Civil Society Participation in EU Social Policy: A More Social EU with the Civil Society?

A Case Study on the European Pillar of Social Rights

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Abstract

Traditionally, the role of the civil society in the EU policy-making has been week in comparison with the business associations and trade unions who are the social partners of the EU. However, this weakness forced the civil society to unite under a common network, which became to be known as Social Platform. Recently, their visibility became even stronger when the crisis hit the EU and consequently destroyed the weak welfare states first. The social consequences even worsened when the EU applied austerity measures to those countries. All these led to the criticism of the civil society members who were active in the social sector, under the network of the Social Platform. However, the recent initiative from the Commission grew new hopes for a stronger social Europe. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how the Social Platform and one of its member, Solidar, mobilized during the Pillar development. In that perspective, by employing the theories of the social movement approach, political opportunity structure and framing process will enable us to explain the mobilization and the success of the Social Platform and the Solidar. The findings also show show that thanks to favorable political opportunities and framing, civil society could actively mobilize and had an impact on the Pillar.

Key words: civil society, EU, social policy, political opportunity structure, framing process

Contents

List of abbreviations

CSO – Civil Society Organization

DG EMPL – Directorate – General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

EMU – Economic Monetary Union

EU – European Union

EPSR – European Pillar of Social Rights

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

POS – Political Opportunity Structure

SMO – Social Movement Organization

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1 Introduction

Participation of different stakeholders in the EU's policy areas obtained a regular character for decades. As it gives the EU to fix its legitimacy problem and also to produce quality policy outputs. These stakeholders range from trade unions, civil society to business or industrial associations. Among them civil society becomes of particular interest in this thesis for two reasons. On the one hand, in compare with trade unions who are "social partners" of the EU, civil society does not have any similar institutional relations with the EU. On the other hand, in comparison with business and industrial groups who are traditionally regarded as stronger and well-resourced interest groups in Brussels (Greenwood 2007, pp.2-3), civil society, especially social NGOs are regarded as diffused interest and weaker than the former (Cullen 2015). This also impacts their role their in the policy-making process, which does not go beyond 'right to be heard' since they do not receive any feedback afterward (Obradovic 2005).

However, civil society's interactions with the EU have increased over time. The EU especially showed an interest in having good relations with civil society and encouraged the formation of EU level civil society actors with its funding and provided access opportunities to the EU institutions (Johansson&Kalm 2015, p.1). With the creation of many EU level civil society organizations (CSOs), regular interactions with the EU developed in terms of both intensity and variance of policy areas(ibid, pp1-2). Besides having a role in contributing to the democratic deficit problem of the EU, CSOs also are the supporters for more EU competences. As one of the sources of the EU integration, mutual relations of civil society-EU and their interests to transfer the competences to EU level have been an interesting point in EU studies (Greenwood 2007, pp. 1-2).

Subsequently, a question arises: what about the certain policy areas where the EU has minimalist involvement? Social policy is the primary example where these restricted EU competences become evident. In this perspective, the role of the civil society in the social policy turns into an interesting research angle.

1.1 Objective and Research question

The overarching aim of the thesis is to investigate the role of civil society in the EU's social policy. However, in order to conduct it effectively, the research focus will be narrowed down to the recent initiative of the Commission, the European Pillar of Social Rights

(hereinafter, the Pillar). It was officially proclaimed in November 2017, at the EU Social Summit in Gothenburg, Sweden jointly by the Commission, the Council and the Parliament. It is of particular interest to look at the development phase of the Pillar, from the time the Commission announced it in 2015 to its proclamation day in November 2017. Even though, the implementation phase which started after the proclamation of the Pillar displays the real power of this initiative with actual take-up from the Pillar, the development phase that ran almost two years well suits to the research interest. On the one hand, among many powerful stakeholders the civil society was actively advocating for stronger Pillar. On the other, the limited competences of the EU in this field was the main obstacle for achieving a strong social Pillar. However, the Pillar was mostly regarded as an ambitious project which revived the social agenda of the EU after the financial crisis. From the civil society side, the participation of the Social Platform and Solidar, two biggest social NGOs were the main contributors. As the report from Social Platform notes:

> For advocacy successes to have an impact on the lives of people, one must first ensure that the area at stake is put at the highest possible agenda-making level of political leaders. In 2017, this was mission accomplished in the social field in the European Union, and Social Platform has played a leading role in this process.   -Social Platform, 2017a

So what explains this role? There are many approaches that disentangle the role of civil society in the EU, and its impact on decision-making which will be discussed in further sections. Yet, the choice of this thesis is to employ the social movement approach since it enables us to explain the mobilization of the civil society and the impact it had for achieving a stronger social Pillar. Therefore, the goal is not to develop a broader theoretical framework, but to apply the key theory of the social movement approach, namely political opportunity structure (POS) and framing process, to the role of civil society in order to explain and answer the research question:

How did the civil society mobilize during the development process of the Pillar? What impact did they have on the Pillar?

These two questions are interlinked and conditions the success of the civil society. Even though we will be able to draw more concrete results after the data analysis, an assumption can be made according to the theoretical background. First, the favorable political opportunities that were opened during the development phase enabled the civil society to actively mobilize and increase their visibility. Second, the way they framed the social issues was directed to strengthen the existing EU competences and thus the Pillar. Subsequently, both assumptions lead to the impact that the civil society had on the achieving stronger Pillar.

1.2 Disposition

The thesis starts with an introduction chapter which presents research problem, objectives and research question. It is followed by the background information where more information is given about EU's social policy, the recent initiative in this field, and stakeholders who participated in the development process of the Pillar. The main emphasis will be given to the civil society as the research interest of the thesis. The third chapter delves into the literature where different scholars took different approaches to study the civil society. The next chapter proposes the approach that this thesis took, and the theories are outlined, including political opportunity structure and framing process. Methodological approach and data collection are to be found in the fifth chapter with more detailed description of qualitative research design. The analytical part will be discussed in the sixth chapter followed by the last chapters where discussion and conclusions will be presented.

2 Background

2.1 The EU's Social Policy and the Pillar

Primarily 'market-building' image of the EU that focus on economic cooperation mostly leaves "citizen-focused, national welfare states, its sovereignty formally untouched" (Leibfried 2010, p.254). The member states historically developed different social-economic systems that Eisping-Anderson (1989) classifies them into three types of socio-political regimes: "liberal", "christian-democratic" and "social-democratic". Each of those models presents different degree of state regulation on the labor market that differs in terms of their competitive capabilities on the European and global market. Initially, the EU was only able to regulate this area through soft-law with strategies that lacked a binding effect. Despite the limits to extensive European social policy-making, the dynamics of the single market forced EU to include increasingly the social issues to its agenda (Leibfried 2010, p.254) The EU committed itself to create "European social market economy" in the Lisbon Treaty that would require to enforce legislative tools with broad political consensus which can hardly be expected (Scharpf 2010, p. 8).

Despite the limits in this policy area of the EU, the challenges that Europe faced, especially after the crisis, forced the EU to give more weight to the social dimension of the integration. In this perspective, European Social Model took new speed with the ambitious purpose that Junker declared in his annual State of the Union speech in 2015 developing a European Pillar of Social Rights which would entail "fair and truly pan-European" labor market (Karlson & Wennerberg 2018 p.4). In his speech Junker stressed the importance of the Pillar which will "take[s] account of the changing realities of the world of work and which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area". To achieve "upward convergence" in the social market was the baseline of the Pillar.

It set a goal to complete the "Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)". Completion of the EMU was a high priority in the Commission's Five Presidents' Report 2015 (in cooperation with the Presidents of the Euro Summit, the Eurogroup, the European Central Bank, and the European Parliament), that also outlined that "Europe's ambition should be to earn a social triple A" which means to ensure social issues go hand in hand with economic issues (European Commission 2015, p.8)

The Pillar can be regarded as being very advanced in comparison with previous measures of the EU in social policy, in terms of presenting far more detailed principles and rights. It set a goal to achieve "upward social convergence" in the Eurozone. These principles are structured around three different categories: 1. Equal opportunities and access to the labor market; 2. Fair working conditions; 3. Social protection and inclusion. (Karlson & Wennerberg 2018, p.4) Once established it was foreseen to become a reference framework on the base of which employment and social performance of the member states would be scanned. Furthermore, the Pillar does not create new social rights but rather refers to the rights and principles enshrined in the EU Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights with an aim to operationalize them. It also builds on Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers (1989), the European Social Charter (1961), and the European Code of Social Security of the Council of Europe (European Commission 2017a, p.1). Appendix 1 presents the principles in detail.

When the Commission first presented the draft of the Pillar, it became obvious that it preserved its ambition to a limited degree. The Pillar's shortcoming showed itself in its unclear legal nature, the application only to Eurozone members, presenting principles and guidelines

rather than actual social rights and its primary aim to serve the traditional economic interests, such as competitiveness, fiscal sustainability, economic growth (Poulou, 2016). More than that, it focused too much on employment issues. For some member states and stakeholders, it was rather appropriate to keep the Pillar weak, reminding the principle of subsidiarity which defines whether the EU should act or not. For example, Hungary was concerned with the cost of the "upward convergence" that could undermine the productivity, competitiveness and economic growth of the country that had been achieved through recent years (Council of Europe 2016, p.3).

2.2 The stakeholders

Usually, the key actors in the social policy making, are the Council, the Commission, the EP and other non-institutional interests such as social partners (Leibfried 2010, p. 256). Social partners represent two both sides of industry, employers and employees. Traditionally, the Commission highlighted the social partners' role as main stakeholders in social policy and considered their potential for achieving better European Social Model. Endorsed by the legal framework (Amsterdam Treaty) the social partners possessed significant recourses for fighting social issues such as unemployment or workers' rights (Obradovic 1999, p.624).

During the development process of the Pillar, their role became even more important. The Preamble of the Pillar explicitly states that "[d]elivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights is a shared commitment and responsibility between the Union, its Member States and the social partners" (EPSR, 2017, p.9). One of the principles of the Pillar has been dedicated to the social dialogue and involvement of workers. It outlines that social partners will be consulted for the design and implementation of social and employment policies. Therefore, their role during the process was vital and based on regular meetings and consultation. Social Partners contains trade unions, employers' associations and business interests. The main network representatives of these sectors during the development process of the Pillar were ETUC[1], BusinessEurope, UEAPME[2] and CEEP[3] (European Commission 2017b, p.6).

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[1] European Trade Unions Confederation
[2] The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
[3] The European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest

Civil dialogue. On contrary to the social dialogue, civil dialogue with civil society in social policy lacked any institutionalization. However, the Commission put also considerable effort to bring other interest groups collective action into the decision-making (Obradovic 1999, p.624) to complement the social dialogue

During the development of the Pillar, the rank of stakeholders expanded to the civil society members working on local, national and European level. Social Platform, the biggest network of EU level umbrella organizations working on social related issues was the main civil society actor that advocates for more social Europe. When the Commission launched a public consultation in 2016, for receiving different stakeholders' views and positions, Social Platform actively contributed to the debate. They have engaged in different advocacy activities – from lobbying to discussions with member states, to "regular high-profile speaking slots in EU level events" (Social Platform 2017b, p.6). Moreover, because of this commitment Social Platform, according to its report, was one of two civil society members, that presented at the Social Summit in Gothenburg on the day of Social Pillar's proclamation. Considering the active role played by civil society organizations in the drafting and negotiation phase of Pillar, it is of interest to study the civil society's role in EU's social policy, concretely in the Pillar.

2.3   Social Platform and Solidar

Social Platform is the leading network of value- and rights-based NGOs working in the social sector. It was established during the preparation of the first Social Policy Forum in 1996 by 25 national and international NGOs. The EU was the main funding source for the Social Platform who aimed to promote a dialogue with EU institutions, national governments and social partners (Cullen 2015, p.207). While the Social Platform started to gain prominence and professionalized in its structures, it also experienced funding crisis in 1998 (Geyer 2001, p.483), which came after the inter-institutional struggles on the Commission's social policy funding. The Commission's rights to allocate 1billion euro funding on the anti-poverty program was challenged as it lacked any legal base. In result, the Commissioned froze all lines of funding without legal base, after which all social NGOs were shocked as their projects and even their existence became under question. However, active mobilization and putting pressure on the EU institutions forced the Budget Council to unblock the funding lines (ibid, p.485).

Through the years, Social Platform has enlarged its membership. Currently, 47 umbrella organizations functioning on the EU level are the members of the Social Platform. In their turn, those 47 organizations represent more than 2800 national, regional and local organizations and associations throughout Europe. They are working in different parts of the social sector and represent different social groups, such as women, children, older people, vulnerable groups, etc. The Platform's advocacy directed at increasing social justice all over the Europe and defends a human rights approach in its work for socially just Europe. It also functions to facilitate information exchange and internal coordination among its members and to encourage the formation of common policy positions (Cullen 2015, p.212). Social Platform's members are characterized by being of a diverse nature. While some identify themselves as service providers, the others function as advocacy groups (ibid, p.208).

Solidar is one of the 47 organizations, comprising 59 member organizations functioning both in EU and non-EU countries. Solidar shares a view of solidarity and equality in Europe where everyone can have a life in dignity. In instrumental terms, Social Platform allows its members, including Solidar, to acquire an access to the EU's social policy-making process (ibid, p.208).

3   Literature Review
3.1   Civil Society Concept
Despite of being studied largely, the concept of civil society has always been debatable among political scientists because of having vague and broad nature which made it difficult to define the exact scope. However, depending on what aspects being studied scholars gave different conceptual and theoretical definitions to the civil society. These definitions help to identify the role and functions of civil society and to better understand state-society relations. Mostly referred to as a third sector, civil society is separate sector from public and private sectors which "intermediates between political institutions and the wider public" (Baglioni&Giugni 2014, p. 34)

According to Kohler-Koch (2009, p.50) there is a consensus that "civil society encompasses the wide range of voluntary associations that follow a "logic of action" that is distinct from that of the state or the market or the private sphere". He clearly disposes that various kind of organizations, "ranging from member-based interest groups to advocacy

groups promoting rights and values" are included to the scope of the civil society (p.50). Cullen (2015) uses the concept of organized civil society to which he includes social movements, academics, experts, NGOs, think tanks.

The concept of civil society The roots of civil society can be traced back in the studies of political thinkers such as Alexis de Tocqueville, John Locke, Charles de Montesquieu, Georg Friedrich Hegel who conceptualized the civil society as either competing or cooperating with the state (Heidbreder 2012, p.6). According to Heidbreder some authors of this dichotomous state-society relations are "concerned with popular control of political institutions and markets, which can only be exerted by independent societal actors who remain separate and therefore outside the framework of public policy and distinct from market actors (e.g., business interests)" (ibid, p.6). In contrast, the followers of Montesquieu's conception of state/society relations defends an integrative perception which can be translated into 'modern, democratic political systems and welfare states'. Some scholar such as Habermas and Foucault view the civil society as a space where the communicative rationalities develop and shows resistance to governing and market rationalities (cited in Kutay 2014, p.20-21)

3.2   Civil Society's role in the EU

The development of the EU's participatory practice which involved EU level civil society actors among other interest groups gave rise to the related academic literature with different research angles. Participation and role of civil society in EU policy areas have drawn a great interest of both politicians and academic scholars. There has been great effort to associate the participation of civil society with democratic legitimacy of the EU. Since the EU after the Maastricht Treaty started to get a lot of criticism about 'democratic deficit' in its decision-making structures, civil society's role and participation was seen as an important solution. (Heidbreder 2012, 6). It was a reason that draw academic attention to democracy models of the EU In this sense, participatory democracy as a complement to the representative democracy becomes an important discussion point in scholarly work (Heidbreder 2012, Finke 2007). The Commission as one of the EU institutions that suffers the legitimacy problem was particularly active in the participatory discourse which was culminated in its White Paper on European Governance (2001) by referring to the importance of inclusive and accountable policy-making with the involvement of civil society (Smismans 2002, p.480).

In the academic literature governance approach to the EU-civil society relations highlights both positive and critical aspects of those relations. In general, the loss of hierarchy is associated with this approach which enables co-existence of different actors in policy steering. (Kroger 2008, p.4). After the inclusion of civil society in the official discourse of the Commission, it was highly expected that this would increase input and output legitimacy of the EU. While the input legitimacy concern with the participation of a broad range of actors in the governance which contributes to the "bottom-up will formation", output legitimacy mostly concern with the quality of policy to which competent actors can contribute with their expertise and specific knowledge (ibid). In the latter civil society is viewed as fulfilling certain tasks, such as welfare functions, which were previously delivered by state actors (ibid). This division also made some scholars to differ participatory democracy from participatory governance that the latter corresponds with output effectiveness of a policy-making (Heidbreder 2012, Finke 2007). Schmitter (2002) suggests that certain groups that are affected by policy will participate in the policy preparations if those groups possess some resources and quality that enables them to participate and calls them 'holders'. In this case, he identifies the participation criteria according to the substance of the problem (cited in Finke 2007, p.6). Proponents of this functional approach are mostly interested to find in which circumstances "participatory governance leads to sustainable and innovative outcomes" (ibid, p.7)

Kohler Koch (2009) argues that the political nature of the EU has a strong influence on the role attributed to the civil society. He developed three conceptions describing those images of the EU in which different functional and normative role is attributed to civil society. As already discussed, he views civil society as a remedy for legitimacy crisis of the EU, an actor with capacity to contribute to the problem solutions directed to increase the output legitimacy and "social constituency" which can compensate the lack of European demos.

A growing body of literature with a focus on aspects of civil society-EU relations also deals with the interest representation in the EU which specifically pay attention to the interest mediation, lobbying and strategies of influence by various types of societal actors. Participation and influence of certain interest groups on the EU policy-making have been explained with different approaches. The key concern of the researches regarding interest groups was overrepresentation and dominance of specific interests such as business interest groups in Brussel, who also are well resourced in order to influence decision-makers. However, more recent researches find out that the perceived bias about the success of business

or company associations over more diffused interest does not already find its empirical support (Kluver 2012). Kluver finds that "cause groups" representing diffused interests equally are able to successfully lobby the EU. Moreover, while the private interests rely on their economic resources, diffused (public) interests derive their power from the public sphere in which they address ideal causes that in turn gains them legitimacy. This is done so by donating large amount of time and energy.

There is no doubt that highly professionalized character of CSOs based in Brussels is mostly due to the role that EU played in their formation, funding and maintenance, incorporation into the political structures of its institutions (Greenwood 2007b, p. 342). An explanation for that is that civil society as its "natural constituency" both provide expert resources and provide support for more EU power and also plays a role as agents of input legitimacy (ibid, p.343). "However, some observers might consider that such funding dependencies leads to the over-institutionalization of civil society and limits their autonomy. Nevertheless, civil society members functioning at the EU level stress that funding provides a means of independence, much in the same way as political parties' funding by the states who want to make sure that there will be no need for the political parties to seek alternative sources of funding (ibid, p.344).

Considering the increasing institutionalized nature of CSOs based in Brussels it is logical to think about the functional role of the civil society such as a remedy to the democratic deficit, providing input and output to the policymaking. However, this approach may cause to see the role and success of the civil society as predictable and even take it for granted. There has been negligence to consider the political context that surrounds the civil society and the way that civil society reacts to it. These are the key aspects that the social movement approach mostly deals with. This approach concerns with political contestation that is considered to contribute to the "politicization of EU related issues" (Finke 2007, p.14).

Especially, it is important to consider that the recent research on new social movements has also developed major arguments for civil society and interest representation in the EU. Since many interest groups such as environmental or woman's advocacy group have evolved from new social movements (ibid, p.12). One of such researches is the comparative study of Ruzza (2004), who took sociological and cognitive factors into account to explain the mobilization and influence of civil society. For this, he specifically adopted the

term *Movement Advocacy Coalition* (MAC) by which he implies that distinction made by previous scholars among movements, church activist groups, NGOs, etc, should not "obscure the commonality of intent that has developed around certain social-movement-inspired social controversies" (p.14). He studied three families of movements in the spheres of environmentalism, anti-racism and minority ethno-regionalism in three levels: domestic, supranational and policy community. Throughout the book by examining the impact of MAC on policy-making, the importance of "framing of ideas, the institutional structure of the respective policy area and the interaction between movements and policy-makers" were stressed as explanatory points. Compared with previous scholars of the POS tradition who mostly focus on contentious aspects of the movement-state relations, Ruzza draws our attention to a more institutional character of these relations and extends the POS approach by adding 'institutional need for political legitimacy'. However, he gives more weight to 'frame-bridging' concept in order to explain how social movement transfers the ideas to the EU via civil society organizations.

Recognizing civil society's ability to influence the EU as part of EU's democracy project that directed to increase its governance legitimacy, the thesis will demonstrate that external political factors (world) also matters and contributes to the shaping of civil society's mobilization and success in the policy-making of the EU.

In sum, sociological aspect of the civil society literature motivates this thesis as it views the civil society not merely from the functional point that most scholars seek in order to address democratic deficit problem, but also gives a big space to consider external factors (political context) and cognitive factors. By focusing on the social policy area, it will help us to understand better how civil society places itself in a policy area that gives limited competences to the EU.

4 Theory

4.1 Social Movement approach

The thesis will employ social movement approach as an explanatory model for the study. Being an interdisciplinary study, a social movement approach has been applied to many studies in order to critically study political change. This approach was employed by scholars

who aimed to explain how and when the social movements mobilize, under what conditions they succeed in their goals, as well as what political or social consequences they leave.

The motivation for this thesis to study the civil society with social movement approach lies its social constructivist perspectives that possess a capacity to explain the movement groups' mobilization and impact on the policy-making, and consequently succeed in their goals. It is also part of a broad research on the identity of political actors at the European level, that analyze their attitudes and preferences (Saurugger 2014, p.168). This research also focuses on how individuals and organizations contribute to the shaping of political space (ibid, p. 169). According to Saurugger (p.170) in order to understand the EU as a form of social organization and power structure, it is important to identify "who the individuals and groups making up the EU are, where they come from, what kinds of resources and networks they have access to, how they perceive reality,…, social world around them"

Subsequently, the social movement approach follows the same sociological perspectives to study the social world around them. Civil society's relation to the social movement becomes clear in scholars' work. For example, Kohler Koch (2009, p.52) asserts that irrespective of how we define civil society, it is not given but is a social construction. She continues that this construction "emerges from processes of social interaction which are channeled by institutions that give meaning, provide resources and impose structures" (ibid). Consequently, as "collective action frame" civil society acquires a potential to either "mobilize popular support" or provides legitimacy to the governing institutions (ibid).

The organizational question of movement groups is a starting point for the scholars when studying their mobilization capacity. For the social movements to be strong and sustainable they should be able to construct an enduring organization (McAdam et al. 1996, p.13). But once the organizational strength is already achieved, mobilization and influence become the main priorities for social movement organizations (SMOs). As Rutch notes, "for large scale and sustained movement activities, mobilization requires resources such as people, knowledge, frames, skills, and technical tools to process and distribute information and to influence people" (Rutch 1996, p.186). Even though he distinguishes social movements from interest groups in analytical terms, empirically he finds it is much harder to separate them. Therefore he adds 'interest group model" to social movement structures which is characterized

by having influencing strategies (for instance, lobbying) and "reliance on formal organization" (ibid, p.188).

Social movement community is a network of interactions among movement organizations, individuals and institutional supporters who share a collective identity of that community and work for advancing the movement goals (Aunio and Staggenborg (2011) cited in Cullen 2015, p.205). It is noteworthy that in his work Cullen (2015) analyze the Social Platform from a social movement approach and calls it as professional SMO who enjoys insider access to the EU institutions. By applying this approach to the Social Platform, he explores the patterns of coalition work of the Platform which allow it to have strong social interaction among its members and to mobilize around the EU institutions. Therefore, the repertoires and network structures of the Social Platform allowed it to be perceived as a professional SMO community.

4.2 Political opportunity structure

The POS derives from the from social movement literature where scholars put great effort to explain different states' political structures as an explanatory for social movements. The historical roots of comparing the states for their POS can be linked to Tocqueville (Tarrow 1996, p.46). Tocqueville argued that centralized states (like France back at that time) empower themselves by "weaking and coopting the intermediate corporate bodies in civil society" (ibid). As a result, "the stronger the state, the weaker its encouragement of institutional participation and the greater the incentive to confrontation and violence when collective action does break out" (ibid). Bu he also studied the American state in contrast to centralized France as being weak and thus it enables strong civil society to freely widespread forms of participation. As a result, violent confrontations that Tocqueville observed in France were less likely in the US.

POS mean a context which offers social movement actors possibilities, options or barriers to act on their goals. The term was first used by Peter Eisinger (1973) as "structure of political opportunities". He explored various political environment conditions as a stimulus to the political protest activities that targeted American institutions, agencies and elite in urban places. Environmental variables relate to one another and together they establish a context in which political behavior forms. By identifying the conditions that incite the protests in cities, Eisinger suggests a model, called curvilinear model, which hypotheses that mobilization of

groups will be most prevalent in a system characterized with both open and close factors (1973, p.15). Eisinger focused on the institutional access and governmental openness to explain what different levels of riots in each city.

Many other scholars started to utilize the term as a theoretical framework to explain the emergence, tactics, and success of social movements in different political systems. According to Tarrow POS is "consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements" (1998, pp. 19– 20).

Many attempts have been made to compare the states in terms of their structural differences that affect the social movement actors. In this sense, as a most referred researcher Kitschelt (1986) inspired by Tocqueville, define the states as 'open' and 'close' to the inputs from non-established actors that also intersects with the strength or weakness of their capacities to deliver the effective implementation of policies once they are decided. For example, he finds that 'open' and strong Swedish system enables the ecological movements to operate freely, in contrast to 'close' French system where weak institutional receptivity to inputs results in the use of confrontational strategies by movement activists (cited in Tarrow 1996, p.44). This state-centered approach had shortcomings in terms that it did not pay substantial attention to subnational and subgroup variations in movement opportunities (ibid, p.45). Therefore, Kitschelt's work was criticized for being too determinist and obscuring the complexities of social movements-state relations.

Structural characteristic is mostly defined as 'power of the state' to which scholars refer executive power of the state. In general, in more open systems the more political decision-makers play a role and in its turn, social movements gain many access points to the system (Porta 2006, p. 202). Porta briefs the overall effect of institutional variables on social movement evolution into three main areas: territorial decentralization of power, functional dispersal of power, and the extent to which power is possessed by the state (ibid).

The first points concern the basic suggestion that "the more power is distributed to the periphery, the greater the possibility individual movements have of accessing the decision-making process". So this leads to define that federal states are more open than centralist states. The second point refers to the clear division of tasks between legislative, executive and judiciary each of which should hold great autonomy in order to facilitate the channels of access

to the system (ibid 203). The third, it can differ according to the roots of the state (Roman law or Anglo-Saxon) that renders more or less openness of the system for external actors (ibid 204). Seemingly, the first and the second points can also characterize the EU institutional structure to some extent. As will be discussed in later sections, the different institutions with their roles in the development of the EU, which bears some patterns of a federal state, provided many access points to the civil society.

Despite the growing autonomy of judiciary and decentralization of the power in European states, Porta notes that neoliberal shift in the 1990s led to the "privatization of public services and the deregulation of the labor market" and consequently, citizens' possibilities to exert pressure on governors were limited (ibid). This especially true with a shifting of power from national to supranational level in the case of the EU.

However, it should also be stressed that structural characterization of a decentralized system which favors the social movements is only a superficial picture of the political opportunity structure. Because one should also consider that together with offering multiple points of access for external actors, decentralized systems also mean 'multiple points of veto' (ibid, p.205). It means the chances of access increase both for social movements and counter-movements and other opposing interest players.

Scholars also differentiate a flexible (informal) set of variables as part of POS from more fixed (formal) ones that discussed above. The significant aspect of the flexible variables is the presence of allies and opponents. Social movement actors rely on alliances as they provide resources and political opportunities. Limited institutional opportunities highlight the importance of allies for movements. Among different type of institutional allies, Porta also mentions trade unions as an important ally for emerging movement actors (such as student movement) (ibid, p. 212). Having "wide social base" and "privileged channels of access" to the political decision-makers trade unions can enhance the chances of success for SM. Opponents can either be institutional and non-institutional actors (such as counter-movements) (ibid).

Having an ally in an institutional setting as a dimension of POS became a point of criticism. Kriesi (1996) argues that, close interaction with allies among elites and the authorities can be ambivalent for two reasons. First, the SMO may receive important resources from such an ally, while this can lead to a reduction of its autonomy and even a threat to its

stability in the long run. Second, the established working relations with authorities, on the one hand, may provide public recognition, access to decision-making procedures and considered as a success for a SMO, but on the other hand, it can limit the SMO's mobilization capacity and distant it from its constituency (ibid, pp.155-156).

Criticism came at a point when the POS had a tendency to cover a broad range of variables that risked to lose its analytical use. As Gamson and Meyer (1996, p. 275) note the concept of the POS is "in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment". Therefore, the scholars paid more attention to identify the POS in a more concise way. To summarize all the discussed aspects, McAdam (1996, 26-27) listed the dimensions by synthesizing the approaches of other scholars:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity
3. The presence or absence of elite allies
4. The state's capacity and propensity for repression

Here, McAdam distinguishes the formal institutional structure (1,2) from the informal structure of power relations (3,4) that characterize the system.

It is notable that the subsequent development of the POS also took a direction towards the EU arena. For example, Marks and McAdam (1999) analyzed the POS in the framework of EU integration. They stress that in comparison with individual states where certain forms of the POS either encourage or discourage unconventional behavior (protests, violent mobilization), there is little social movement activity in unconventional forms in the EU. They explain this with a few reasons: to organize a mass protest in Brussels is both time consuming and expensive, so it is easier to set up lobbying centers close to the decision-making bodies. Second, public discourse is deeper in individual member states than on the European level. Hence, individual attachment to the territorial communities at a national and local level is stronger than at the EU level. This can be partly explained by the absence of European news media. Finally, the POS that the EU presents for interest groups is more open to conventional rather than unconventional mobilization. The wisdom of the literature on POS is that conventional lobbying is the best option in institutionally open settings. (Marks and McAdam 1999).

They conclude that the actual effects of political opportunities on social movements depend on (1) the identification of those opportunities, (2) the existence of collective identities and frames that are favorable to the specific forms of political activity, and (3) organizational resources and capabilities that allow social movements to take advantage of those opportunities.

Meyer and Minkoff (2004), developed the concept by elaborating on its theoretical and methodological implications and took a closer view to explain the dependent variables. Traditionally, the POS was used as a key explanatory variable in regard to two principal dependent variables: the timing of the collective action and the outcomes of movement activity. The scholars assert that there is a relationship between political opportunities and form of social movement activity and the outcome (p.1458). McAdam et al (1996) also confirm this relationship and defines that the social movement will mobilize "in response to and in a manner consistent with the very specific changes" in the POS that grant them leverage (p.10).

As soon as the movement groups perceive the opportunities present in a given political context, the relations between POS and movement groups reciprocally influence each other. It means that the political opportunities are "no longer independent of the actions of movement groups", but rather turn to be a product of its interaction with the movement groups (ibid, p.13).

Considering the variety of phenomena that movement analysts sought to explain by referring to the POS, McAdam notes that one needs to be "explicit about which dependent variable" s/he is seeking and "which dimensions of political opportunities are germane to that" (1996, p.31). Therefore, as research questions also indicates to the dependent variables, the mobilization level of the civil society and the impact they had on the Pillar will be looked at as a consequence (dependent) of the favorable POS.

In sum, this thesis will look at the two dimensions that the McAdam presented above in order to apply it to the case: relative openness/closeness of the EU institutions and the presence of allies. As the other does not apply to the situation (the EU does not use repression and there was not any dynamics within the elite alliance because of absence of the elections) that was present during the Pillar case.

4.3 Framing

Framing process is another crucial part of social movement literature that together with political opportunity process allowed the researchers to understand better the development of the social movements. Goffman (1974, p.21) first used the idea of frames as "schemata of interpretation" that allow groups "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences and guide their actions. Frames are "passive and structured" which involves people in actively constructing them (Gamson and Meyer, 1996, p.276).

For social movements, frames are an important component of their overall mobilization. In their study, Snow and Benford (2000) give a better explanation about the framing process and talk about "collective action frames". "Collective action frames" as described by them are "sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (ibid, p.614). Framing process denotes to the ways of invoking "one frame or set of meanings rather than another" by SMOs when they communicate a message (Oliver and Johnston, 2000, p.45).

Framing process is one of the central aspects of social psychology, with which the social movements engage in social constructions of ideas (Snow and Benford, 1988). David Snow defines framing as "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action". Framing also provides "a way to link ideas and social construction of ideas with organizational and political process factors" (Oliver and Johnson 2000, p. 37).

The similarity of framing and ideology led some scholars to use them as synonyms. It became with the criticism, of Oliver and Johnson who differentiated two phenomena by discussing them separately. As it is not in the scope of this thesis to analyze ideological views of the civil society, it suffices to mention that even though the ideology and frames are related concepts, ideology refers to a bigger picture of political content (or thinking) and is more stable. Whereas, the frames refer to a cognitive process wherein certain groups utilize their background knowledge in order to "interpret an event or circumstance and to locate it in a larger system of meaning" (ibid, p.42). It is closely tied with strategic interpretation and can change during the process.

Social movement organizations usually adopt inclusive frames that are broad in its scope, which Snows calls it "master frame". According to Snow with master frames,

movements condense the grievances of their members into one concept. Master frames are employed in order to portray the perceived injustice, however, remains unelaborated (Oliver and Johnson 2000, 41). Inclusivity and flexibility are the main features of the master frames. Noonan's study (1995) showed that in 1950s and the 60s the leftist master frame covered only working class issues that left out feminist concerns, however, evolvement of the master frame to "return to democracy" in the 1980s gave a space for different movement specific frames, including feminism(cited in Snow and Benford 2000, p.619)

According to Snow and Benford (1988), there are three framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. It is a key part of the framing process, as it provides a passage of information from movement organization to its audience (e.g., institutions, public or counter movements). Diagnostic framing refers to the identification of problems, and "attribution of blame or casualty" (ibid p. 200). Movement groups can blame more than one factor for the identified problems, but it is mostly the case that one factor will be highlighted more than others, as a primary one. Prognostic framing is the articulation of how the problems can best be solved. Here the purpose is not only to suggest solutions but also to "identify strategies, tactics, and targets" (ibid. p.201). There is usually a direct link between prognostic and diagnostic framing, however it is also not an exception that the suggested solutions may not "follow directly from the causal attributions"(ibid 202). The motivational framing refers to "the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action" which extends the framing process beyond the diagnosis and prognosis (ibid). As it obviously relates to the traditional protest-oriented social movement activities, for the purpose of this thesis the motivational framing will be interpreted in a sense as to encourage for an action and highlighting the importance of this action for the contribution to the problem solution. (Parks 2015,p. 17). Snow and Benfort (1988, p.203) note that movement groups will have a higher chance to become active in a particular cause, if they use all three framing tasks in a highly integrated manner.

There is also a strategic side of framing process requires the SMOs to use to different techniques in this process. This strategic process is goal-directed and can determine the success of the SMOs. Snow and Benford (2000, p.624) conceptualize it as "frame alignment processes" which contains four dimensions: frame bridging, frame extension, frame amplification and frame transformation. Here frame bridging is of particular importance for the analysis of this study. By frame bridging, Snow and Benford refer to "the linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular

issue or problem" (ibid). Its prevalent use by previous scholars helped the concept to develop more to match the EU context. In this regard, the study of Ruzza (2004, 2011) extensively relies on the frame bridging to show how the SMOs achieve their goals in relation to the EU institutions by using frame bridging. Since the policy problems and possible solutions that are framed by the SMOs can be in contradiction with the consolidated EU approaches, there is a need for mediation (Ruzza 2004, p.31). This mediation occurs when the movement representatives become incorporated into the EU's policy process. Subsequently, the participation in the policy process will necessitate giving a consideration on how to frame the problems and solutions. Hence, the frame bridging turns to be an important strategy in order to avoid possible clashes with decision makers and to transfer the SMOs' claims to them in a way that is close to their firm approaches that derive from their institutional positions.

In frame bridging the "consensus mobilization" and "consensus formation" plays a role (Klanderman 1988 cited in Ruzza 2004, p.32). To put it simply, consensus mobilization refers to the "deliberate attempt by a social actor to create consensus" among different parties, whereas consensus formation is "an unplanned convergence of meaning in social network" (ibid). In both notions, the aim is to borrow the discourse of powerful institutions and then to modify it in order to gain support and legitimation. With consensus mobilization it happens strategically, with consensus formation it is more or less automatic in other words "cognitive merging of taken-for-granted frames" (ibid, p.33). Process of consensus formation emerges within (governing) institutional settings where the SMOs become "embedded in identity of the institutional actors" (ibid). Considering the highly institutionalized and incorporated nature of the CSOs within the EU policymaking, it is expected that in the case, frame bridging happens through the consensus formation.

In sum, if the resonant master frame and two framing tasks are pursued in order to increase the visibility of the issue and to convince the audience, frame bridging is a more strategic process that facilitates the impact.

5 Methodology

5.1 Case Study

The study relies on a qualitative approach taking a case for deeper examining. A case study has been used by different traditions, which identified the strength and weaknesses of the

method. The strength of the case study is that it helps to comprehend the bigger picture of any particular problem. Considering that the world we live bases on the construction of meanings and interpretations, the case study method becomes relevant to understand the rich and complex nature of interactions between different actors (May 2011 p. 221). The value of the case study lies in "its ability to draw attention to what can be learned from the single case" (Glesne p. 22). Since it enables the researcher to focus on the complexity of the phenomena within the case, social context becomes clear with the linkages to that complexity (ibid). So this thesis takes inspiration from the advantages of case study in order to understand the nature of relations in the given case and to answer the research questions.

In this thesis, the case concerns the participation of the Social Platform and Solidar in the Pillar was chosen for two reasons. On the one hand, to bring a new alternative to the literature on civil society's participation in EU policy areas, from a sociological approach which emphasizes the importance of political context and framing. On the other hand, the mechanism that manifests itself within the given theory, illustrates an analytical picture, which explains the phenomena – the ability of civil society to succeed.

However, as Stake (2000) stresses a "case study is not methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied". Consequently, various methods can be employed in order to conduct the case study research. For the purpose of the research question, two methods will be utilized accordingly to each part of the theoretical background: process tracing and frame analysis.

5.2 Process tracing

In order to define the political opportunity structure in the single case, process tracing will be applied for the development phase of the Pillar. Process tracing aims to trace the causal mechanism within a case (Beach&Pedersen, 2013, p.11). The advantage of process tracing is that the researcher can make a robust "within-case inferences" on the causal processes, which in turn increases the degree of confidence about the validity of the research (ibid). Process tracing will help us to spot the main events that involved CSOs (the ones in the case) to the process during the given period. As Panke (2012, p. 126) notes process tracing allows us to observe fine-grained implications of the causal processes and also outcomes in a single case.

When talking about process tracing, it is important to define independent and dependent variables. As already discussed in the previous chapter the theories present independent variables: shared frames and political opportunities (relative openness or closure of the EU institutions and the presence of allies). The dependent variable in the case is the impact of the civil society. There have been much criticism about a highly complex system of identifying the impact mechanism (Dur, 2008). However, in order to avoid the complexity of this mechanism, clearly defined aspects of the dependent variable and their examination on the collected data, will help to conclude the results.

The overall efforts of the Social Platform and Solidar were directed for achieving a strong Pillar, and their impact then can equally be termed as their success. There have been manifold researches on the literature studying the success of the movement campaigns (Parks 2015, Ruzza 2011). For example, Gamson (1990) categorized the success into two broad parts: the achievement of specific goals and recognition of a certain actor as a representative of the groups' claims (cited in Parks 2015). Moreover, the importance of the political context (POS) has also been captured in defining the movement consequences or outcomes, since the context plays a role of filter between movement claims and resulting outcomes.

The thesis will refer to Parks (2015) who studied different campaigning activities in the EU and their consequences. She provides typology for campaigning impacts in three categories: access outcome (the increased ability of movement groups to communicate with decision-makers); agenda outcome (the movement grouped managed to bring a debate on a topic that previously ignored) and policy outcome (the movement achieved a change in policy). For the purpose of this thesis access outcomes and policy outcomes will be of specific interest together with mobilization degree as dependent variables, since bringing a new topic to the agenda was not in the work of the CSOs, but rather to achieve a strong and broad Pillar that covers more social issues and rights. So, the overall causal mechanism of the process where the independent variables led to the occurrence of dependent variables can be depicted as following:
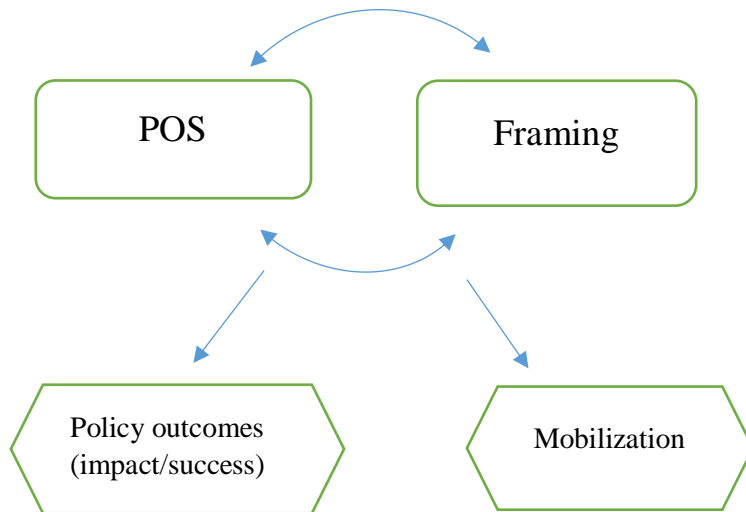
Figure 1. An analytical model of process tracing

Even though the overall process tracing method will be the main mechanism for reaching the conclusions, the second part of the independent variable that bases on framing process theory, will require specific methodological attention. This method takes the same name as the theory itself: framing analysis.

5.1 Frame analysis

Frame analysis has its roots in different disciplines such as sociology, literature, psychology or politics. Originally frame analysis as a method is a part of quantitative contend analysis (Parks 2015, p.19), which is based on simply counting words. However, scholars shifted their focus from quantitative approach to qualitative, since the meaning of the words and their attachment to the sentence required interpretative and thus qualitative approach (ibid). In general, Frame analysis refers to the "multiple potential dimensions" of a policy area in which framing enables to select and emphasize particular aspects of the issue (Eising et al.2015, p.516) Through framing process, different actors then can become independent players in given policy debates and have an impact on the outcomes.

In the social movement literature, scholars have developed this method, which allowed to analyze how the movement actors made claims, and how these claims affected the governing powers (Ruzza 2004, Goffman 1974, Parks 2015). From their work, it becomes clear that the framing methodology heavily relies on the corresponding theoretical approach. However, it will be more insightful for the concrete mechanism to refer to the study of (Touri and Koteyko, 2015) who divides the methodology of the frame analysis into two groups:

deductive and inductive. For deductive approach, there should be predetermined frame categories which are then brought to the data. It typically relies on quantitative content analysis and gives its focus to measuring the frequency of the frames. However, as already said especially social movement literature tends to avoid quantitative method. Then the second approach, inductive, becomes more relevant for this study. Inductive method extracts the frames from the data through the interpretation of the text. It starts with broadly defined theoretically identified categories of frames which guide the researcher to extract more specific frames (ibid). According to Touri and Koteyko, contextual factors play a significant role when analysis the frames, therefore in this task there is a need for the human interpretation that will the place the context into the context.

Based on this inductive frame analysis method, the aim will be to analyze how Social Platform and Solidar framed different aspects of the social issues concerning the Pillar from the time the first draft was published in the beginning of 2016. As the theory on framing process gives us broad framing categories, the data will be analyzed within those categories. It starts with the master frame followed by the framing tasks, diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. Within each category, consideration will be given to find the utilized frames that conform the theoretical description. In this perspective, diagnostic framing will focus on the identified problems, also on the causal attribution, such as reasons for the identified problems. Prognostic framing will focus on the frames used as solutions for those problems. Motivational frames will be drawn from the frames that can be interpreted as a call for action and mobilization. Both master frames and the framing tasks are effective and strategic tools in terms of drawing the attention of EU decision-makers to the clear and concise position that the CSOs advocated for. At the end, with frame bridging we will seek what concepts (frames) the CSOs linked together that are taken from the EU's existing discourses. The table shows the frames found during the coding of the CSOs' documents.

Master frames	rights-based approach to the Pillar
Diagnostic frames	Inequalities, unemployment, vulnerable groups, poverty, social exclusion, EU-austerity measures
Prognostic frames	Comprehensive implementation
Motivational frames	Civil dialogue
Frame bridging	Social investment: Social ⟷ economic

Table 1. Framing process of the CSOs

5.2   Data collection

In order to investigate the case thoroughly it is of importance to collect data from various sources. The data sources, in this case, will be drawn from the documents and web-articles of the Social Platform and the Solidar, the EU documents, and interviews. The documents of the Social Platform and the Solider are their position papers that were prepared for submitting to the consultation. These documents will especially serve for the frame analysis. They are Social Platform's "Response to the public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights" (2016); Solidar's "The European Pillar of Social Rights – A Basis For Upward Social Convergence?" (2016) and Solidar's "Update on the Pillar of Social Rights" (2017).

For discerning the POS, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the representative of the Social Platform and the Solidar to gain their perceptions of what opportunities existed at that time. The value of interviews lies on the belief that participants are the ones who engage in the construction of surrounding social world and are able to communicate the insights of it verbally (Ritchie et al, p. 55). Therefore, it is particularly important to have interviews with the CSO representatives in order to understand how they perceive the external political factors as opportunities or constraints. The interviews were conducted with former policy advisor of the Social Platform, Gilberto Pelosi and current Secretary General of the Solidar, Conny Reuter. The interviews with each representative lasted 20-35 minutes via phone and Skype after which recorded voice was transcribed and analyzed according to the theoretical framework. The topic guides used for the interviews can be found in the Appendix 2.

Additionally, the webpages of the organizations also contain necessary publications, press releases, articles and other information that will be useful in order to observe what events happened during the Pillar and what relations were made between different actors/allies.

6 Analysis of data

The analysis chapter will first start presenting the chronological progression of main events that happened during the two years' development of the Pillar. It will be followed by describing briefly the key concerns of Social Platform and Solidar[4], that emerged after the first draft of the Pillar. The rest of the paper will discuss how the political opportunity structure and framing process played a role in their mobilization and what the outcomes were. In other words, it will seek to answer the research questions: *How did the civil society mobilize during the development process of the Pillar? What impact did they have on the Pillar?*

6.1 The European Pillar of Social Rights

After the announcement of the Pillar, the first draft documents became public in 2016. In March 2016, the Commission published its Communication for launching a public consultation on the Pillar which was accompanied by two Staff Working Documents (SWD) and the annex document on the outline of the Pillar. The first SWD set out the key economic, labor market and social trends, the second one was about social acquis of the EU. The Communication stated deepening of the European Single Market goes hand in hand with social acquis which aimed to prevent social dumping and 'race to bottom' (European Commission 2016). The consultation lasted until the end of 2016 and received 200 position papers and more than 15.500 online replies (European Commission 2017b, p.5). The Pillar includes 20 various principles that aim to decrease the social differences such as labor or living conditions among member states.

The Legal nature of the Pillar was left as an open question in the Commission's first Communication (European Commission 2017b, p.14), however it became clear afterward that the Pillar will not be legally binding and will respect the national competences and subsidiarity principle. Therefore, the establishment of the Pillar was primarily a political project, which

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[4] Hereinafter, CSOs, when referring to both institutions in order to avoid repetition.

required a strong political commitment from both EU institutions, and the member states in order to bring social agenda back on the EU table but without leading to any Treaty change. (ibid)

In April 2017, the Commission published the results of the consultation together with the second and last Communication paper. The proposal for an Inter-institutional Proclamation was sent to the Council for preparation of the final Proclamation text on the Pillar. Another document published on the same day was the Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe.

Furthermore, a number of legislative initiatives also accompanied the Pillar, such as work-life balance, access to social protection and "written statement directive". The governance of the Pillar was envisaged by mainstreaming the social policy in the European Semester (European Commission 2017a, p.9). Benchmarking and exchange of good practice were the main tools for the assessment of the implementation of the principles enshrined in the Pillar. Social scoreboard was added to the governance of the Pillar in order to support the monitoring of the progress by the member states. It was presented in April 2017 by the Commission. The social scoreboard consists of existing indicators to assess the employment and social trends with the potential of becoming a reference point on the social dimension (ibid).

6.2   Concerns of the CSOs

From the beginning of the Pillar's announcement, both Social Platform and Solidar worked for achieving a strong and legally binding Pillar. Social Platform had already started its campaign on social standards that it considered seriously damaged by the financial crisis (Pelosi, 2019). Their campaign was directed to tackle social issues such as employment, minimum wages, gender equality, in-work poverty, access to social protection and services (ibid). Social Platform obtained an opportunity to be involved to informal exchanges even before the first draft of the Pillar became public (ibid). However, the publication of the first draft came up with rather weak and limited scope. The first criticism came immediately from the CSOs was the question of whether the Pillar contained rights or principles. Even though the title of the Pillar says "Social Rights", the fact that it does not create any new rights and mostly refers to the principles in its outline, has caused a confusion for the CSOs. Solidar held

a view that presenting principles rather than legal rights would be less effective for the achievement of upward convergence (European Commission 2017b). Legal uncertainty of the Pillar also put it in a danger as a weak tool which could allow the member states to cherry-pick some principles over others for implementation. Therefore, both Social Platform and Solidar many times underlined the importance of having legally binding Pillar (Reuter 2019, Pelosi 2019)

More than that, the Pillar was applicable for only the Eurozone members, that was not in line with what the CSOs advocated for. They considered that the inclusion of all member states was a necessity in order to achieve a real social convergence. They feared that partial inclusion could lead to further increase the disparities among the member states and their social standards which would consequently affect people's life standards (Solidar 2016a, p.5). Equal application of the Pillar's rights to all citizens in Union was seen as an only way to prevent the growing social divergences.

In addition, the scope of the Pillar also became under the expectations of the CSOs. The main concern of the Social Platform regarding the scope of the Pillar was that it confined its focus to the employment and economic matters and social dimension seemed to be subordinated to the economic policy. For Social Platform, the Pillar should have been more than jobs, and the wider scope of social inclusion needed to be included. For them, it was the only way for creating a fair society where everyone could realize their potential and contribute to society (European Commission 2017b, p.10). Therefore, economic-social imbalances, prioritization of the macroeconomic objectives and presenting the social issues in a way to incentivize the economic growth, rather than as a question of fundamental rights opposed the position of rights-based social NGOs.

Another drawback of the Pillar was that it did not address the issues of third-country nationals and their inclusion to the social life of the EU. Connected to this point, there was little emphasis on the issue of discrimination on the base of ethnic origin, rights of undocumented migrants and also social rights of the mobile citizens of the EU (European Commission 2017b, p.10). Therefore, Social Platform called for more attention to be paid to the creation of an inclusive labor market and not just focus on its well performance (ibid). In this respect, the inclusion of people in a vulnerable situation and unemployed into the scope of the Pillar was essential.

However, among other stakeholders, there were reluctant actors also who did not support the expansion of the Pillar's scope. Civil society's rights-based approach to the Pillar became contradicted with the business and employer organizations who were favoring for economic and employment weight to be given to the Pillar. For them, increased competitiveness, job creation, productivity growth, better utilization of skills could contribute to the social progress of the EU and thereby improving living standards (ibid).

6.3   Political opportunity structure

As already discussed above for SMOs in order to be able to successfully mobilize, external factors play a role which create political opportunity structure. In order to discern what kind of political context with opportunities or constraints was presented for CSOs, each of the EU institutions, the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council will be looked separately as they were the ones who proclaimed the Pillar jointly.

6.3.1   The Commission

The Commission came as an initiator of the Pillar plan that opened many opportunities for civil society who work for social justice to put their ideas forward. Especially, the Junker Commission was considered to bring a new phase of a social dimension to the EU which was long considered as a neoliberal project serving only for a limited number of elites. As the former president of Social Platform stressed:

> The EU's economic and monetary coordination mechanisms have watched over, and sometimes blatantly encouraged, massive cuts in social spending and the dismantling of social safety nets in many Member States. That is why this latest initiative of the Juncker Commission has generated so much interest from social civil society.   -Social Platform, 2017c

The contacts of Social Platform with the Commission regarding the Pillar started even before the initiative became public (Pelosi 2019). The initiative was a political issue that came up without long preparations. Therefore, the DGs and their offices at the Commission were not ready to prepare well elaborated outline for the Pillar, as it was not in the work plan before (ibid). Therefore, the need for input from outside generated an advantageous situation for CSOs to start their mobilization work on early stages. As the representative of the Social Platform recalls "when you are doing advocacy, the earlier you intervene in the process, the more leverage you have" (ibid). The fact that Social Platform already had a package of social issues with recommendations and solutions prepared during their campaign, facilitated their

work to feed those solutions into the informal exchange meetings with the Commission's officials.

Some of the informal meetings happened with Allan Larsson, a Swedish special advisor on the Pillar, appointed by Juncker, from November 2015 to March 2016. (ibid). He held a series of meetings during this time with mainly five actors: ILO, the Parliament, BusinessEurope, ETUC and Social Platform. For Social Platform it was a useful opportunity to be one of the few actors and to establish a contact with a person who was the chief responsible for the design of the Pillar.

Besides, Marianne Thyssen, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, also organized a meeting with a wide range of civil society organizations working in different spheres of social sector such as, fight against poverty and homelessness, people with disabilities, social justice, social inclusion of Roma or migrants and so on. The main goal was to share the expertise of civil society and discuss how to achieve 'Triple A social rating", a goal set by Junker (European Commission 2015b).

However, once the first draft of the Pillar was published, it displayed many uncertainties regarding the content and implementation of the Pillar. As the representative of the Social Platform mentions there was an obvious language problem on the draft documents which superficially talked about actual social concerns such as inequalities, social protection or poverty (Pelosi 2019). Also another uncertainty was on how to implement the Pillar (ibid). Nevertheless, considering that the presence of opportunity depends on how the actors perceive it, the CSOs also utilized the Commission's unclear drafts by both presenting well-elaborated position papers to the consultation and also by organizing big events with decision-makers from the Commission and the Parliament (ibid). As will be discussed in the next section, meetings with some MEPs was particularly important in terms of advocating for broader implementation instruments.

The results of the consultation were supposed to feed into a proposal readjusting the European Monetary and Economic Union (Solidar 2016b). Usually, public consultations present a good opportunity for the stakeholders to contribute to the policymaking. But it also serves the Commission's interests from two aspects, as discussed in the literature review. First, to soften its democracy deficit problem and increase the institutional legitimacy which in the Pillar case proved that shaping the Pillar did not confine only to the high-profile officials and

specific business interests. Second, the Commission's limited awareness about the social situation on the grassroots level increased its dependence on the input from the civil society, such as expertise or direct experience with different social groups. As Jana Hainsworth, the former president of Social Platform stressed during the Commission Conference, that "European civil society brings together the collective views of groups whose voices are commonly unheard, putting us in a unique position to provide expertise to proposals like the Pillar" (Social Platform 2017d). Therefore, both civil society and the Commission were eager to interact with each other in order for the former to have an influence on policymaking and for the latter to gain more insights and knowledge from the grassroots level.

During the consultation, the Commission also hosted for some important events with the participation of different stakeholders. To mention few, in March 2016, The Commission organized the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth, which brought together 400 participants from civil society (European Commission 2017b, p.6), including the members of Solidar and Social Platform. Moreover, the Strategic Dialogue Meeting held in June 2016 with the participation of 45 social NGOs to discuss the concerns about the development of the Pillar. Together with Social Platform, its member organizations were present to discuss the future of work and welfare systems.

In January 2017, the results of the consultation were concluded in a high-level conference on the Pillar 'Going Forward Together' organized by the Commission, that also intended to define the forthcoming direction of the Pillar (ibid, p.3). For the Social Platform, the results were particularly positive since it was the most quoted organization on the report of the Consultation (Pelosi 2019) which meant they had quite an impact (ibid).

Yet, later on the process, another uncertainty of the Commission came with regard to the competences of the EU when new documents on the Pillar was released in 2017. For the Social Platform, it seemed that the Commission had further reduced its action in the social sphere and took a step back by clearly stating in its reflection paper that "member states have main responsibility for the implementation" (Social Platform 2017e). Solidar also held a view that in times of high levels of unemployment and job insecurity, reduction of community method actions and increasing intergovernmental power would lead of having a weak Pillar of mere principles and claims instead of consisting real, enforceable standards and right (Solidar, 2017, p3).

However, the focus of the CSOs was already shifted to an inter-institutional Proclamation which was expected to increase the relevance and political legitimacy of the Pillar. Therefore, they wanted to make sure that all sides would be committed to a strong Proclamation. Since one of these sides, the Council, was not fully supportive of the Pillar because of some member states who opposed to any possible threat to their welfare state competence. The Social Platform describes all these challenges, "in the climate of uncertainty, civil society has a clear role to play. We need to support the signing of this proclamation at the highest political level and with highest possible visibility" (Social Platform 2017e).

Solidar representative notes that, once the proclamation became maximum possible with the EPSCO Council's agreement on the proclamation text, within the Commission the compromise was also reached about the need to go further for achieving, to some extent, formal and binding character for the Pillar. (Reuter 2019).

In sum, the Commission can be characterized as a structurally open institution, since throughout the development process of the Pillar there has been intense meetings and dialogues organized by the Commission with the participation of the civil society. However, towards the end of the process, it showed some reservation on undertaking its competences, arguing for a subsidiarity principle.

6.3.2 The Parliament

After an increased role of the European Parliament in the decision-making process, it also became an important venue for interest groups. Especially, diffused groups such as civil society organizations advocating for public good increased their relations with parliamentarians who are interested to have contacts with the representatives of the large constituents. In the Pillar case, the Parliament was particularly supportive of the initiative, as it generally favors the social policy. During the Plenary session in 2016, the Parliament set out its recommendations for the Commission's Work Plan of 2017. One of the focuses in the recommendation was the social rights and the Social Pillar, asking the Commission to present the proposal regarding the Pillar. However, a more decisive step from the Parliament came with the report prepared by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs in the end of 2016. The report was drafted by the Vice President of the Socialist and Democrats Party, MEP Maria Jaoa Rodrigues, who warmly welcomed the Pillar. The report attracted much attention

with its strong language that called the Commission for taking concrete actions and ensuring enforceable and legally binding rights in the Pillar. For both the Social Platform and the Solidar it was a huge opportunity that the ambitious language of the report could strengthen their position and provide for them a reference point when demanding more EU actions. From the interview with the Social Platform's representative, it becomes clear that the report also included many recommendations of the Social Platform (Pelosi 2019). Thus the Social Platform's relations with the rapporteur had already started before the publication of the report when the Social Platform invited her to be the main speaker in its event organized in June 2016, which led to the establishment of close contacts (ibid).

For both Social Platform and Solidar the advantages of the report were that it dealt so much with the implementation tools, such as legislation and funding. This was very close to the approach that the Social Platform took on social standards since many years (Pelosi 2019). For example, the report called social partners and the Commission to present a "framework directive on decent working conditions in all forms of employment […] ensuring for every worker a core set of enforceable rights"(European Parliament 2016). Since this call would exceed the competences of the Commission, it stated that the Commission would not be able to react to this call because of a series of difficulties such as insufficient legal basis, political difficulty to reach a majority in the European Parliament and the Council.

Moreover, the report also recommended "the establishment of national wage floors through legislation or collective bargaining, with the objective of attaining at least 60 % of the respective national average wage" (European Parliament 2016). This target was also one of the goals of the Social Platform that was set on their position papers on minimum wage since 2015 (Pelosi 2019). Therefore, this ambitious report on the Pillar brought the rapporteur Maria Jaoa Rodrigues as an ally close to the Social Platform. It became a strong Parliament-civil society alliance who were pushing for more social Europe through legislative (i.e. directives) and financial (i.e. social investment) instruments that the member states usually are reluctant to adopt. Having such a strong ally in the Parliament, encouraged both the Social Platform and the Solidar to increase their mobilization towards the adoption of the report, they engaged with an intense lobbying work to target some MEPs who could potentially oppose the report (ibid). Eventually, even though the majority voted in favor of the report, the sections about the adequate minimum wages were voted against. It was especially right-wing parties who did not favor the report. (Reuter 2019) However, civil society still welcomed the adopted

resolution both as a success of long campaigning for the reinforced social dimension and also as an opportunity to continue on pressing decision-makers for a stronger and implementable Social Pillar.

6.3.3   The Council

Structurally the Council is the least open institution to the civil society members than the other institutions. The representative of the Solidar also mentioned that civil society, in comparison with social partners who had regular tripartite meetings with the Council and the Commission, did not engage in any intergovernmental negotiations and had very rare contacts with the Council. During the development of the Pillar, it was less easy to put pressure on the Council than on others (Pelosi 2019). The divided position of the Council on the Pillar also added to the complicated nature of the Council. Thus, some member states who had strong social welfare models were not willing to contribute to the Pillar and that could slow down the pace of the internal negotiations (ibid). Sweden, for example, as a model of high social standards was not sharing the idea of the Pillar from the beginning. Therefore, it holds very protective stance on the subsidiarity principle and regarded the Pillar as a threat to its national welfare state (ibid). More than that, Germany as a euro-zone country also showed its reluctance during the development of the Pillar, which could have a negative impact on the output of the Pillar.

Nevertheless, the Council was not completely isolated from the civil society. Even though for the Solidar it was harder to engage with the Council on the social issues, the Social Platform as a top organization of all social NGOs was in a better position in terms of the capability of getting in touch with the Council officials. For Social Platform, an intense work started towards the end when the Estonian Presidency took charge of the office on 1 July 2017. The Estonian Presidency was the last presidency through the duration of the Pillar's development process and its priorities mainly focused on the field of Employment and Social Affairs that highlighted the work on the Pillar with the focus on preparing a Proclamation text (Solidar 2017b). Therefore, it became an essential spot for civil society to follow closely the developments at the Council (ibid). It was a critical time for the Social Platform consider that, as mentioned above, different positions of different member states in the Council, could potentially put the strength and shape of the Pillar under question. Therefore, it was very important for the Social Platform to keep its monitoring work on the Council negotiations, which they did mainly through two channels. First, by making personal contacts and trying to

find someone from inside of the Council in order to exchange information or leak some documents and drafts. In this work, the director of the Social Platform who formerly worked for the Italian Permanent Representation when Italy held the Presidency at the Council, facilitated the creation of these contacts (Pelosi 2019). According to him, having this experience eased the work for the Social Platform in terms of getting in contact with the Council officials. Second, Social Platform kept it contacts with the Council through other institutions and allies, the Commission and the Parliament. Mainly, it was through the rapporteur Maria Jaoa Rodrigues who had very close contacts with the Presidency and other offices in the Council (ibid). Even though increased relations with the Council towards the summit day allowed the Social Platform to follow closely the negotiations, react to the Proclamation draft, and possibly to propose some amendments as they did with the Parliament report, they chose not to do it. It was strategically thought step since if they pushed for opening up of the text for amendments within the Council, "the balance of power and the request coming from some countries would make it more likely that text would get worse" (ibid). Instead, they informally put pressure on the member states and the Presidency in order not to let the negotiations within the Council to slow down and to steer them towards a solemn Proclamation.

6.4   Allies

The presence of the allies is an essential factor for the movement actors to succeed in their advocacy work and to have an impact on policy. In the institutional settings, it was the special advisor on the Pillar, Allan Larsson, the Commissioner Thyssen, the rapporteur Maria Jaoa Rodrigues, and some left-wing MEPs from the Parliament. It should be noted that over time these relations were becoming more or less important. For example, the CSOs' relations with the Commissioner Thyssen and other officials of the DG EMPL were more important and intense at the beginning of Pillar process whereas later on the MEP Maria Jaoa Rodrigues became even more important and closer ally. In the Council, there was not any ally which also characterized the close nature of the Council. Many events, roundtable discussions have been organized with the allies. In all of these events, the CSOs have been firmly maintaining their position to achieve a strong Pillar with enforceable rights.

Moreover, the presence of non-institutional allies also facilitated the CSOs' work on many social policy-related issues. As Social Platform notes, "part of the work was to engage

with other stakeholders, trade unions, employer associations. With trade unions, it was easier, as on many issues we were aligning and doing joint actions" (Pelosi 2019). Having trade unions as allies, as Porta notes, plays a significant role since they have a broad social base which contributes to the mobilization of social actors and obliges the decision-makers to recognize their demands. ETUC as a chief social partner was the closest ally to the Social Platform and the Solidar. Even though usually the ETUC's work mostly concerns the employees' rights and the working conditions, during the Pillar process, it aligned with the Social Platform and the Solidar on all social issues, such as establishing social standards, including minimum income and employment benefits or improving the social investment.

6.5   Mobilization and activities

In order to effectively utilize the opportunities opened up for the civil society members, their mobilization from the very beginning of the Pillar process to the day of Proclamation was characterized with a number of activities.

For Social Platform it was even more important and harder to deliver the voice of people coherently since it was the largest network of the social NGOs. The representative of Social Platform explains it,

> NGOs are different in terms of capacity, interests and priorities. To be able to engage outside it requires an internal agreement… it is also negotiations internally about what to put forward or what is needed to prioritize… in some cases when it comes to advocating new issues you have to formalize your position. Responding to the consultation requires a lot of draft work, to make sure everyone on the board, agree. A lot of NGOs worked through the Social Platform in order to get visibility on the Pillar.   - Pelosi, 2019

By mobilizing its member organizations on the specific issues, the Social Platform aimed to achieve more influence on the process of the Pillar. For example, one of the calls that the Social Platform advocated from the beginning, to give more attention to the fight against poverty in the Pillar, found its way to reach the EU decision-makers. It was mainly through one of the Platform's member organizations, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), that had expert knowledge on the issue. The EAPN has organized some meetings with the high-level officials of the EU where they carried an exchange of ideas and solutions on the poverty issues with the decision maker. For example, one of them was held in November 2016 with the participation of the Director General of DG EMPL, the

representative of Slovakian Presidency and the Commissioner Marianne Thyssen (Social Platform 2016b)

One of the ways of involving as many actors as possible to their mobilization was organizing different events with the participation of both institutional and non-institutional actors that intended to foster the exchange of ideas among them. For example, in May 2016 Solidar together with some national social partners organized a conference on the Pillar where the representatives from the Commission (DG EMPL), the Parliament, and also from the private sector and the trade unions were present (Solidar 2016b). By inviting both the allies and the reluctant partners (such as business associations) for discussing the possible ways of shaping the Pillar, it aimed to bring different approaches on the Pillar together and to find a common way forward. For instance, while some representatives from the Commission and the BusinessEurope were on the side of having a Pillar as a guideline and keeping minimum standards, the civil society members were favoring for a binding Pillar which would cover the whole EU. Therefore, having the aim to serve as a constructive place, those kinds of events served for reaching a common ground.

More than that, both Social Platform and the Solidar were working with their member organizations on the national level as a way to inform and mobilize them to act towards the governments. (Reuter 2019) Since the member states were the ones who possessed the main competencies in social policy, their high political willingness was one of the key driving factors that could lead to a strong Pillar.

Towards the Proclamation day, the CSOs gained a new speed of mobilization for ensuring a robust inter-institutional Proclamation. The Social Platform launched a month-long social media campaign with its member organization, European Youth Forum, in order to raise awareness on the civil society's position on the Pillar. The campaign used different infographics and tweets that garnered lots of impressions and managed to make the Summit's official hashtag - #SocialSummit17 (Social Platform, 2017b, p.9). It was successful campaigning which spread the messages such as a call for an adoption of a framework directive to guarantee decent working conditions and a directive on minimum income among the decision-makers.

The culmination of all these activities came with the day of the Social Summit for the Pillar's Proclamation in Gothenburg, Sweden on the 17th November 2017, when Solidar as

part of the Social Platform's delegation attended the summit. Several debates were organized by the Social Platform, ETUC, and the S&D group a day before the summit which made last calls to the EU institutions. On the summit day, the Social Platform was also given official speaking slots in three workshops alongside the Prime Ministers and the European Presidents. The only disappointing point for the CSOs during the summit days was the absence of the German Chancellor, who viewed by the Solidar as one of the leading pioneers of austerity measures (Solidar 2017c).

6.6   Framing process

Framing process is an important factor that feeds into the visibility of civil society actors. The way that the CSOs advocated for a stronger Pillar, consequently became crucial in terms of convincing the decision-makers on how to achieve a better Social Model of Europe. The CSOs produce a master frame(s) in order to facilitate the mobilization of the common objectives of diverse social NGOs advocating for different elements of social policy. The Social Platform as a network of social NGOs, in this case, carries a big responsibility on how to formulate the broad frame to which all its member organizations can relate. "Rights based approach to the Social Pillar" was the main and overarching frame in the many positions or advocacy documents of the Social Platform and the Solidar (Solidar 2016a, Social Platform 2016a). It was an encompassing frame that described the dominant vision of the civil society acquired during the development of the Pillar. Its strategic goal aimed to include a broad variety of social rights, which would connect with human rights. It illustrated how from the outset of the idea of the Pillar, the Social Platform and the Solidar avoided sticking only to the workers' rights. This was especially important for the Social Platform whose member organizations work on diverse fields of social life. According to the Solidar, such a rights-based approach should have to be manifest on the Pillar's outline for "comprehensive and integrated social policies" (Solidar 2016a, p. 8)

The master frame with which the CSOs were advocating for the rights of all people leaving in the EU, became a shield against two dispositions that characterized the initial version of the Pillar. First, the economic considerations were a priority over the social ones in the first draft of the Pillar. In other words, the language of the first draft mostly dealt with economic concerns. These concerns were demonstrated as following: "the experience of the past decade and a half has shown that persisting imbalances in one or several Member States may put at risk the stability of the euro area as a whole and that an inability to correct these

may result in even further costly divergence"(European Commission, 2016) . In that perspective, social policy was regarded as subordinate to the economic concerns that had the potential to be a remedy: "it is clear that the future success of the euro area depends, in no small measure, on the effectiveness of national labour markets and welfare systems and on the capacity of the economy to absorb and adjust to shocks" (ibid).

Second, the social issues in the first draft were rather restricted to the employment and the labour market issues, paying less attention to the social challenges such as inequality, poverty, rights of unemployed people (Pelosi 2019). That is why making "a rights based approach" as a main call in their advocacy work had a significant effect on broadening of the scope of the Pillar to the real social challenges that every person leaving in EU, regardless of citizenship and work situation could face.

6.6.1 Diagnostic framing

As Snow explains when social movement brings up diagnostic framing, they tend to identify the sources of blame and casualty and the "victims" of the injustice. The emerged political opportunities during the Pillar process allowed the Social Platform and the Solidar to raise the issues of different social groups of people. They based their advocacy work on the efforts to frame the seriousness of the problems. The Social Platform as an outspoken actor stressed the increased share of unemployed people after the crisis together with in-work poverty which resulted from involuntary part-time, non-standard forms of employment (such as zero-hours contracts) or temporary work and other forms of underemployment (Social Platform 2016a, p.4). Against this background, the Social Platform was highlighting the high levels of inequalities as extremely concerning point to tackle. In general, "inequalities" grew into a strong frame which rendered the problem identification more visible. As said in the previous section, the first draft of the Pillar disregarded the inequality issues as less essential. By "inequalities", the Social Platform referred to the existing inequalities in the access to different social services, such as care, housing, education, life-learning or health, but also to the income inequalities that were in need of proper political action (ibid). This political action, first of all, should have included the "fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance" (ibid).

Moreover, the Solidar identified the vulnerable groups as victims of the inequalities. Vulnerable groups that faced difficulties in the European labor market was on the rise in 13 countries (out of 14) according to the Solidar's Social Progress Watch Initiative (SPWI). The Solidar expressed its concerns that the Commission's first draft on the Pillar did not take into

consideration the high number of migrants coming to Europe among which young people particularly get exposed to the discrimination and exploitation on the labor market (Solidar 2016a, pp.6-7). Since, migrants, especially those with unclear legal status, can easily become the target of 'precarious working and living conditions', it was one of the concerning points for the Solidar and therefore, it supported an "equal access to economic, social and cultural rights for all people irrespective of their legal status" (ibid). By referring to the SPWI's findings, the Solidar asserted that young migrants were usually healthier and more educated compared with their peers in the country of origin. So the Solidar was trying to draw the attention of the EU policy-makers to the opportunities and the big potential that the migrants could bring to the aging demographic situation in Europe.

As one of the requirements for the framing to be credible is empirical credibility, the Social Progress Watch Initiative as a monitoring tool empowered the Solidar's concerns and arguments. It was launched with a purpose to monitor the progress and the commitment that the national governments made towards "a more social and cohesive Europe" (Solidar 2016c, p.5-6). On the base of that, Solidar collects country reports and prepares statistical and case studies on a yearly basis.

It is noteworthy that, while on overall social policy as mentioned in the previous section, CSOs see the trade unions as their allies, on certain issues they criticized the trade unions, such as on the vulnerable migrants' issue. Mainly, that is because the trade unions had a tendency "to concentrate one-sidedly on protecting national worker" which could contribute to further exclusion of the migrant workers (Solidar 2016a, p.). A high number of "people at risk of poverty or social exclusion" was another group of victims stressed by Social Platform (Social Platform 2016a, p.4). It concerned that, in this group of people, especially children and people with disabilities could more easily get exposed to poverty than the rest of the people.

By identifying wide range of problems and victims in different social groups, diagnostic framing also involves an "attribution of blame or casualty" (Snow &Benford 1986, p.200). Even though, Snow notes that there is less probability to come to a consensus in the problem attribution than in the problem identification, it was not the case with Social Platform and Solidar when articulating the causes of the problems. Both CSOs utilized the opportunities presented by the Commission to criticize those who were responsible for the dire situation

Europe faced after the economic crisis. In the beginning of the development of the Pillar, it was clear from the documents of the Social Platform and the Solidar that they attributed the reasons of inequality, poverty or high unemployment to the EU and its austerity measures and neoliberal agenda during and after the crisis. The Social Platform notes, "… it is largely the result of policy decisions made in recent years, and austerity measures aimed at boosting competitiveness taking precedence over social objectives" (Social Platform 2016a, p.4). They also viewed these austerity measures as contributing factors to the populism, distrust to the EU institutions and to an unfair position of the vulnerable and minority people. The Social Platform highlighted the consequences of these detrimental political decisions and for them, the lack of binding EU rules in the social policies, with an exceptional little or even no harmonization or coordination powers, caused the growing differences in the social standards among the member states.

6.6.2 Prognostic framing

The purpose of the prognostic framing is not only to propose solutions for the problems but also to find certain strategies and tactics.

For both the Social Platform and the Solidar, the key goal during the development of the Pillar was to have a binding Pillar which could become a solution to minimize the differences both between the member states and their social standards and also between the different social groups. Apart from this, some specific solutions were put forward in order, in the end, to have a strong Pillar. The strength of the Pillar mostly depended on how it would be made operational. Therefore, the question of implementation was at the center of both CSOs concerns.

"Comprehensive implementation" became a major frame which had a potential "to guarantee the full range of social safeguards applicable in all Member States" (Solidar 2016a, p.5). During the development of the Pillar, the CSOs paid their utmost efforts for finding ways for achieving a strong Pillar. They put forward different components of the "comprehensive implementation" so that to push them to be incorporated into the Pillar. These components were legislation, soft governance and the EU funding. According to the Social Platform, the starting point should have been to strengthen the implementation of already existing instruments, such as Europe 2020 Strategy, Social Investment Package, Barcelona targets or the European Disability Strategy (Social Platform 2016a, p.5). Even though all these instruments were launched with an aim to achieve improvement in social issues, all of them

fell short of proper implementation. It was due to the "unbalanced budgetary objectives" and a "lack of effective monitoring tools to measure progress" that resulted in poor implementation (ibid).

Second, the CSOs strongly favored the need for new legislative tools without which implementation of the Pillar could be ineffective. In compare with the member states and the employer organizations who favored soft policy tools (benchmarking), the CSOs were strongly supporting having binding instruments in order to achieve upward convergence in social issues (European Commission 2017b, p.16). Even though with their "comprehensive implementation" frame, they have suggested many implementation tools, it is interesting to look at few of them, which potentially touched upon the distribution of the EU-member state competences.

They proposed the introduction of a directive on adequate minimum income and the EU framework for an adequate minimum wage. They considered that the establishment of common definitions, principles and methods became necessary to reach a level playing field across the EU. They underlined the importance of having a minimum income directive as a basis for social protection during the whole life-span of a person, and consequently to ensure that people live a life in dignity. The main point was that to fight poverty should not have been only connected with an employment criterion. Therefore, according to the Social Platform an adequate minimum income and the "social protection floor" needed to be available for everyone regardless of one's work situation and to ensure the provision of universal access to affordable and quality services (Social Platform 2016a, p.6). The realization of this directive was proposed to be assessed through the European Semester and other governance frameworks.

Regarding the latter directive, the minimum wage that is a crucial component of comprehensive income support schemes, both CSOs advocated for the minimum wage to be above 60% of the national median wage. It should have been set in a way that avoids any discrimination based on a type of contract, work experience, gender or age, etc. Moreover, for all the sectors of the economy, the minimum wage had to be applicable in order to ensure a decent life for workers and employees. Overall, both CSOs became vocal actors for the introduction of a "positive hierarchy between minimum income, unemployment benefits, and minimum wage, all set above the poverty line" (ibid).

This two policy areas, especially the minimum wage policy gives marginal competences to the EU decision makers. Therefore, while advocating for the EU level coordination and harmonization in those policy areas in order to achieve a better guarantee of social rights to people, both CSOs also paid due attention to the possibilities of their realization. In this regard, the CSOs referred to the existing EU acquis when they advocated for stronger Pillar and consequently for more EU competences. For the adequate minimum income directive, which the Social Platform considers (minimum income) as one of the fundamental rights, the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, Article 153,1(h) was a reference point as a legal basis. This article asserts that the EU will "support and complement the activities of the Member States" in "the integration of persons excluded from the labor market"(TFEU, Article 153). Moreover, Solidar referred to the Commission Recommendation of 3/10/2008 which was also about active inclusion of those who were excluded from the labor market and facilitating the access to quality employment for them.

In the case of minimum wages, which was even more contentious issue in regard to the limited EU competences. The EU Treaty explicitly excludes the wage policy from the EU's competences. Therefore, soft law and its tools became reference points for the CSOs in order to push the EU for some action. According to the Social Platform, "European Commission should support the introduction of adequate minimum wages… through country-specific recommendations (CSRs) within the framework of the European Semester" (Social Platform 2016a, p.16). So the CSRs were perceived to be an effective way to call for a progressive rise in minimum wages levels.

The CSOs considered that, the European Semester as soft governance was a crucial point in overall implementation of the principles of the Pillar. Especially, considering that traditionally the European Semester was viewed as an instrument for economic governance, efforts put by both Social Platform and Solidar in order to highlight the need to make the European Semester more social are noteworthy. Since not all the domains of social policy can be implemented through legislation, it requires the need for the minimum standards' evaluation through soft governance, and therefore, the use of benchmarking was strongly supported by the CSOs. These benchmarks needed to incorporate "measurable and comparable indicators" in order to be effective and provide guidance and support to the member states. (ibid, p. 11) For this purpose, social scoreboard, which was also introduced by the Commission, was a right starting point to apply in the European Semester (Solidar2016a,

p.12). According to the Solidar, the indicators of the social scoreboard should not have focused narrowly on unemployment, but cover various dimensions describing transitions in the life cycle of people and ability to protect them from structural and cyclical changes. (ibid).

6.6.3   Motivational framing

Even though, in the traditional use of motivational framing, the movement groups call for arms and action which illustrates more dynamic and contentious events by those groups, it can well be translated into the case of civil society who prefer more conventional methods of engaging with decision-makers. In that regard, their call for action was a call to involve all social NGOs working on all levels, grassroots, national and EU-level, into the development process of the Pillar. As discussed above, the Social Platform as a network of all social NGOs in Europe, plays a crucial role in terms of talking on behalf of a wide range of NGOs. Therefore, the frequent use of "civil dialogue", even though not a new frame, represented not only the Social Platform and the Solidar but also their member organizations and this frame highlighted the importance of their participation in the policymaking. This importance was connected with the ability of the civil society to add value to the policy-making. As Solidar emphasizes:

> The involvement (and empowerment) of civil society organizations at all levels of policy-making (local, regional, national, European) is a prerequisite for evidence-based policy-making that finds acceptance throughout society.   -Solidar 2016a, p.8

Social Platform explains the importance of "civil dialogue" as following:

> civil society organizations are important engine of social innovation and are the only ones to represent the interests of people that gather around specific characteristics: young and older people, women, children, people living in poverty, people with disabilities, carers, migrants..., etc   -Social Platform 2016a, p9

The facilitating point for this motivational frame was that the Treaty of the EU (article 11) set the need for a dialogue between the civil society and the EU. However, Social Platform and Solidar obviously did not take this dialogue for granted, as being supported by the Treaty. Rather there was a need to reinvigorate this civil dialogue and to recognize it as an indispensable part of the ongoing Pillar process. Since the existence of social dialogue and social partners who were directly responsible for the achievement of the Pillar and its implementation could downgrade the need for civil dialogue. Even though, social partners were very close allies to the CSOs in advancing the cause of their social rights, the advantages

of civil dialogue were often stressed by the Social Platorm as a complementary to the social dialogue:

> Civil society organizations represent groups that are not necessarily represented by trade unions and have important contributions to make in the implementation and design of social policies.

-Social Platform 2016a, p.18

Therefore, Social Platform saw the essence of civil dialogue in the fact that the CSOs represented a broad variety of social groups and thus could contribute to the social issues covered by the Pillar. Solidar in one of the early meetings also made clear that civil dialogue was not in competition with the social dialogue (Solidar 2015)

Overall, the call of both CSOs for a civil action for attaining more social Europe, which framed around the "civil dialogue", was a contributing factor to their mobilization.

6.6.4   Frame bridging

Frame bridging is linking two or more ideologically congruent but structurally different frames that aim to succeed targeted goals by mobilizing a consensus. During the Pillar process, this consensus was especially needed regarding the implementation tools. Social investment as one of these tools was particularly important and strongly supported by the CSOs in order to revive it within the Pillar. Since the social investment was given little attention in Pillar (Solidar 2016a, p.10), both Solidar and Social Platform included this issue in their response to the consultation as one of their priorities. Social investment can incentivize the member states to maintain investments on the social sector, which will enable people to actively take part in different spheres of the society throughout their lives such as childcare, education, healthcare, minimum income schemes, social insurance and so on (European Parliament 2016).

The frame bridging was between social and economic policies, which clearly showed itself on the social investment issue. The Social Platform was favoring the social investment not just because it had potential to increase the life standards of all people and promote the social inclusion (however, this was the main motive), but also social investment could have a great impact on the economic growth as well (Solidar2016a, p. 5). As it stated that, "…social expenditure is primarily a long-term investment in the development of our societies, our well-being and our economies". It was a remarkable point in a sense that certain member states have always regarded the social investment as a burden on their budget and economy.

However, the experience showed that the countries that bore minimal impact from the crisis were those who made the largest social investments on their people. So economic stability during the crisis and economic growth were positively connected with the social cohesion and inclusion. According to Solidar, social protection and social investment could make the "social market economy" even more resilient (Solidar2016a, p. 4).

It should be noted that the importance of investing in human capital was emphasized in the Commission's first Communication, even though not explicitly mentioning the social investment throughout the paper. It stated that,

> Modern social policy should rely on investment in human capital based on equal opportunities, the prevention of and protection against social risks, the existence of effective safety nets and incentives to access the labour market, so as to enable people to live a decent life, change personal and professional statuses over the lifetime and make the most of their talent"

-European Commission 2016

As Ruzza (2004) stresses, while talking about frame bridging, that in order to be successful the SMOs must not take totally 'innovative approaches' which can counter the stable norms of institutional behavior. Rather to find 'stable niches' and to combine "their norms and agendas with institutional ones" (ibid). Therefore, considering that there already existed acknowledgment of the link between social policy, economic policy and investment, the CSOs activated consensus formation when bridging the social investment to this linkage.

Other than that, as frame bridging pursues to build a relation between two major policy approaches which are potentially supported by competing actors, in this case between social and economic, it was strategically done to encourage some actors such as BusinessEurope or some members states who favored economic interest over social issues, to consider the close interdependence between the two spheres.

7 Discussion: Success? To what extent?

As discussed above, with unpacking the political opportunity structure during the development process of the Pillar, some important implications can be identified for the Social Platform and Solidar.

Even though the Pillar was not supposed to bring Treaty changes or create new rights, it necessitated the EU legislation to be either revised or to be completed. Therefore, both CSOs

focused on how to achieve a comprehensive and strong Pillar supplied with major implementation tools. Put it simply, wide content and inclusion of implementation tools were the main goals for CSOs. In addition, to ensure a strong and committed proclamation from all three institutions, became another point in their advocacy work towards the summit day.

Regarding the content and language of the Pillar, the main concern of both CSOs was that the initial version of the Pillar came with a rather narrow focus on jobs and employment issues and mostly served for economic growth. The Commission had the responsibility on designing the outline of the Pillar. Being structurally an open institution allowed the CSOs to push their concerns through different channels to the Commission's decision makers. For the Social Platform, these opportunities started even earlier before the initiative became public. Having informal bilateral contacts with special advisor allowed the Social Platform to present its recommendations on the issue. Also, earlier meetings of the Commissioner Thyssen with the civil society, including Solidar and Social Platform, were good opportunities for them to exchange their views and ideas. The Consultation process added to this favorable situation when both CSOs presented well-elaborated position papers on the Pillar. Also, some events during the consultation process were also organized by both the Commission and the CSOs. It was a result of all these meetings and openness of the Commission to the external input, that the CSOs could improve the language of the Pillar. As The representative of the Social Platform puts it "…clearly what we wanted were not all there, but comparing the original idea of the Commission, as it was very much about employment, digitalization and skill, in the end it [the Pillar] became an instrument that focuses on inequalities and poverty, accessibility of services and social protection" (Pelosi, 2019)

With regard to the "comprehensive implementation" as was framed by the CSOs, it became more challenging to achieve it. It should be noted that implementation is an ongoing process, but within this case study's time limits the efforts of the CSOs directed to the recognition of the implementation tools through the Pillar's documents, such as the second Communication from the Commission or accompanying Staff Working document (2017). The challenge of achieving a wide range of implementation instruments was lying on the question of the EU competences. In this perspective, the Commission was skeptical of taking more action and shifted the responsibility towards intergovernmental instruments which caused the criticism of the CSOs. As Gamson and Meyer notes (p. 277) circumstances in opportunity

structure can become more or less favorable, in the Commission, especially after the consultation process, it became less favorable because of this responsibility shift.

However, this time opportunities came from the Parliament side with an ambitious report and the rapporteur who became a close ally for both CSOs. The report presented an extensive implementation of the Pillar which also included a call for the Commission to consider the establishment of minimum wage floors and adoption of a directive on minimum wages, which were part of the CSOs' solution (prognostic) frames. So, the openness and the presence of an ally in the Parliament facilitated the CSOs' prognostic frames to find institutional support. Since the fact that the report included many of the Social Platform's recommendations also proves the importance of the POS and resonance of the framing process.

In a favorable political opportunity structure, effective framing efforts enabled the Social Platform and the Solidar to communicate with an external audience from a united front. It required a high level of mobilization internally with their member organizations and externally with their allies and even with reluctant actors, such as BusinessEurope. As Rutch notes "the movement can realize its potential to be strong and successful to the extent it takes this context into consideration and makes it resonant by structural attunement, strategic calculation, and clever use of leverage points" (2016, p.189). So the civil society managed to make this existing political context resonant and achieved three things. The representative of the Social Platform describes it in this way,

> …first, in terms of our organization's legitimacy, the initiative allowed to improve the Platform's standing and credibility; second, politically we contributed to the approval of the Proclamation of the Pillar, as at one point there was deadlock at the Council; third, the content, comparing with the original idea of the Commission, turned into a good balanced language covering inequalities, poverty and social standards.   -Pelosi 2019

In sum, despite the limited competences of the EU in social policy which also showed itself in the Pillar case, the civil society managed to mobilize actively during this period by organizing different events, making elite contacts and unifying under one firm position that eventually led to their success. Even though, this did not necessarily end up with a transformation of more competences to the EU, civil society's mobilization forced the EU to show more commitment to the social issues which were traditionally left behind by the economic issues.

8 Conclusion

This study has attempted to bring a different approach to the civil society literature, which mostly analyzes it as a normative element in the EU governance, such as assigning a role of remedy to the democracy deficit problem. However, the previous scholars have not paid enough attention to the real potential and capacity of the civil society when a favorable political context exists. Therefore, this thesis analyzed this capacity in terms of the civil society's mobilizing activities and efforts during the development process of the Pillar. Having an aim to succeed in their overall advocacy work, in order to achieve socially ambitious Pillar, the civil society members effectively used all the opportunities that came up with the Pillar process. In that terms, the Social Platform and the Solidar, the leading actors in the social sector, had quite an positive impact on the Pillar, which became more comprehensive in comparison with the initial version. So, considering that the social policy still largely depends on the member states' competences, there are similar policy areas that also give the EU trivial competences. Therefore, it would be interesting to further the research to comparative perspectives, in order to examine how the civil society members working on different policy areas mobilize for the more EU action and competences.

Word Count: 19253

9 Appendix 1

• Chapter 1: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market	• Chapter 2: Fair working conditions	• Chapter 3: Social protection and inclusion
1. Education, training and life long learning 2. Gender equality 3. Equal opportunities 4. Active support to employment	5. Secure and adaptable employment 6. Wages 7.Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals 8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers 9. Work-life balance 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection	11. Childcare and support to children 12. Social protection 13. Unemployment benefits 14. Minimum income 15. Old age income and pensions 16. Health care 17. Inclusion of people with diasbilities 18. Long-term care 19. Housing and assistance for the homeless 20. Access to essential services

❖ European Pillar of Social Rights. Proclaimed version. Source: Booklet (2017) The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission solemnly proclaim the following text as the European Pillar of Social Rights

10 Appendix 2

Topic guide – Social Platform and Solidar representatives

1. What were the main points your organization advocating for?
2. What were the opportunities?
3. How were your relations with the Commission? /what contacts?
4. How were your relations with the Parliament? /what contacts?
5. How were your relations with the Council? /what contacts?
6. Who were other partners?
7. How did your organization mobilize during the process?
8. How did you satisfy with the results?
9. What was the added value of your organization?

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