the dynamics emerging in the analysis of data. In constructing the discourse of social change civic initiatives are engaging in struggles over the meaning of democracy as deployed by the dominant (state) discourse. Implicit in civic initiatives' script and performative agency is an effort to negotiate sociality in view of the democratic ethos of

citizen participation as all-pervading social ideal they postulate. The discursive dynamics were represented as technologies of empowerment and refer to the means and ends of their agency as political. As re-articulations of the European democratic script, civic initiatives embody its political dynamics. The specific acts and moves were analysed with recourse to Newman's politics of des - identification and Young' s politics of inclusion. The first captured the deconstructive dynamics while latter enclosing politics of redistribution and politics of recognition, to the constructive aspect. These dynamics allowed to argue for the image of civil society civic initiatives substantiate, not as in Tocqueville's approach on civil society as a particular separation of the social context from the political. On the contrary, as linked to the vision of democracy as associated living, the concept of civil society they encourage is one where the social and the political are mutually implicated.

Technologies of empowerment as everyday acts of politics are directed at cultivating the "local idiom". Against the scholarly analysis on Bulgarian civic society as historically lacking the political element in the social fabric, the practices of civic initiatives act to reactivate /revive the political consciousness of the Bulgarian

citizen. Although they deny the (explicit) political nature of their agency, it is claimed on the account of their aim, namely to counteract the general passivity permeating the Bulgarian social space, which they recognized with the expression "missing citizen". In the discourse of social change citizens assume centrality in the construction of the democratic social world. Technologies of empowerment are dynamics initiated from their recognition of the hindrances which obstruct/prevent people's engagement in social or matters of public concern. Empowerment then is a condition of deconstruction of powerlessness.

Their work towards citizens assuming political power evolves out/against (is predicated upon) of two logics, which are organising the "grammar of conduct" of the Bulgarian habitat. The logic of dependency and logic of mistrust have been analysed as responsible for sustaining the cultural symbols of passivity. The logic of dependency is working to prevent individuals from assuming responsibility and hence to initiate activities; and instead falling into scepticism, relying on the state and general disbelief in possibility of individual agency. The logic of mistrust while as the name suggests denotes a behavioural pattern of general distrust in collective action, in social institutions underpins the lack of socialization, of

connectedness between social actors. Joint together, inactivity and mistrust act as socialized subjectivity in Bulgarian society. Their influence has been decisive in regulating social interaction and framing social relations. These two logics are reminiscent of the long shadow of communism as organised irresponsibility, as ideological mechanism of paralysis of political action and thought.

Within the so crafted social milieu empowerment dynamics entail engaging in politics of des-identification. Civic initiatives interfere with the deep entrenchment of the symbolic violence of communism rendered with Derrida's metaphor "theatre of cruelty". Lifting the shackles on individual agency required disavowing the 'ideological logic of communism', hence the vision of the theological stage as comporting a *passive,* seated public on the one hand and the ideas of all the intellectual authorities who have created the dominant discourses, on the other. Reversing the theatre of cruelty is approached as a transformation of the emotional habitus of Bulgarian society. Civic initiatives engage with the "logicality of ideological politics" through launching a counter discourse and alternative symbolism.

The counter discourse of knowledge production rests on cultivating citizen power as agency and as collectivity. The implicit image of *Homo Civicus* as freed from the shadows of communism is apprehended as potentiality and plurality. Empowerment as constructive dynamics centers on cultivating responsibility. Following Derrida, responsibility is understood as three layers, i.e. for one own's acts, towards the other, and in front of the other. Empowerment dynamics implied in the practices of civic initiatives are explained with Bourdieu's terms cultural capital and social capital.

Civic initiatives work towards promoting civic agency. Described with the metaphor from citizen as spectator to citizen as actor this line of moves of the counter discourse covers the educative dynamics aimed at fostering cultural capital. Cultivating responsible for their own acts citizen involves reinstating the belief in the efficiency of their agency. Civic initiatives engage in educative activities in order to enhance the capabilities and skills of citizens. Together with internal efficiency education is the medium to cultivate democratic orientations. Education strengthens civic values and cultivates an attitude of care and responsibility. Educational focus of civic

initiatives practices enables people to constitute themselves as agents under new terms, taking different positions in the social space than those in which they were previously positioned. It constitutes a step further to coming close to the independent citizen as foreseen in the concept of human rights.

The second line of dynamics enshrined in *Homo Civicus* is that of plurality. In conjunction to constructing individual agency as the way of discrediting the power hold of two logics, civic initiatives practices contribute to the collective constituency of power. The section "From uniformity to plurality: the construction of the social as multiple" described dynamics of cultivating responsibility towards the other and in front of the other. The latter is approached through activities aimed at cultivating social capital. Empowerment as socialization is conducive to reverse distrust between social actors (people and in institutions alike) and to cultivate belief in collective efficacy. Civic initatives by creating networks and establishing channels of communication are embracing different social actors and perspectives. They are thus maximizing the social knowledge of individuals and are involved in politics of inclusion. Moreover, creating colourful reality is an essential move for the construction of

the social as a plural and heterogeneous place. Their work towards cultivating responsibility towards the other involves restructuring social relations along equality lines. The moves to this end enclose deconstruction of exiting polarizing tendencies in language and educational activities as politics of distribution and politics of recognition.

Civic initiatives observe the prevailing 'stigmatizing' language of categorizing people used in mass media and in educational institutions. They undertake deliberate efforts to subvert the linguistic conditions of stigma. They propose an alternative language which is steeped in linguistic codes of difference as resourcefulness. In introducing changes in conceptual vocabulary, they are disrupting the connection between an attribute and stereotype.

The educational activities as politics of redistribution are aimed at cultivating cultural capital reflecting individual differences. They manifest out of their recognition of the need to ensure that all people are equally adequately qualified as to participate on an equal footing with the others in social and political life. Further, the educative activities of civic initiatives are targeting the wider society. They are

engaging in politics of recognition for in educating the community on the benevolence of difference they are targeting the social production of devaluation of difference. Thus while civic initiatives provide services, i.e. resources for redressing marginalization as personal capabilities, they conduct work as "therapy on the society" in their function of rectifying misrecognition. Finally, for politics of distribution and recognition to take place, the existence of otherness is to be recognized and has to be acknowledged. The various practices and modalities of agency (linguistic and bodily) they employ have been analysed as mediums of negotiating sociality through the notion of space. People act within space on the basis of the spatial ideas they acquire through socialization. The spatial morphology of socialization of civic initiatives consists in devising social practices as "spaces of appearances". These are not tied to location, but as spaces of establishing reciprocity. As spaces of appearance they provide possibilities for interaction and possibilities to respond to the other.

Civil society emerges out of these multiple spaces of establishing reciprocity through people acting together. These are spaces of socialization of people into democratic relations through arduous

work upon oneself and the other. The symbolic structure of morphology together with the syntax of political action of the new language civic initiatives develop define the spaces of civic society as workshops democracy. Rearticulating the democratic script and its political dynamics yields to activation of political freedom by substantiating its cultural domain.

Studying civic initiatives as a case study of Europeanization presented a fragment of the puzzle of democratization process started in 1989. Civic initiatives in the context of Bulgaria highlight democracy as an open process. 10 years after Bulgaria's accession into the EU and 25 after the fall of communism, they continue the democratization process by carving up a mental space of possibility to catch up with the civilizational transition. The impact of Europeanization on societal change in Bulgaria is to be seen in the light of facilitating the development of socially and politically aware and therefore active citizen out of the debris of the communist devastation of individuals. In the current crisis of democracy in Europe Bulgarian citizen creative democracy is to be evaluated within the social struggle for preserving yet articulating democracy

as singular and plural. This, however, is a challenge for further research on Europeanization to explore.

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Appendix I: Invitation Letter and Informed Consent

Invitation to participate in a sociological inquiry on civic activism in relation to a PhD project "Civic Initiatives in Bulgaria: Europeanization from "below"?

Summary of the project:

Europeanization refers to the EU's impact on a state's economic, political, and socio-cultural spaces. This impact occurs at many levels and through the agency of different actors. At the level of governance and institutions, the EU impact is predominantly seen as in the transposition of EU policies and politics in domestic context, as well as in the creation of common economic markets. There are significant social dimensions of the impact too, which this project seeks to understand.

The main question it poses is how the appearance and development of civic initiatives in Bulgaria is influenced by the European norms of democracy and active civil society; and how the initiatives contribute the advancement of Europeanization. It prompts three sub-questions: a) what is the role of Europe in the development of civic activism? b) what social dynamics does civic activism point to that benefit the development of civil society? c) how does civic activism contribute to Europeanization?

From a philosophical-sociological perspective, Europeanization is studied as a discourse of Europe, understood as a construct of the

idea of the opening towards the other and action, and hence dialogue, conflict and transformation it begets. Consequently, the themes of the other and otherness, difference, and the overcoming of segregation (based on forms of difference as ethnic, gender, ability/disability, etc.) constitute some of the main areas of inquiry in studying Europeanization. The link of civic activism with Europe is considered through their relation to these themes.

How the research is to be conducted?

The research design envisages one to one interviews with two categories of individuals:

a) Organisers of civic initiatives, and b) Participants in the projects of the initiatives.

The interviews are envisaged to take approximately an hour.

Ethics of Research:

The participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw at any point with no negative consequences. The identity of participants will be kept anonymous and the data obtained is highly confidential. All information will be stored on a password protected and encrypted computer and destroyed once transcribed. The results of the research will be seen by the researcher, supervisors, and examiner and be presented in the published thesis and at relevant conferences. The transcription of the interview and a digital copy of the dissertation will be offered to the participants.

In this regard, it is my pleasure to invite you to participate in the study. Should you be interested in participating, further details regarding questions, time and venue of the meeting will be communicated to you later.

Thank you

Kind Regards

Dilyana Kiryakova–Ryan

Statement of Consent*:

I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I am aware that my anonymity will be respected and of my right to withdraw from participating at any given point with no negative consequences. I consent to take part in the study.

Signature_____   Date: _____

In addition to the agreement to participate, I also consent to having the interview recorded by audio.

Signature_____   Date: _____

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in anyway, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie
or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such

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* Signing of the informed consent is optional rather than obligatory

circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

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Appendix II: Guiding Questions

Conversation on the topic "Dimensions of Civic Activism"

A.   Questions regarding the activities of the organisation. This set of questions covers guiding ideas, motivation, goals, accomplished results

How would you define the activities that you are engaged in?

How did the idea of the organisation come about? /How did you decide to (establish) become engaged in a similar organisation? (ideas, films, books, conversations with people, personal experience)

What stopped you from taking part in already existing NGOs, and stimulated you to look for (create) other organisations (formats)?

What advantages and disadvantages do you see in your organisation?

Is there any specific aim your follow and a goal you wish your activities to accomplish?

Do you have any ideals that guide you? Any norms that you wish to see in our society? if so, can we describe them as European?

B.   Questions concerning the specific activities that a person or organisation is engaged in

1.   Inquiry into interpersonal dynamics:

The projects of your organisation engage people in common activities. Could you please comment on the interpersonal relations you have observed when people engage in your project?

The projects of your organisation are targeting specific groups of the population. What motivates you? Have you observed changes in personal attitudes when people interact with *forms of difference?*

2.   Inquiry into political implications:

Do you find your (self) organisation politically engaged?

Do you differentiate between engagement and participation?

How would you comment on the connection of your organisation and civil society in Bulgaria?

C. Questions concerning the wider context: Europe, Bulgarian society

What is the general reaction of society about your activities? (as in media coverage). Do you enjoy public support?

What motivates people to take part in your projects?

Do you see any connection with Bulgaria being a member of the EU and the appearance and developments in civic activism?

Thank you

☺

Appendix III: Civic Initiatives

See the Excel file attached

Appendix IV: Phases of Discourse Analysis

Interpretation as reconstruction of layers of meaning (Reed, 2011)

Descriptive Phase

Thematic Analysis
De-contextualization of data, (Tesch, 1990)

<u>The techniques employed</u>: conceptual mapping (Grbich, 2013); coding ideas (Creswell, 2007)

Interpretive Phase

Re-contextualization of data (Tesch,1990)

<u>The techniques employed</u>: interpretation (Reed, 2011) and problematization (Glyson et al, 2009; Howarth, 2000)
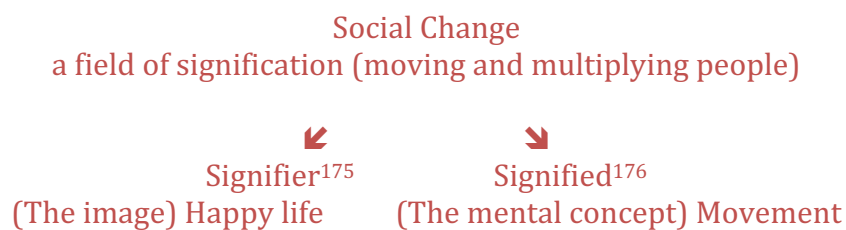
↙   ↘

Semiotic Analysis:

Structural approach to disclose how the discourse is constructed (Curtis and Curtis, 2011; Grbich, 2013; Chandler, 2007)

Theoretization (Explanation)

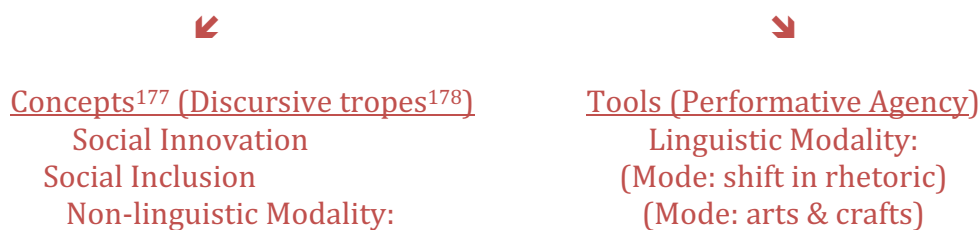Post-structuralist deconstruction to illuminate the many possibilities of meaning (Derrida, 1976; Reed,2011)

Appendix V: Graphic Outline of the Discourse of Civic Initiatives

Mapping the discourse of Social Change as Happy Life

Discourse as a field of meaning is constituted through to the relationship between the signifier and the signified[174]. It is a process of signification.

Social Change
a field of signification (moving and multiplying people)

↙   ↘

Signifier[175]   Signified[176]
(The image) Happy life   (The mental concept) Movement

The constitution of movement as the meaning conveyed by the signifier: Movement as signified in the constitution of a field of meaning of discourse of social change is premised on the predicative (i.e. the call for change) underpinning motivation, aspirations and general view of participants. Mapping the discourse of civic initiatives then requires an investigation of how the meaning of movement is constituted; or sorting out the structures of signification, i.e. concepts, tools and their knowledge claims (resources):

↙   ↘

Concepts[177] (Discursive tropes[178])   Tools (Performative Agency)
Social Innovation   Linguistic Modality:
Social Inclusion   (Mode: shift in rhetoric)
Non-linguistic Modality: (Mode: arts & crafts)

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[174] As per de Saussure's theory of sign as a combination of form and content, of signifier and signified. The classical example model of the sign developed by de Saussure is that with the cat. The word 'cat' is a signifier. It has physical form as written text on the page. The word cat triggers a psychological process of recognition and extrapolation of the reader, which points to the concept and examples of 'cat', which is the signified (Curtis and Curtis,2011:246). However, the same signifier can stand for a range of different signified as well as different signifiers for the same signified within a sign. Hence, the 'neat' division between signifier and signified is criticized by Derrida and post-structuralists. The meaning of social change will then be deferred as sliding between signs is impossible to be fixed.

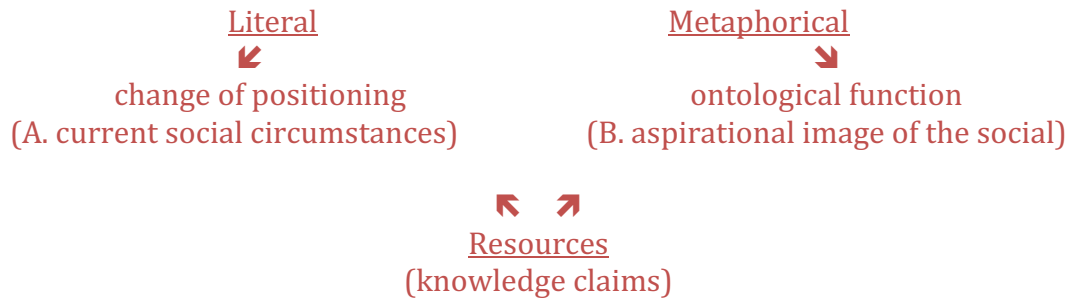[175] Happy life as signified is created in the perceiver and is internal to them.

[176] The thing indicated by the signifier; it is a referent to which signifiers refers.

[177] Semiotics stresses the malleability of signs: while we share concepts, we do so via signifiers.

[178] Trope: words of expression used in figurative sense

Movement as literal and metaphorical connotations:

Literal   Metaphorical
↙   ↘

change of positioning   ontological function
(A. current social circumstances)   (B. aspirational image of the social)

↖   ↗

Resources
(knowledge claims)

a) positionality: Social (grass-root) knowledge: ➜ deficiency expressed with the metaphor "missing people"
b) emotionality: Emotional dissonance ⬅dissatisfaction, indignation with current state (dysfunctional system of governance)
c) spatiality: Symbolic imaginary ➜ human rights and independent citizen