THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Open Method of Coordination on Social Inclusion: Analysing the participation of British and Greek stakeholders and its impact on their expectations, political activities and loyalties.

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Abstract

This research focuses on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion over a period of ten years. It analyses the participation of people who experience poverty and/or social exclusion and anti-poverty associations in the OMC. The main objective is to explore whether such participation triggers the redirection of participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. The research focuses on participation at domestic and EU level. It identifies the core responses (or non-responses) of British and Greek governmental and non-governmental actors to the EU pressures for participation. National responses to EU pressures help understand the participation of the above mentioned stakeholders in the domestic policy-making process. Additionally, by focusing on the participation of British and Greek delegates to the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty, this research seeks to understand whether participation through the OMC, at EU level, influences expectations, political activities and loyalties. The empirical findings of the research show that participation in the OMC indeed influences redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties. However, the differences between the UK and Greece, and the differences between participation domestically and at EU level were found to be significant. This research contributes to existing theory by analysing the effects of participation of wider numbers of citizens in EU processes. It addresses the lack of empirical data regarding the participation of non-traditional stakeholders.

Table of Contents

List of tables 6
List of abbreviations 7
Acknowledgements 9

Introduction 11
Studying expectations, political activities and loyalties 11
The purpose of the thesis 15
Structure 18
An overview of the findings 19

Chapter 1: Analytical and Methodological Framework 23
1.1 The launch of the Open Method of Coordination 23
1.1.1 Reasoning behind the design and launch of the OMC 26
1.1.1.1 The need for social Europe and the need for citizens' support 27
1.1.1.2 The need for further integration and democratic legitimacy 29
1.1.1.3 The need for unity in diversity 30
1.1.2 The OMC and the provisions for participation 31
1.1.3 The OMC as an invisible method and the social inclusion OMC as an open method. 34
1.1.4 Participation, governance and loyalties 36
1.1.5 Europeanisation of social inclusion and loyalties 39
1.2 The redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties and efforts to construct a European identity 48
1.2.1 A 'people's Europe' through a European culture 51
1.2.2 New and pre-existing collective loyalties: incompatibility and rationalism 53
1.2.3 Shifts in loyalties limited to the elites 56
1.2.4 Participation in EU processes and socialisation 57
1.2.5 The OMC as a socialisation agent 61
1.3 Methodology and country selection 67
1.3.1 Stages, degree and level of participation 67
1.3.2 Research question and hypotheses 72
1.3.3 Qualitative research 73
1.3.3.1 Interviews 74
1.3.3.2 EU, national and third sector documents 79
1.3.4 Research timeframe 80
1.3.5 Country selection: Greece and the UK. 82
1.3.5.1 Europeanisation through the Lisbon strategy 82
1.3.5.2 Loyalties to the EU 83

Chapter 2: The European Union, poverty and social exclusion 87
2.1. Introduction 87
2.2 The concepts of poverty and social exclusion 88
2.2.1 The concept of poverty 88
2.2.2 The concept of social exclusion 92
2.3 The EU, poverty and social exclusion 97

2.3.1 The early steps of the EU and limited social provisions.....97
2.3.2 The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).....100
2.3.3 An OMC on poverty and social exclusion before the Lisbon strategy?.....102
2.3.4 The Community Charter on Fundamental Social Rights of Workers 105
2.4. Criticisms of the focus on growth and jobs.....107
2.4.1 Criticising growth and jobs.....108
2.4.2 Criticising the approach to participation 111
2.4.3 Participation and empowerment as equilibrium to growth and jobs.....113
2.4.4 Barriers to participation 118
2.5 The European meetings of people experiencing poverty.....122
Conclusion.....131

Chapter 3: The Open Method of Coordination in the United Kingdom..... 135
3.1 Introduction: the Open Method of Coordination in the UK.....135
3.2 Indices of poverty and exclusion in the UK. 137
3.2.1 People at risk of poverty 137
3.2.2 Evaluation of indices.....140
3.3 The need for a qualitative assessment of the Open Method of Coordination145
3.4 Participation of primary and secondary stakeholders 149
3.4.1 Participation in the NAP process.....150
3.4.2 Participatory projects undertaken by the Social Policy Task Force 164
3.4.2.1 The Get Heard project 164
3.4.2.2 Bridging The Policy Gap 170
3.4.2.3 An open but invisible method.....173
3.5 Shortcomings in participation.....176
3.5.1 Towards a formal participatory process......176
3.5.2 A non-inclusive participation.....179
3.6 Expectations, political activities and loyalties 183
3.6.1 The domestic level.....183
3.6.2 The EU level.....192
Conclusion.....201

Chapter 4: The Open Method of Coordination in Greece..... 205
4.1 Introduction: The Open Method of Coordination in Greece.....205
4.2 Indices of poverty and exclusion in Greece 206
4.2.1 People at risk of poverty 206
4.2.2 Evaluation of indices.....208
4.3 The need for an OMC assessment through participation 210
4.4 Participation of primary and secondary stakeholders 224
4.4.1 Participation in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process.....224
4.4.2 Participation of primary stakeholders 246
4.5 Expectations, political activities and loyalties 254
4.5.1 The domestic level.....254
4.5.2 The EU level.....263
Conclusion.....271

Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis 277
5.1 Introduction 277
5.2 Participation in the British and Greek social inclusion processes 281
5.2.1 Members of the Social Policy Task Force and the National Committee for Social Protection 282
5.2.2 Stages and degrees of participation 286
5.2.3 Formal vs. informal participation 291
5.2.4 Participatory projects undertaken in the context of the OMC 293
5.3 Domestic participation and the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties 295
5.3.1 Expectations towards the EU 298
5.3.2 Political activities towards the EU 301
5.3.3 Loyalties towards the EU 303
5.4 Stakeholders' participation in EU projects and the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties 307
5.4.1 Expectations towards the EU 309
5.4.2 Political activities towards the EU 311
5.4.3 Loyalties towards the EU 312
Conclusion 315

Chapter 6: Conclusion 321
6.1 Introduction 321
6.2 Research hypotheses reassessed 328
6.2.1 Domestic participation and expectations, political activities and loyalties ..329
6.2.1.1 Europeanisation of participation 330
6.2.1.2 Participation at domestic level and expectations, political activities and loyalties 343
6.2.2 Participation at EU level and expectations, political activities and loyalties348
6.3 Rationalism, socialisation and the OMC's contribution towards democratic governance 351
6.3.1 Mediating factors: rationalism, socialisation and the input in the EU.....351
6.3.2 The OMC and democratic governance 355

Bibliography 359

Appendix I List of interview questions to secondary stakeholders 389
Appendix II List of interview questions to primary stakeholders 391
Appendix III List of interviewees 393

List of tables

Table A European Parliament elections' turnout……..……..12

Table 1 The financial crisis and citizens' attitudes….……....85

Table 3.1 The social situation in the UK in 2009-2010……138

Table 3.2 British anti-poverty NGOs and networks mobilised in the social inclusion OMC policy-making process……153

Table 4 Greek anti-poverty NGOs and networks mobilised in the social inclusion OMC policy-making process……225

Table 5.1 British and Greek responses to the OMC's provisions for participation……..283

Table 5.2 Domestic participation of non-traditional stakeholders in Greece and the UK and the redirection of their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards the EU……...307

Table 5.3 Participation of British and Greek primary stakeholders at the EU level and the redirection of their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards the EU…….309

List of abbreviations

ADEDY – *Anotati Dioikish Enoseon Dimosion Ypallilon* [Supreme Administration of Civil Servants Trade Unions]

AHC – After Housing Costs

APNC – Anti-Poverty Network Cymru

BHC – Before Housing Costs

BTPG – Bridging the Policy Gap

CRE – Central Register of Evaluators

CSF – Community Support Framework

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

EAPN-England – European Anti-Poverty Network in England

EAPN-Greece – European Anti-Poverty Network in Greece

EAPN-EU – European Anti-Poverty Network (i.e. the EU level umbrella network)

EAPN-UK – European Anti-Poverty Network in the UK

ECSC – European Coal and Steel Community

EDF – European Disability Forum

EES – European Employment Strategy

El. Stat. – *Elliniki Statistiki Ipiresia* [Gellenic Statistical Authority]

EMCO – Employment Committee

EMPEP –European Meeting(s) of People Experiencing Poverty

EMU – Economic and Monetary Union

ERDF –European Regional Development Fund

ESAMEA – *Ethniki Sinomospondia Atomon Me Anapiria* [National Federation for People with Disabilities]

ESF – European Social Fund

EU – European Union

FEANTSA – *Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri* [European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless]

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

GSEE – *Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Elladas* [Greek General Confederation of Labour]

HBAI – Households Below Average Income

IKE – *Idrima Koinonikis Ergasias* [Social Work Foundation]

ILO – International Labour Organisation

MHSS – Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity (Greece)

MNE – Merseyside Network for Europe

MRC – Migrants Resource Centre

MSIO – Merseyside Social Inclusion Observatory

NAP –National Action Plan

NCSP – National Committee for Social Protection

NSR – National Strategy Report

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMC – Open Method of Coordination

OSW – Off the Streets into Work

PaSoK – *Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima* [Panhellenic Socialist Movement]

POSGAMEA – *Panellinia Sinomospondia Somation Goneon & Kidemonon Atomon Me Anapiria* [Pan-Hellenic Federation of Societies of Parents and Guardians of People with Disabilities]

RED – Redistributive Discourse

SEB – *Sillogos Ellinon Viomihanon* [Hellenic Federation of Enterprises]

SIAG – Social Inclusion Advisory Group

SID – Social Integrationist Discourse

SJPG – Social Justice Policy Group

SOP – Sectoral Operational Programme

SPC – Social Protection Committee

SPTF – Social Policy Task Force

SUD – Social Underclass Discourse

TMD – Tackling Multiple Disadvantage

TPSF – Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum

UKCAP – UK Coalition Against Poverty

UN – United Nations

WHO – World Health Organisation

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To Lefteris and Olga…

Introduction

It is not an exclusive academic interest to find out more about European Union (EU) citizens' expectations, political activities and loyalties. In fact such citizens' attitudes have become essential for the survival of the European project. Increasingly lower turnouts in the European Parliament (EP) elections, negative responses to referenda that ask for citizens' support for further European integration, the economic/Euro crisis and the democratic deficit are issues which have all intensified the debate about citizens' attitudes towards the EU. The following sections illustrate why this thesis focuses on a topic which is of great political relevance in the contemporary debate about European integration.

Studying expectations, political activities and loyalties

It can be argued that the disagreement with or at least the disinterest in European integration by the citizens of the EU member states, has expressed indirectly through a continuously falling turnout in the EP elections. As shown in table A, in 1979, 63% of the registered to vote citizens participated in the elections. A two per cent decline was recorded in 1984 when 61% of the electorate of the then ten member states voted. Since then, every five years the falling turnout in the EP elections has been alarming the EU executives more intensely. In 1999 the participation dropped for the first time to under 50% (i.e. 49.51%). In 2004 the very low turnout in the newly accessed member states led to an EU average turnout of only 45.47%. And in the

latest EP election in 2009 the turnout reached its lowest point so far with a disappointing 43%.

Table A (author's compilation): European Parliament elections' turnout

Year	Total Turnout	Turnout UK	Turnout Greece
1979	61.99% (Nine member states)	32.35%	-
1984	58.98% (Ten member states)	32.57%	80.59%
1989	58.41% (Twelve member states)	36.37%	80.03%
1994	56.67% (Twelve member states)	36.43%	73.18%
1999	49.51% (Fifteen member states)	24.00%	70.25%
2004	45.47% (Twenty five member states)	38.52%	63.22%
2009	43% (Twenty seven member states)	34.70%	52.61%

Source: official portal of the EP, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cdcd9d4/Turnout-%281979-2009%29.html, accessed on 10.03.2010

Table A also illustrates that the UK has always been below the EU average as regards to the turnout for European elections. In 1979, 1984, 1989 and 1999 UK citizens participated (out of all member states) least in the EP elections, and in 1994, 2004 and 2009 they were among those with the lowest turnout. In contrast, Greece has often been among the five member states with the highest turnout in EP elections previously to the last EP elections in 2009. The only time Greece was not ranked among the top five in terms of turnout to EP elections was in 2004 when it ranked

sixth with a recorded turnout of 63% percent. However, in 2009 this percentage was reduced to less than 53% and Greece ranked ninth in the EU27.[1]

The low turnout in the EP elections has been seen as reflecting the lack of citizens' interest in and awareness of the EU and revealed their reluctance for further integration (e.g. Hix 2005[1999]; Jiménez 2003). Questions have been increasingly asked about the EU's democratic deficit. However, the democratic deficit is not limited to the turnout in the EP elections but extends to the continuing conflict between the intergovernmental and the supranational forces that define the EU integration process. In addition to the Council, which conducts mainly intergovernmental negotiations, the EU is also made up by supranational bodies such as the EP, Commission, European Court of Justice and European Central Bank. Yet,

> [t]he credibility and authority of the European Union's supranational institutions … rests upon their claim to represent the 'European interest' over and above that of the individual member states. This, however, presupposes a transnational European public whose 'general will' arises from common interests that can be represented and championed by these supranational bodies (Shore 2000: 19).

Shore claims that the absence of a European *demos* is at the core of the EU's legitimacy problem. Similarly, Sáncez-Cuenca (2000: 166 –emphasis in the original) holds that for a supranational system to be legitimate people should feel that 'they belong to a wider, supranational *demos*'. The European demos has been considered

[1] Official portal of the EP, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cdcd9d4/Turnout-%281979-2009%29.html, accessed on 10.03.2010.

synonymous with a community in which people share a European identity (e.g. Shore 2000). As will be highlighted below, the European identity has, in turn, been treated as synonymous with citizens' loyalties to the EU (Risse 2005; Shore 2000 – both draw on Haas 1958). Scharpf (1999: 10-11) has argued that the lack of a collective identity which is taken for granted in the member states 'emphasises the irremediable aspects of the European democratic deficit'. Bernhard (2005) holds that if the EU is to overcome its legitimacy problem then it needs to acquire one of the major characteristics of the modern nation state: the collective identity that connects the polity with the public. In the same vein, Decker (2002: 258) warns that,

> the democratic prerequisites of further centralization in Europe cannot be fulfilled, because we are missing the necessary social and cultural preconditions … The most important of these preconditions is the presence of a common political identity which serves as a basis upon which all governmental or parliamentary decisions can be interpreted as being expressions of democratic self-determination.

Paradoxically, the ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty, which was meant to provide the context and impetus for constructing a kind of European identity (Shore 1998), experienced a crisis after a *no* vote in a referendum in Denmark and only a *petit oui* in a referendum in France in 1992. Since then, the European citizens have often expressed their negative stances towards the EU integration process at different opportunities. Examples include the referenda in Ireland in 2001 and 2002, the Swedish referendum concerning the Euro in 2003 and the French and Dutch rejections of the proposed draft Constitutional Treaty in 2005. The negative

outcomes of these referenda have made it clear that European integration is not in people's minds and hearts. In other words, such developments 'left no doubt that the public acceptance of further integration can no longer be taken for granted' (Mayer and Palmowski 2004: 573).

The purpose of the thesis

The main aim of this thesis is to research whether active participation in EU processes and projects has an impact on the participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. The approach to expectations, political activities and loyalties used in this thesis draws on Ernst Haas's definition of political integration as is shown in the first chapter. Suffice to say that Haas considered the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from national to supranational level as part of the process of European integration. As Risse (2005: 293) argues, for Haas, this type of redirection was an indicator 'for the degree of integration'. However, past scholarly work (e.g. by neofunctionalists) on such attitudes has focused on a narrow range of actors, namely the political and economic elites i.e., politicians, higher civil servants, officials from trade and labour associations (Haas 1958: 17). The so-called Open Method of Coordination (OMC), which is a relatively new method, opens up a new field for research on the emergence of expectations, political activities and loyalties of other actors towards the EU. The main reason for this is that the OMC is a process which is not limited to the political and economic elites but intends to involve a wider range of stakeholders. Thus, one of the OMC's main principles is the mobilisation and participation of a wide range of new actors in the 'design, implementation and monitoring' of the

public policy (European Commission 2005a: 5; see also European Council 2000a). As is explained in more detail below, this thesis draws on specific studies (e.g. Inbas and Engender 2012; Heywood 2007, 2000) in order to assess critically the entire policy-making cycle by focusing on the agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring stages.

The OMC on the fight against poverty and social exclusion provides a particularly promising area of research because, according to the continuously updated objectives of the Lisbon strategy[2], it requires 'the mobilization of all relevant bodies' (e.g. Council of the EU 2002). Among these relevant bodies (or new actors), the *social inclusion OMC* has been designed to include people who work in anti-poverty associations (i.e. networks and NGOs) and people with direct experience in poverty and social exclusion (European Council 2000b). Importantly, the terms 'primary stakeholders' and 'secondary stakeholders' are used in the context of the social inclusion OMC to distinguish between people who live in poverty and NGOs, experts, trade unions, etc. (e.g. Inbas and Engender 2010). The differentiation between primary and secondary stakeholders is used in this thesis although the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-EU 2010a) has criticised the use of these two terms by arguing that NGOs who campaign in favour of people in poverty should also be regarded as primary stakeholders. This thesis refers to people in poverty and social exclusion by using the term 'primary stakeholders' while the term 'secondary stakeholders' is reserved exclusively for the anti-poverty organisations and networks.

[2] The Lisbon strategy was in 2010 renewed under the name Europe 2020.

Since EU-related expectations, political activities and loyalties among the above mentioned groups of people comprise an under researched topic, the OMC on social inclusion is the main focus of this thesis. The social inclusion OMC (compared to other OMCs) involves a much wider range of primary and secondary stakeholders (Noël and Larocque 2009; de la Porte and Pochet 2005) and is together with the OMC in employment the 'the oldest, most fully developed, and best institutionalized OMC processes.' (Zeitlin 2010: 255). The assessment of the social inclusion OMC in this thesis refers especially to its application in Greece and the UK for reasons explained in section 1.3 below.

Previous research has argued that participation in EU institutions (particularly the Commission) and processes influences the expectations, political activities and loyalties of people who participate in it (e.g. Hooghe 2005; Shore 2000; Haas 1958). Since the launch of the Lisbon strategy, there has been growing literature which focuses on similar cognitive changes which the participation in the OMC processes induces in the involved stakeholders (e.g. Schönheinz *forthcoming*; PPMI 2011; Vanhercke 2010; Zeitlin 2009; Vifell 2009; Zeitlin 2005b; Haahr 2004; Jacobsson 2004). Both kinds of participation could therefore be used to explain shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties. However, so far little research has been undertaken on the non-state/non-traditional stakeholders. Ironically, in particular people who are the primary and secondary stakeholders for EU policies aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion are largely neglected by research on the attitudes of citizens towards the EU. This thesis puts forward new empirical findings in addressing the following main research question: *To what extent will primary and secondary stakeholders who participate in the social inclusion OMC*

shift their expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic to the EU level?

Structure

Chapter 1 puts forward the analytical framework of this thesis. It first presents the reasons behind the launch of the OMC, the method's provisions on the widening of stakeholder participation and the effects of this participation on EU governance. The chapter then assesses theories of Europeanisation and theories of EU identities, defining the analytical framework through which participation and its impact on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties will be analysed. Additionally, chapter 1 highlights the importance of qualitative methods in answering the above stated research question. In doing so it explains the reasons for the use of semi-structured interviews, clarifies the selection of the interviewees and the core documents that have been studied for this thesis.

Chapter 2 explains the most important developments at EU level regarding the combating of poverty and social exclusion. A central concern of chapter 2 is to show that participation of primary and secondary stakeholders has been regarded by the Commission, academics and anti-poverty associations as an important counter-weight to the strong focus on growth and jobs in the EU's Lisbon strategy. In this context a critical analysis is provided of the Brussels European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP) which took place under the social inclusion OMC in the period 2001-2010.

Chapters 3 and 4 initially provide an overview of the social situation in the UK and Greece respectively. In the context of Europeanisation, these chapters examine the domestic adaptation to the social inclusion OMC in these two countries in general, and in terms of participation in particular. This is an important step before the presentation of participation's impact on the expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants in relation to the EU. Chapter 5 serves as the comparative chapter. It provides the comparative analysis of the main research findings in Greece and the UK. Chapter 6 draws the conclusion on the empirical findings in relation to the analytical and methodological framework that has been set out in chapter 1.

An overview of the findings

This thesis has found and analysed important differences in the –intended through the OMC– process of Europeanisation (see section 1.1.5) of the Greek and British public policy. These differences refer explicitly to the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic application of the social inclusion OMC. Between the years 2001 and 2010, British primary and secondary stakeholders were found either to be *involved* or to *collaborate* with the policy-makers according to the agenda-setting, implementation and monitoring stages of the NAP process (for degrees and stages of participation, see section 1.3.1). In the same period in Greece, secondary but not primary stakeholders participated in the NAP process. These stakeholders were either only *consulted* or *informed* by the policy-makers but only during the agenda-setting stage. These differences helped draw an analysis of the degrees of Europeanisation which was missing from the OMC literature. Based on such approach, this thesis found that differences in participation can explain

differences in shifts in British and Greek non-traditional stakeholders' expectations, political activities and loyalties. Thus, due to their satisfactory participation in the OMC, British primary and secondary stakeholders considered the EU framework as more possible to provide benefits to them than the national framework. Based on this rational assessment of the EU framework, British stakeholders redirected expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU framework. On the contrary, despite their initial redirections of expectations and political activities towards the EU level, Greek secondary stakeholders were soon disappointed by their limited participation in the domestic application of the social inclusion OMC. Therefore, their expectations and political activities did not last long and no loyalties to the EU level have emerged.

Concerning participation in the EU level, only limited redirections of expectations political activities and loyalties were found among Greek and British primary stakeholders. However, different reasons explain this similarity between participants from these two countries in the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty. Greek delegates in the meetings initially redirected their expectations towards the EU level. This seems to have happened due to the fact that for Greek primary stakeholders the EU level was the only framework for participation in the policy-making process. However, these stakeholders were eventually disappointed by the fact that their participation did not have an impact on the policy-making process. Whereas, delegates from both Greece and the UK did not see the EU framework as possible to provide positive outcomes to their daily lives, British participants were additionally satisfied from their participation in the domestic application of the OMC. Therefore, the EMPEP did not provide an added value to them. In both cases,

contrary to academics' expectations for the OMC's potential to create a framework for socialisation under common EU concerns and objectives (e.g. Zeitlin 2005b; Jacobsson 2004; Haahr 2004), the OMC did not appear to be able to create such a strong framework by promoting participation at the EU level.

Chapter 1: Analytical and Methodological Framework

1.1 The launch of the Open Method of Coordination

The OMC was launched by the Lisbon strategy to coordinate member states' actions towards the overall goal of making the EU 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (European Council 2000a). Since the Lisbon summit in 2000 many areas which are excluded from the competences of the EU have started to be coordinated with the OMC.[3] Given the various areas the OMC has been applied to, some scholars have proposed that it should not be regarded as a single method but rather as a 'label attached' to many processes which run in different fields of public policy (Tholoniat 2010: 95). Thus, there are certain common characteristics in the various processes which permit the use of the single label 'OMC':

> (a) establishing guidelines for the Union; (b) translating the European guidelines into national and regional policy by setting specific targets and adopting measures to meet them; (c) establishing quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks as a means of comparing best practice; and (d) periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review (e.g. Jacobsson 2004: 357)

[3] Employment, social inclusion, pensions, education, youth and training, research/ innovation, information society/ eEurope, enterprise promotion, structural economic reform, education and training, immigration and asylum, environmental protection, disability, fundamental rights, youth policy (Zeitlin 2011: 136; Zeitlin 2005b: 19-20; see also Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008: 3). Zeitlin (2011: 137) also clarifies that the OMC has not been launched as the only tool to meet the Lisbon Agenda's objectives. It has rather been launched to be combined with other instruments such as legislation, structural funds, social dialogue etc.

Therefore, with the launch of the OMC the EU member states have been called to act towards commonly agreed objectives which are decided on at the EU level (by the Council) and translated into guidelines and targets according to the needs of the national, regional and local levels. The domestic actions taken by each member state to implement the OMC strategy are outlined in the so-called National Action Plans (NAPs). The NAPs are government documents which report the member states' policies towards the OMC's objectives to the European Commission and the Council of the EU. In 2005 the Commission decided to streamline three strands of the OMC (i.e. social inclusion, social protection and health and long-term care) and introduced a single *social OMC*. Following the streamlining of the OMC the member states have had to incorporate the NAPs on the three different strands into overall National Strategic Reports (NSRs).

Finally, the features which facilitate the coordination of national actions are the sharing of good practices among the member states and the monitoring and evaluation of progress with peer reviews (Zeitlin 2011; Bruno *et al*. 2006; Zeitlin 2005a; Zänge 2004). It is for these reasons that the OMC has been described as a 'soft law' coordination process in contrast to the traditional Community method which is based on 'hard law' which stipulates legally binding common rules (Trubek and Trubek 2005: 343). Under the OMC formal sanctions for the states which are lagging behind in respect to commonly agreed guidelines are not provided (*ibid*.).

While the OMC has been referred to as a novelty (e.g. Radaelli 2003a) a critique emerged regarding whether it can indeed be seen as an entirely new method. Certain

features of coordination of member states' actions can be found already in the 1993 Copenhagen criteria towards the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (Hatzopoulos 2007).[4] This led to the 'managerial technique' benchmarking being adopted by the EU to achieve convergence of the member states' actions (Bruno *et al.* 2003: 523). One further step was taken by the Treaty of Amsterdam which formally initiated the process of the European Employment Strategy (EES) which in turn offered the context for advancing this new mode of governance for 'developing "sensitive" policy areas' (Lopez-Santana 2006: 482).[5] Nevertheless, even if the OMC features were not introduced during the Lisbon summit, the summit made the following important threefold contribution:

> a) it gave the method a name; b) it recognised that it may be used in fields for which there is no Treaty basis; and c) it designated it as the core instrument of the so-called Lisbon objectives… (Hatzopoulos 2007: 311)

The indisputable novelty of the method refers to its provisions for widened participation of actors in public policy, as section 1.1.2 below shows. For now, the next section of the present thesis explores the reasons for the emergence of the OMC.

[4] Zeitlin argues that the coordination techniques used in the EMU are not similar with the OMC techniques (Zeitlin's comments in Hatzopoulos 2007)

[5] Methods such as the OMC can be found outside EU processes as for instance in the OECD, the International Monetary Fund (A. Schaefer, (2004) 'A New Effective Form of Governance? Comparing the OMC to Multilateral Surveillance by the IMF and the OECD', Max Plank Institute http://www.mpi-fg-koeln.mpg.de in Hatzopoulos 2007: 311)

1.1.1 Reasoning behind the design and launch of the OMC

As chapter 2 will show, one of the EU's primary tasks has historically been to find a balance between the need to improve economic competitiveness (which has been welcomed by the member states), and the need to build up a social Europe in order to tackle economic and social 'disfunctionalities' (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004: 186).[6] Prior to the Lisbon European Council in 2000, the EU had already taken important steps towards economic and financial outcomes. Yet, employment rates and social cohesion within the community were not reflecting the same positive developments (Lopez-Santana 2006). Lopez-Santana (*ibid*: 481) noted that since the mid-1990s the unemployment rates in the EU were 'dramatically high and welfare states did not have the capacity to handle these pressures'. Accordingly, the Lisbon summit's conclusions in 2000 acknowledged that '[t]he number of people living below the poverty line and in social exclusion in the Union is unacceptable' (European Council 2000a: Point 32).

Unemployment and poverty were issues which attracted the attention and required the response of governments (see also chapter 2). However, there are certain reasons why the OMC has been used instead of the Community method. Rodrigues (2001: 3), who initiated and developed the OMC's theoretical context for the EU and acted as special advisor of the Portuguese Prime Minister during the Lisbon summit, holds that '[t]he open method of coordination was elaborated after a reflexion (sic) on governance aiming at defining methods for developing European dimension'. In the same vein, Jacobsson (2004: 357) has argued that the OMC emerged as a response to

[6] This is also known as the debate between 'positive' and 'negative' integration (Hix 2005[1999], Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999)

the ‘need to view national policies as a “common concern” and the need to achieve a certain policy convergence’. Certain socio-economic issues could not be addressed with EU legislation. As the case of employment had shown, the member states had similar problems that needed to be addressed at the European level although without the binding nature of the Community method (Heidenreich 2009; Lopez-Santana 2006). A series of compromises needed to be made in order to enable the EU to trigger common action in policy fields where it either had only weak or no explicit competences (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004). Drawing on Borrás and Jacobsson, the OMC is an effort to respond to certain challenges: the need for social Europe and the need for citizens’ support, the need for further integration with enhanced democratic legitimacy, and the need for unity in diversity. The following sections assess these challenges in detail.

1.1.1.1 The need for social Europe and the need for citizens’ support

While economic competitiveness was desired by the member states, a harmonised response at European level to social challenges such as unemployment and poverty would have been opposed by governments. National welfare states, which typically cope with these issues, have been sectors that the member states consider as part of their sovereignty in such a way that ‘the prospects for the development of a European level welfare state are poor’ (Wincott 2003: 2). Much of the citizens’ support for the state –and therefore much of the state’s legitimacy– derives from welfare provisions (Mazower 2000[1998]; Esping-Andersen 1990). Additionally, social policy is a sensitive area of exclusive national concern (Trubek and Mosher 2003). For these reasons, any kind of delegation of power towards a supranational level would not be

acceptable to citizens as previous efforts to increase EU competences have shown (Heidenreich and Bischoff 2008).[7] Nevertheless, following the member states' paradigm in terms of citizens' support, the EU has also intended to draw legitimacy and support from its citizens and it has looked for ways to set up a European social policy (Wendler 2003). According to Daly (2007), there have been the following three different periods in which the EU intended to adopt a social dimension: (1) early 1970s; (2) late 1980s and early 1990s; and, (3) early 2000s. The latest period reached its high points with the adoption of the Lisbon strategy (one of the objectives of which was to achieve 'greater social cohesion') and the application of the OMC in fields of social protection and inclusion under the Nice Treaty. Drawing lessons from past attempts and experience, the EU focused especially on social inclusion as 'an element of a successful European society' (*ibid*: 4). The OMC was designed both to preserve member states' social policies and to establish EU welfare provisions. The latter were expected to balance economic integration and to draw support and legitimacy for the EU from the member states' citizens.

Efforts for a European social policy have not prevented the EU from being described as a 'welfare laggard' (Majone 1993: 155). However, the intervention of the EU in the field of social inclusion has already attracted support from citizens. As section 1.2.3 shows, there is a gap in the support for the EU between the (national and supranational) elites and the public: EU public is far less supportive of EU integration and membership than the national and EU elites. However, in detailed comparative research on the attitudes of the EU and domestic elites and the attitudes of the public towards the EU integration, Hooghe (2003) found that citizens are more

[7] Prominent examples are the Social Chapter (rejected initially from the UK), the EU Constitution (rejected from the citizens of France and the Netherlands) and the Maastricht Treaty (rejected in the first referendum by the citizens of Denmark).

supportive than the elites concerning the involvement of the EU in the social field. Thus, Hooghe's research showed that 62% of member states' citizens support EU policies on social inclusion. At the same time, only 29.3% of Commission elites and 40.7% of national elites support the intervention of the EU in the field of social inclusion (*ibid*: 284).

1.1.1.2 The need for further integration and democratic legitimacy

The second challenge for the EU was to continue with further integration in a period when its democratic legitimacy has been questioned. The democratic deficit did not refer solely to the lack of the public's representation in the EP and the latter's role in EU decision-making. It started to extend also to matters of transparency, accountability and openness especially after the problems with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and the corruption allegations which the Commission faced in the late 1990s (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004; Harlow 2002; Bunyan 1999). Many scholars theorised the OMC to be a tool which would help the EU's quest for democratic governance mainly because of its normative provisions for transparency, accountability and participation (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; Zeitlin 2005a; Telò 2002; Larsson 2002; Rodrigues 2001). With the periodic evaluation of member states' actions through, for example, the submission of NAPs and the composition of Joint Reports (i.e. reports by the Commission and the Council of the EU after assessments of the NAPs), the EU was intending to increase 'the transparency and intelligibility of the policy co-ordination cycle and thereby its visibility and impact' (European Commission 2002a: 3, 10; see also Borrás and Greve 2004). Particularly on the issue of participation which is discussed in section 1.1.2 of this chapter, it has been argued

that the participants in the Lisbon summit were concerned by the criticism about the EU's democratic deficit (Borrás and Greve 2004). According to the same researchers, this was the reason why the Lisbon summit conclusions drew up explicit rules on the need to widen participation through the OMC.

1.1.1.3 The need for unity in diversity

The third challenge for the EU was 'to find a feasible balance between the need to respect diversity among member states, and the unity – and meaning – of the common EU action' (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004: 186). This balance between diversity and unity became more pressing with the preparations of the enlargement of the EU by the Central and Eastern European states. In 2004 the EU was joined by ten new member states with wide structural diversities as regards to both their welfare systems and the ways in which they were implementing their public policies (Copeland 2011; Maravegias 2010; Heidenreich and Bischoff 2008). Esping-Andersen's (1990) influential theory regarding three diverse types of welfare states, which was extended by other researchers by the Mediterranean welfare state, can explain why harmonisation of member states' social policies has been proven impossible (Wincott 2003; Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1996).[8] Instead, the domestic policies' adaptation to the objectives posed by the EU governance (i.e. Europeanisation) could be achieved by the coordination of member states' actions through the use of an OMC (Armstrong 2006).

[8] Arguments that the 'Welfare Modelling Business', the academic pursue of clustering the national welfare states, is downplaying differences even between neighbour regions (e.g. Abrahamson 1999) can be seen as extra obstacles to this type of harmonisation of welfare.

In fact, for all these reasons, the coordination of the member states actions was seen as the only way to express common European concerns. However, during the implementation of the OMC, which theoretically allows for the coordination of member states' actions in social policy and other fields, it became clear that central to this type of coordination was the participation of a wide group of stakeholders in the policy-making process. The next sections intend to show why participation has been linked to the OMC's provisions.

1.1.2 The OMC and the provisions for participation

According to some scholars, the main innovative aspects of the OMC have been the new participation patterns which it created. The reason why the OMC has often been called a *new* method of governance or a *new* policy instrument is due to its provisions for participation of wide range of actors (de la Porte and Pochet 2005; Borrás and Jacobsson 2004; de la Porte and Nanz 2004; Telò 2002). The traditional main EU actors –member states, Commission and Council of the EU as well as, although to a lesser extent, the EP are not the only participants in the domestic and EU decision-making processes of the OMC. The OMC has also trigged the setting up of committees –most notably the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and the Employment Committee (EMCO)– which are made up of member state representatives and Commission officials.[9] Through the OMC the 'privilege' of participation (Jacobsson and Johansson 2007: 17) in the policy-making process has been extended to 'the regional and local levels, as well as the social partners and civil society…' (European Council 2000a: point 38). According to the European Council,

[9] A brief description of the role of these committees is provided in section 1.1.5 below.

all these actors '…will be actively involved, using various forms of partnership' (*ibid*: point 38).

Especially for the application of the OMC in the field of social inclusion (social inclusion OMC), the European Council in Nice (2000b), called for the participation of all of the relevant stakeholders as one of the main objectives of the strategy.[10] These calls for wide participation explain, according to some scholars, the 'openness' of this method of coordination (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004: 199; Telò 2002: 265). Additionally, the same calls for wider participation under the OMC have opened up space for the involvement of primary and secondary stakeholders in the EU and member states' social inclusion strategies. According to the Nice European Council (2000c: 9) which set the objectives for the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the OMC in social inclusion should not only aim to involve anti-poverty associations 'in the fight against the various forms of exclusion' but also,

> promote, according to national practice, the participation and self-expression of people suffering exclusion, in particular in regard to their situation and the policies and measures affecting them.

The opportunities for participation offered to primary and secondary stakeholders must be seen in the context of the EU's efforts for improved governance. These efforts were expressed in the Commission's *White Paper on European Governance*

[10] The overall objectives of the social inclusion OMC according to the Nice European Council: to facilitate participation in employment and access by all to the resources, rights, goods and services (objective 1), to prevent the risks of exclusion (objective 2), to help the most vulnerable (objective 3), and to mobilise all relevant bodies (objective 4) (European Council 2000b).

which listed participation as one of five new principles[11] while listing proportionality and subsidiarity as other fundamental principles of governance (European Commission 2001).[12] As the White Paper (*ibid*: 10) was highlighting,

> [t]he quality, relevance and effectiveness of EU policies depend on ensuring wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation.

Four years later, the communication of the EU Commission for the streamlined social OMC (see above) focused again on the involvement of stakeholders (European Commission 2005a). Importantly, the Commission set as an objective of the social OMC the participation of stakeholders in the 'design, implementation and monitoring of policy' (European Commission 2005a: 5). Finally, in an effort in 2008 to reinforce the social OMC, the Commission specified that particularly in social inclusion, the policies should involve all 'relevant actors' (European Commission 2008a: 9). Explicit reference was again made to the people experiencing poverty. It is for these reasons that Zeitlin (2005b: 3) has noted that the effectiveness and legitimacy of the OMC policies

> arguably depend on the participation of the widest possible range of actors and stakeholders at all levels, from the European through the national to the

[11] These were: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, coherence (European Commission 2001)

[12] The White Paper explains the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality using the following wording: 'From the conception of policy to its implementation, the choice of the level at which action is taken (from EU to local) and the selection of the instruments used must be in proportion to the objectives pursued. This means that before launching an initiative, it is essential to check systematically (a) if public action is really necessary, (b) if the European level is the most appropriate one, and (c) if the measures chosen are proportionate to those objectives' (European Commission 2001: 10-11)

> regional and local, in order to ensure the representation of diverse perspectives, tap the benefits of local knowledge and initiative, and hold public officials accountable for carrying out mutually agreed commitments.

Before assessing further the extension of participation towards legitimate and efficient policy-making process, it is important to show whether the OMC's participatory provisions have been indeed put into practice when the method was implemented in the member states. Thus, part 1.1.3 will show that although the OMC has in general often been considered as closed and invisible to potential participants, the social inclusion OMC has been successful in involving a wider number of stakeholders.

1.1.3 The OMC as an invisible method and the social inclusion OMC as an open method.

Despite the provisions for participation of stakeholders, the application of the OMC in different fields of public policy has not been followed by the full application of the method's participatory provisions. In general the OMC processes are unknown to the citizens in the member states (Büchs 2008). Thus, according to Zeitlin (2005b: 460; see also Kröger 2009), the OMC in its application in the field of employment is a

> narrow, opaque and technocratic process involving high domestic civil servants and EU officials in a closed policy network, rather than a broad, transparent process of public deliberation and decision-making, open to the participation of all those with a stake in the outcomes.

Another assessment by the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI) of the social OMC has shown that the method is rarely referred to in the domestic media and that even journalists who are specialised in social policy issues are unaware of it (PPMI 2011). Other independent experts and academics have also shown the lack of 'media and public awareness' of the social OMC while adding that no political debate about the process has emerged in most member states (Frazer and Marlier 2008: 2; Armstrong *et al*. 2008: 439). As a result, the social OMC is known only to a limited number of participants, mainly civil servants, politicians and members of NGOs of, for example, the EU level European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-EU) (Frazer and Marlier 2008). In other words, the method lacks 'institutional visibility' (e.g. Vanhercke 2010: 117). The lack of institutional visibility of the social OMC prevents people who would otherwise be interested in being involved in the process from doing so (de la Porte 2010). In 2005 the EU Commission acknowledged the limited visibility of the social OMC by stressing the importance of involving stakeholders in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the social inclusion policies (European Commission 2005a). The above mentioned assessment by the PPMI argued that wider participation will make this OMC a 'more visible' method (PPMI 2011: 14).

However, the OMC in social inclusion has –under its participatory provisions (see part 1.1.2 above) achieved the highest mobilisation of secondary stakeholders in an effort to push political issues of their concern onto the national agendas (de la Porte and Pochet 2005). According to de la Porte and Pochet (*ibid.*) the more the secondary stakeholders participate in the domestic implementation of the social inclusion OMC, the more the primary stakeholders also get involved in the same process. Other

studies have also shown that the OMC in social inclusion has the most successful record of primary and secondary stakeholders' participation at both domestic and European levels (PPMI 2011; Zeitlin 2010; Zeitlin 2009; Noël and Larocque 2009; Armstrong 2005). As regards to the involvement of stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC at the EU level, since 2001 primary stakeholders from all member states have also participated in the annual *European meetings of people experiencing poverty* (e.g. Schönheinz *forthcoming*; PPMI 2011; de la Porte and Pochet 2005; First EMPEP 2001). The purpose of these meetings is for the people with direct experience in poverty and social exclusion to feed their views and experiences into the EU policy-making process.

1.1.4 Participation, governance and loyalties

According to theoretical provisions for participation of the OMC and its application in the member states, participation of stakeholders has two interrelated dimensions for the EU and the member states. First, it can offer increased democratic legitimacy in the sense that there is a wider range of people involved in the policy-making process (Bernhard 2005; Borrás and Jacobsson 2004; Borrás and Greve 2004). Second, it can increase efficiency when the stakeholders involved are specialised in the issues on which the OMC is applied. The views which these stakeholders offer are then expected to be fed into the EU and domestic decision-making process (Barnes *et al.* 2007: 34; Trubek *et al.* 2005: 16-17; de la Porte and Nanz 2004: 269; Council of the EU 2002). Consequently, 'more and better public participation is viewed as capable of improving the quality and legitimacy of decisions … as well as having the potential to address the democratic deficit' (Barness *et al.* 2007: 1).

Therefore, the opportunities for widened actors' involvement in public policy bear up to a certain degree similarities with the concepts of input and output legitimacy (Scott and Trubek 2002). According to this normative claim, this new mode of governance shows resemblances to Scharpf's (1999: 6) 'government by the people'. The latter means that

> [p]olitical choices are legitimate if and because they reflect the 'will of the people'– that is, if they can be derived from the authentic preferences of the members of a community (*ibid*: 6).

Thus, wide participation of 'societal actors' in the policy-making process adds a democratic dimension to (EU) governance (Borrás and Conzelmann 2007: 533). At the same time, the widening of participation offered by the OMC provides opportunities for increased output legitimacy ('government for the people' according to Scharpf). In this sense, there is a higher degree of correlation between the EU policy outcomes with the actual needs of the people (Scott and Trubek 2002).

However, despite the normative approach to participation, there are important restrictions which could affect claims that the OMC is an example of governance by and for the people. Apart from the fact that national governments have the first and last say on policies developed under the OMC, and apart from the issues of opaqueness and invisibility of the method as were discussed above, there are certain preconditions which must be fulfilled in order to link participation and democracy.

Only when these preconditions are in place can participation through the OMC be considered as a step towards democratic governance.

The first precondition has to do with the fact that 'input-oriented arguments often rely simultaneously on the rhetoric of "participation" and of "consensus"' (Scharpf 1999: 7). Who participates? How representative is the number of participants regarding the problems the community faces? Are the problems brought forward which lead to European guidelines being shared amongst an important proportion of the population? Is each individual represented through a meritocratic system? As shown above, the norm for wide, meritocratic, and inclusive participation is mentioned in official EU documents which refer to the OMC. Particularly the OMC in social inclusion has indeed triggered the participation of primary stakeholders (i.e. people who experience poverty) and secondary stakeholders (i.e. antipoverty NGOs and networks) as section 1.1.3 above has shown.

Secondly, the national policy-making process takes for granted that collective identities are shared between those who decide and those who are affected by these decisions (Bernhard 2005; Decker 2002). This is the basis on which national self-determination has been built in modern states (Liakos 2005; Kedourie 1960). The existence of a national identity is a necessary condition for a state's policy-making process to be considered as legitimate (Smith 1991). Yet, such collective identity has always been missing from the EU political discourse (*ibid.*). As is shown in part 2 of this chapter, Haas (1958) approached the issue of collective identity by arguing that European integration towards a political community entails the shift of citizens' expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the supranational

level. It seems that the terms *European identity* and *loyalties to the EU* are synonyms for Haas. This is certainly the case for Thomas Risse who is a prominent scholar in the field of European identity and Europeanisation. In 2005 Risse published an article which referred to Haas's approach on people's loyalties. In this article Risse 'translated' Haas's approach to loyalties 'into a statement about collective identity formation' (Risse 2005: 292). Haas (1958) himself seems to allow for these assumptions not only by resembling supranational loyalties to 'a new nationalism' (*ibid*: 10) or to a 'new national consciousness' (*ibid*: 14) but also by changing the term 'loyalties' for the term 'community sentiment' (*ibid*: 9).

1.1.5 Europeanisation of social inclusion and loyalties[13]

The OMC itself shows an effort to solve domestic problems with EU level contributions. This fits nicely with Börzel's (1999: 574) definition of Europeanisation 'as a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making'. However, it is not clear whether such a definition implies domestic adaptation to the Community method (i.e. hard law) or if domestic adaptation to other modes of governance, which are not based on hard law but on soft law, can also be regarded as Europeanisation. Börzel and Risse (2003) state clearly that for the emergence of adaptational pressures there must be a misfit between *authoritative* European decision-making and national decision-making. According to Radaelli (2003b: 30) broader references to European public policy instead of specific references to EU laws and decisions allow for the inclusion of

[13] I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Wurzel for his invaluable contribution to the development of this analytical framework. Any erroneous interpretation of the theories of Europeanisation would however be my own responsibility.

‘modes of governance which are not targeted towards law making, such as the open method of coordination’ in the definition of Europeanisation.

The OMC does not amount to governance by authority, but facilitates instead governance by coordination (Bulmer and Padgett 2004). As shown above, the OMC recognises that the goals set by the 2000 European Council in Lisbon concern areas which go beyond the EU’s competences (Tholoniat 2010; Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008). For this reason, the OMC is not implemented through the adoption of EU legislation. It also does not rely on the involvement of (all of) the main European institutions within the formal EU policy-making process. Moreover, although it does not overrule domestic legislation, the softness of the OMC does not rule out domestic legislative responses (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008; Trubek and Trubek 2005; for legislative responses to the social inclusion OMC stimulus see Sotiropoulos 2011). Yet, it has been shown that the OMC can indeed produce adaptational pressures. Armstrong (2006: 86), who assesses the domestic adaptation of the social inclusion OMC in the UK, argues that the fact that the formal EU institutions do not have the same ‘coercive’ powers under the OMC as under the Community method does not mean that ‘the institutional structures at EU level are unimportant’ for the implementation of the OMC. The incorporation of the OMC in social inclusion in the Lisbon strategy was decided on the highest political level through the Nice European Council in 2000. For the functioning of the OMC, the EU Commission issues together with the Council of the EU a set of recommendations and assessments of the progresses made. The role of the committees (e.g. EMCO and SPC) in the OMC process should also not be neglected (Heidenreich and Bischoff 2008). These committees, which are made up of representatives from the member

states and the Commission, help to prepare the discussions on the OMC in the Council with Joint Reports and with the production of other reports and opinions on the OMC processes.[14] However, Bart Vanhercke (2010: 116) has questioned whether the design of the method (i.e. its 'institutional setup') has 'actually influenced policies and policy making processes' both at the EU level and domestically. He has found evidence about both substantive and procedural impact of the OMC. Substantive impacts can be found where the OMC has created hard law in the member states (see also Sotiropoulos 2011), pushed issues onto the domestic political agendas (e.g. child poverty) and made member states reassess their domestic policies (e.g. pension and welfare policies). Procedural impacts can be found where the OMC has triggered horizontal (i.e. between ministries) and vertical (between the central government and the local authorities) cooperation, made domestic NGOs' aware of 'policies, practices and performance' in other member states, and thus triggered the participation of stakeholders in the NAPs processes (*ibid*: 130). Vanhercke concludes that despite its softness the OMC has promoted the Europeanisation of the domestic structures due to 'its capacity to stimulate creative appropriation and action by European, national and sub-national actors' (*ibid*: 116). By 'creative appropriation' Vanhercke means the 'strategic use of OMC tools, EU concepts, objectives, guidelines, targets, indicators, performance comparisons and recommendations by national and sub-national actors as a resource for their own purposes and independent policy initiatives' (*ibid*. 133).

Caviedes (2004) has argued that the reluctance of the member states to coordinate their immigration policies through the OMC should not be seen as a weakness of the

[14] The official portal of the EU, the Social Protection Committee: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=758, accessed on 10.11.2011

method. The member states are acting so because they are aware of the fact that a comparison and evaluation of their policies in the context of the OMC will involve 'a risk of losing control over the agenda-setting process' (*ibid*: 306). Therefore, the OMC can indeed be seen as a method which entails adaptation pressures for the Europeanisation of the member states' policies that are coordinated through the method at the EU level.

What is of particular importance for this thesis in Armstrong's above mentioned work, is that the author assesses the Europeanisation of British public policy on social inclusion through the analytical prism of 'the domestic adaptation to the OMC technique itself' (Armstrong 2006: 84). In other words, Armstrong (*ibid*) proposes that research on the OMC should focus on the 'extent to which the national system is prepared to open out to, and engage with, the different elements of the OMC methodology'.

Therefore, this thesis examines the British and Greek domestic adaptation to the OMC's provisions for participation which is one of the core objectives of this new method. As stated earlier in this chapter, the theoretical provisions for participation refer to the participation of stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC policy-making process. Additionally, in the beginning of this chapter, it has been explained that the member states' responses to the OMC's overarching objectives are *outlined* in the NAPs/NSRs which are submitted to the Commission. For these reasons the focus of this thesis is on the participation of (primary and secondary) stakeholders in the agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs/NSRs process as section 1.3.1 will explain. As Armstrong (2006: 92) has argued '[t]he

most obvious indication of domestic adaptation to the inclusion OMC rests with the development of a participative approach to the NAPincl [NAP in social inclusion].'

Europeanisation theories focus both on changes at the EU and member state levels which result from the interactions between the European political system (i.e. policies, institutions and processes) and the political systems of the member states (Börzel 2003). Most Europeanisation concepts are therefore concerned with the domestic response to EU pressures but also with EU response (e.g. the deepening of integration and emergence of institutions and actors) to member states' pressures (Armstrong 2010; Olsen 2002). In other words, most Europeanisation concepts seek to analyse the ability of member states to 'upload' practices and policies to the EU which then have to be 'downloaded' from the EU level by other member states (Börzel 2002). Much of the existing Europeanisation literature focuses primarily on the member states' response to the EU pressures (e.g. Olsen 2002; Cowles *et al*. 2001; Börzel and Risse 2003; Radaelli 2003b; Armstrong 2010, 2006, 2005).

Regarding many Europeanisation concepts, the 'misfit' between the European and national political systems is a necessary condition for the emergence of 'adaptational pressures' which can lead to changes on the domestic level (Börzel and Risse 2003: 58). Cowles and colleagues (2001: 2) explain that a 'poor fit' between the European system (e.g. formal and informal institutions and collective understandings of actors) and the domestic political system will create strong adaptation pressures while a 'good fit' will create only weak pressures for domestic changes (*ibid*.). As Börzel and Risse (2003) underline, the existence of a misfit between EU and national policies, processes and institutions is a necessary but not sufficient condition for

Europeanisation. The latter depends on the domestic response to the EU pressures. Before the domestic response is explained in more detail, it is important to make clear at the outset that Europeanisation is not (necessarily) a convergence process. Member states (and other domestic actors) do not respond in exactly the same way to the adaptational pressures from the EU; isomorphism therefore does not take place (Featherstone 2003). There may be different degrees of adaptation which can vary significantly among member states and between policy fields (Armstrong 2006; Börzel 2002). For Featherstone (2003: 4) Europeanisation is therefore 'a matter of degree'. Therefore, degrees of adaptation vary among member states, policy fields and time periods (Armstrong 2006; Börzel 2002). Based on Radaelli's (2003b) and Börzel and Risse's (2003) taxonomies of domestic change, the domestic response can lead to the following four main outcomes: (1) no domestic change ('inertia'), (2) low degree of domestic change ('absorption'), (3) modest degree of domestic change ('accommodation'), and (4) high degree of domestic change ('transformation').[15] Inertia means that no domestic change is induced. However, the taxonomy of domestic change into absorption, accommodation and transformation refers to the different degrees to which the member states incorporate European policies, processes and institutions into the domestic policy-making process. Additionally, it refers to the degree to which the member states change their pre-existing policies, processes, institutions and ideas (Börzel and Risse 2003).

However, the degree of domestic change depends on several mediating factors. Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2003) identify five such factors:

[15] Radaelli (2003b: 38) refers also to the possibility of retrenchment of the member states. This happens when the Europeanisation pressures result in the national policy becoming 'less "European" than it was'. However, this inducement of Europeanisation is beyond the scope of the present research.

1. Multiple veto points: obstacles posed by domestic actors who oppose Europeanisation and whose agreement is a necessary condition for domestic change (see also Radaelli 2003b; Tsebelis 1995). In fact, the veto actors are not always able to prevent Europeanisation but they can delay the process especially when other facilitating factors are not available (Cowles *at al*. 2001);

2. Mediating formal institutions: domestic formal institutions which provide the (material and ideational) resources to circumvent veto points. Börzel (2005) gives the example of regions which due to their relationships with European policy-makers are able to circumvent veto points posed by the national governments.

3. Political and organisational cultures and collective understandings: domestic cultures and understandings can influence domestic actors to respond positively to Europeanisation pressures. As Risse (2001) illustrates, the post-WWII reconstruction of German identity favours the European unification project as the alternative to nationalism or as the alternative way to the American West and the Russian East.

4. Differential empowerment of domestic actors: this seems to have the opposite effect of the multiple veto points. While in the case of the latter actors oppose change in order to protect their interests, in the case of the differential empowerment domestic actors are expected 'to use Europeanization as an opportunity to further their goals' (Cowles *et al*. 2001: 11).

5. Learning: Europeanisation can influence domestic actors to redefine their interests and preferences. However, in the case of the OMC which has mutual learning in its toolkit, learning can serve as another means for actors' empowerment. This said, through mutual learning actors are potentially exposed to a wider (European) forum (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008). This forum contains a wider number of ideas and

paradigms to overcome domestic problems than the ideas and paradigms available in the domestic arena (de la Porte and Pochet 2012).

Europeanisation concepts are used for the analysis of the application of the OMC's (social inclusion) participatory provisions in the UK and Greece. However, before such an analytical framework can be used it is important to ask whether Europeanisation can also explain the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. Are there veto points which prevent and/or facilitating factors which promote the Europeanisation of loyalties?

Risse (2001: 198) has shown how the fit/misfit between a European identity and national (French, German and English) identities can challenge the latter. He argues that since there is 'no contractual obligation to develop a common EU identity' the concept of 'adaptational pressure', which emanates from EU rules and regulations, does not make much sense (*ibid*: 200). This does not exclude adaptational pressures in general, other than the ones which follow the authoritative power of the EU. Thus, Risse argues, that continuous involvement of the EU in the daily life of its citizens is expected to alter the way in which citizens define themselves in relation to collective identities. For Risse, 'it is a relevant question to ask how Europeanisation influences collective understandings and loyalties toward the nation-state' (*ibid.*). As said earlier, Risse (2005, 2001) uses interchangeable the notions of identity and loyalty when assessing Haas's contribution to the concept of European identity. According to Risse, Haas's focus on expectations, political activities and loyalties links them to the European identity.

For Risse (2001), the following two facilitating factors could affect the people's loyalties: rationalism and socialisation. These two factors are driving the emergence of loyalties towards the EU. From a rationalist perspective, loyalties towards the EU emerge when people perceive the European framework as more positive in terms of satisfying interests than the domestic framework.[16] From the perspective of socialisation, loyalties to the EU emerge after people are socialised under EU norms, values and common concerns. As the following paragraphs intend to show while Haas predicted in 1958 the importance of shifts in people's expectations, political activities and loyalties for the study of European integration, a debate has aroused regarding whether such shifts follow a rational assessment of the EU or a process of socialisation in the EU norms and values.

Following Haas's work on national actors' attitudes towards the EU, the following section intends to assess briefly the Commission's actions to influence citizens' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. The objective of this assessment is to show that the EU intended to trigger shifts in citizens' expectations, political activities and loyalties mainly by intervening in the 'cultural field' (Shore 2000: 53). Therefore, the Commission has neglected the potential of citizens' participation in EU initiatives to bring about the above mentioned shifts. As mentioned above, participation in EU processes can trigger shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties which are based on rational and/or socialisation factors.

[16] In some studies, the 'rational' approach to the EU identity has been used interchangeably with the 'utilitarian' approach. Like the rational approach, utilitarian also means '"rational" calculations of costs and benefits of integration…' (McLaren 2002: 551). Yet, this thesis only refers to the term rational to avoid any confusion between the terms.

1.2 The redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties and efforts to construct a European identity

In *The Uniting of Europe,* which has been characterised as 'founding moment of the field of what we now routinely term "EU studies"' (Rosamond 2005: 328), Ernst Hass (1958: 16) has argued that,

> [p]olitical integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones.

For Haas, the process of shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties would follow a rational assessment of the benefits that the emerging European framework entailed for the concerned actors (see also Risse 2005). However, in the early 1970s, due to economic and political developments at European level, the vision of a united Europe seemed to be no longer involving the self-emerging redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties (Rosamond 2007[2003]; Rosamond 2005; Laursen 1995). Haas (1967: 325) himself acknowledged that he had not foreseen developments such as the 'rebirth of nationalism'. Since this type of self-emergence of loyalties theorised by Haas did not proceed, the 'construction of the united Europe' was in 1973 intended to be facilitated by a 'European identity'

(Bulletin of the European Communities 1973: 118). The European identity would be built on common values and interests of the then nine member states (*ibid.*). Such stated intensions are the focus of the analysis in part 1.2.1. For now, Haas's analytical contribution on the issue of citizens' attitudes towards the EU is still indispensable. Instead of using the abstract analytical concept of an emerging European identity (as section 1.2.1 will show), Haas was more specific when he theorised EU related loyalties as being the result of the redirection of expectations and political activities towards the EU. The links between European identity and expectations, political activities and loyalties are made obvious in Thomas Risse's (2005) article *Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration*. As said earlier, Risse (*ibid*: 292) argues that Haas's 'shifting loyalties' can be perceived as 'a statement about collective [EU] identity formation…'

Therefore, by making reference not only to loyalties but also to expectations and political activities, Haas argued that political actors' loyalties towards the supranational level would follow the reorientation of these actors' interests (see also Cram 2001[1996]). For European political integration, the shift of loyalties was neither the first nor the only important change. For loyalties to emerge, expectations had first to be reoriented (from the domestic) to the European level for 'long periods' (Haas 1958: 5; Cram 2001). This statement is confirmed by Haas's (1958: 5) definition of loyalties:

> A population may be said to be loyal to a set of symbols and institutions when it habitually and predictably over long periods obeys the injunctions of

their authority and turns to them for the satisfaction of important expectations.

Haas referred also to political activities since he was preoccupied with certain political actors, namely the elites. As Risse (2005: 292) underlines, 'Haas was not that much concerned about mass public opinion and the loyalties of the ordinary citizens, as he regarded European integration as an élite affair.' Thus, Haas referred to the actors who actively participate in the EU, i.e. actors who intend to influence the policy-making process. While as shown in the above citation he defined loyalties through expectations (for the satisfaction of interests) he did not explicitly define the term 'political activities'. Nevertheless, before he defined political integration he paid extra attention in referring to political actors' political activities. Political actors would, according to Haas's neofunctionalist approach, shift their political activities from the national to the EU level, in an effort to pursue their interests and to influence the policy-making process. Such shifts were, after all, indicators of loyalties/'community sentiments' (e.g. Haas 1958: 9).

An example can be used to help towards the better understanding of the terms expectations, political activities and loyalties as they have been used by Haas (1958). Stakeholders aiming at combating of poverty may redirect their expectations to the EU when they believe they are more easily able to satisfy their goals at the EU level than the national level. Following their emerging expectations, these stakeholders redirect their political activities to the EU level when they try to combat poverty (e.g. through lobbying, campaigns or street protests in front of the EU buildings). They

can be said to be loyal to the EU when their expectations and political activities are directed to the EU for long periods of time.

For the sake of clarity, the present thesis uses the terms 'loyalties, expectations and political activities' in Haas's definition of political integration in a different order (*ibid*: 16). In the process of European integration, first comes the redirection of expectations and then the redirection of political activities to satisfy these expectations. Finally, only if these expectations and political activities are redirected to the EU level for long periods does it make it safe to discuss about redirection of loyalties towards the EU. Therefore, the present thesis focuses on expectations, political activities and loyalties over a ten year period.

1.2.1 A 'people's Europe' through a European culture

In the early 1990s, the decline of public support for the EU (e.g. Buhr 2010), which has also become known as the 'end of the permissive consensus' (Hix 2005[1999]: 151), intensified the European Commission's efforts to construct an EU identity based on shared European cultural and symbolic values (e.g. Shore 2000). Such a construction and diffusion across the EU was expected to have an impact on the loyalties and interests of the public and to stimulate support for the EU integration (*ibid*.).

In fact, the more European integration was evolving, the more intense the legitimacy debate became. Consequently, public support for European integration was becoming more urgent. The political elites argued that 'European unification will only be

achieved if Europeans want it. Europeans will only want it if there is such a thing as European identity' (European Commission 1984: 2 as cited in Shore 2000: 45). Thus, in addition to trying to build a social Europe (see section 1.1.1.1 above), the Commission attempted to build also a European identity in order to trigger support for the EU. Accordingly, the Commission has tried to construct a European identity through the diffusion of European cultural values in the same way that the modern states have constructed national identities (e.g. Cinpoes 2008).

The Adonnino *ad hoc* committee, which was established by the Fontainebleau European council, published its report *A people's Europe* in 1985 (Adonnino 1985). The report proposed a number of actions among which were the abolition of any customs formalities at the intra-Community borders and the introduction of symbols of the Community's existence (i.e. flag, anthem and coinage). Again, it seems that the Commission intended to 'build' a European identity by making use of some of the core characteristics which constitute a national identity.[17] The Adonnino Report also proposed the promotion of a European citizenship, involvement of the audio-visual industry, establishment of a European lottery and creation of European sports teams. However, soon after some of the measures which the Adonnino's report had proposed were adopted, the citizens' support for the EU started to decline (Hix 2005[1999]: 151). As a consequence, the EU intensified its efforts by embodying in its Treaties its right to getting involved in the 'cultural field' in order to bring 'the common cultural heritage to the fore' (Maastricht Treaty, Art. 128 as cited in Shore 2000: 53)

[17] The term 'build' is used here to imply a 'top-down' construction of the nation. This is accordant to Gellner's theory that states make the nations and not the other way round (Gellner 1983). Nevertheless, it is a term which is derived from the critique of nation rather than from the nationalist discourse. Smith (e.g. 1999) argues against such top-down construction: for him nations are based on pre-existing ethnic attachments.

These efforts of the EU Commission to build a European identity triggered a debate in academia which has focused on the potential to influence EU citizens' attitudes. It is not possible to identify a precise model of European identity and its constituent cultural, political, social, ideological elements (Tătar 2010). There are 'rival and contrasting "European identities" regarding not only the borders of Europe in geographic terms, but also how each of them perceives Europeaness' (Shore 1993: 791; see also Marks and Hooghe 2003). Additionally, some authors have dismissed the analytical role of the concept 'identity'. For example, in their widely cited article 'Beyond Identity', Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 34) argue that 'it [the concept 'identity'] is riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations'. This thesis therefore does not focus on an abstract European identity concept, but follows instead Haas's concepts of expectations, political activities and loyalties of the citizens (as explained above).

1.2.2 New and pre-existing collective loyalties: incompatibility and rationalism

One group of theories which were developed to explain the potential future of a European identity concluded that it would be incompatible with national identity. This incompatibility refers to this specific effort to build a European identity upon cultural and symbolic elements. In fact, these theories assume that there is no room for the EU to construct an identity on cultural and symbolic elements because they are already attached to well-settled national sentiments (Smith 2006; 1992). For example, the case of England shows that certain factors such as its 'island location', 'strong national state' and other historical reasons lead to a 'distinct lack of

widespread enthusiasm in England for European integration and a European identity…' (Smith 2006: 448-9). Similar conclusions have been drawn from research on the compatibility between Greek national identity and European identity (Sereti and Kokosalakis 2003). According to Sereti and Kokosalakis, the emergence of a European identity in the Greek population cannot be based on cultural or symbolic elements since these are dominated by national feelings (*ibid.*). These brief examples seem to confirm the argument that citizens perceive the European integration as a threat to their national cultural identity (McLaren 2002). Moreover, it has been argued that a strong sense of national identity means a low level of support for European integration (Carey 2002).

Yet, while citizens perceive European integration as a threat to their national identity, this should not substantially restrict the emergence of positive attitudes towards deeper EU integration (McLaren 2004). Positive attitudes about the EU appear to be based not on cultural elements but on an analysis of the benefits that EU membership and integration entail for individuals and their countries (*ibid.*). In other words, national loyalties can coexist with loyalties to the EU since they are based on different criteria: national loyalties are based on cultural elements while the loyalties related to the EU are based on its ability to satisfy citizens' interests. For Haas (1958), loyalties towards the supranational level can emerge because this level is better able to satisfy people's interests than the national level. In other words, loyalties towards the EU can emerge only if it satisfies personal and national interests (Deflem and Pampel 1996). According to Haas (1958: 14), for shifts in loyalties to take place, people do not even need to be 'attracted by "Europeanism" as such'. Importantly, shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties do not mean that

citizens will abandon their national loyalties (Risse 2005). Haas (1958) also predicted such attitudes. According to him, shifts in loyalties do not mean the 'immediate repudiation' of the national loyalties (*ibid*: 14).

Citizens' interests can be material (e.g. money) and/or non-material (e.g. social provisions, status) (Clements 2011; Risse 2005; Jiménez *et al.* 2004; Hooghe 2001). According to utility theories, individuals' decisions are 'consistent with reasonable calculations of costs and benefits' (Hooghe 2001: 14). From Haas's perspective, the choice about the direction of loyalties is a rational one; based on interests. However, interests in turn are shaped by values which 'include nonmaterial benefits' (Haas 2005: xv).

Similarly, research has shown that support for the EU can emerge for reasons such as the effectiveness of supranational institutions (Sánchez-Cuenca 2000). In fact the Eurobarometer surveys have shown that in many countries citizens trust the EU *more* than their national government and parliament (e.g. Eurobarometer 2011b: 44-46). This trend is not the case in eight member states among which include the UK but not Greece.[18] In the UK only 17% of the citizens who took part in the survey trust the EU. However, trust to the British government and the parliament is not significantly higher. Indeed the percentages are 21% and 24% respectively. In Greece 29% of the citizens trust the EU, 8% trust the national government and 12% the national parliament. According to Sánchez-Cuenca (2000: 152), '[m]aximum support for the EU will be found among the citizens that have a good opinion of European institutions and a poor one of their national political system'. This is again a rational

[18] The countries whose citizens trust the EU less than their national government and parliament are: Denmark, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the UK.

assessment of the EU since for Sánchez-Cuenca people support the EU because they perceive it as a solution to domestic problems which emerge from the poor performance of domestic institutions (e.g. state and political parties – see also McLaren 2002: 553).

However, in most of the theories which analyse potential shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties, such shifts usually apply only to a specific and relatively narrow group of people. The next part intends to show who those individuals are who eventually shift their expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU.

1.2.3 Shifts in loyalties limited to the elites

The often cited *A View from the Top,* which contained research that was carried out for the European Commission in the mid-1990s, identified that top decision-makers' attitudes towards the EU were far more positive than those of the general public (Top Decision Makers Survey; 1996). The top decision-makers where '[e]lected politicians, such as members of national and the European Parliament', '[s]enior national civil servants in all Member States', '[b]usiness and labour leaders', '[m]edia leaders – including heads of both broadcast and print media', and '[p]ersons playing a leading role in the academic, cultural or religious life of their country' (*ibid*: ii). The same gap in attitudes between the public and the top decision-makers was according to the same survey recorded in the issue of the perceived benefits by the EU integration. Ninety percent of the top decision-makers who participated in the survey argued that membership in the EU had benefited their country. The figure of

the citizens from the general public who agreed with that view was 43% (*ibid*: 4). For Greece the figures regarding the perceived benefits from the EU were 92% for the top decision-makers and 59% for the public. For the UK these figures were 84% and 38% respectively.

More recent studies also show higher rates of positive attitudes for European integration amongst the elites compared to the public (Kaina 2006; Flockhart 2005; Risse 2005; Risse 2004).[19] The redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties which Haas (1958) considered a central ingredient for European integration, still seems to have affected primarily the elites. The problem for European integration therefore seems to be the lack of a diffusion of shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties within wider groups of the general population. The degree to which shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU have emerged among politicians, executives and other elite actors (who have been traditionally involved in EU processes and projects) could provide an indication for the kind of shifts which are needed in a more inclusive group of stakeholders.

1.2.4 Participation in EU processes and socialisation

Shore's notion of *engrenage*[20] provides a sound analysis of the dynamics of participation in EU processes (Shore 2000). Shore argues that participation in the EU system affects –through the engrenage– the attitudes and loyalties of the participants and that 'the image it [i.e. *engrenage*] evokes of individuals becoming snared in the

[19] As has been shown in section 1.1.1.1 above, citizens are more supportive to the European integration than the elites in terms of social policies.
[20] 'As a figure of speech, however, it is used to convey the idea of being "caught up in the system"…' (Shore 2000: 147)

EU's expanding webs and networks, is crucial for understanding the way European integration is conceptualised by EU elites' (*ibid*: 147). Shore develops further neofunctionalists' predictions about the cognitive change that European integration could offer by stating that *engrenage's*

> …'functions' are to integrate and socialise national subjects into the structures, norms and values of the EU: to draw individuals into the EU's institutional web of meanings in order to change the way they see themselves (Shore 2000: 148).

Shore's theory was derived from empirical data collected among EU executives and particularly with Commission officials. His theory is heavily based on the socialisation of *fonctionnaires* under norms and values that participation in the EU Commission entails. One of the most notable examples in Shore's research is the following statement by a Commission official:

> I suppose neofunctionalist theory is correct. Living and working in the EU does change you. I've certainly become more federalist in my outlook – not as much as some of those who have been here for ages – but I can see the process working on me. It's obvious really; you have a vested interest in promoting the EU because you live here and work for it, so your fortunes become tied up with the fate of the Union… (Shore 2000: 152).

This citation emphasises two central dimensions of socialisation. First, according to Hooghe (2005: 9), 'the longer one's involvement in an organization, the more one's

beliefs can be expected to approximate that organization's norms.' However, the EU is not only perceived as a real entity through participation in its formal supranational institutions (e.g. Commission) but also through participation in its processes, policies and projects. As Tătar (2010: 48) states, loyalties towards the EU can emerge 'through continuous exposure to EU's symbols, institutions, processes and policies'. This seems to happen because such participation provides participants with 'shared experiences and shared social norms that enhance group identity and community feeling' (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 14).

Second, it seems that even if socialisation in EU values can trigger the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties, its precise impact on expectations, political activities and loyalties cannot be assessed without taking into account the rational assessment of the EU by participants who are involved in EU activities. As the above quoted statement by a Commission official reveals, the promotion of the EU's interests is normally expected to promote the personal interests of individuals (Shore 2000: 152). Hooghe (2005) has reached the same conclusion while focusing on the socialisation of individuals in the EU Commission. The Commission has been perceived as an independent 'steering body' for European integration that defends the 'European interest over and above' (*ibid*: 4). However, in addition to a socialisation process there is also a process of 'utility maximization' that leads to the redirection of interests and loyalties of participants (*ibid*: 13). If one accepts this line of argument then expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU emerge also when personal (and national) interests are promoted through the EU. This argument seems to confirm theories which argue that individuals' attitudes

towards the EU are based on rational assessments (McLaren 2004; Mayer and Palmowski 2004, Sánchez-Cuenca 2000).

Like Hass (1958) and Shore (2000), other theories which explain shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties either on the grounds of rationalism and/or socialisation, have focused on specific actors of European integration. These theories base their assumption on the argument that the more the EU is salient to the peoples' personal lives the more the people will shift expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU (Herrmann and Brewer 2004). According to Castano (2004: 41) this is the concept of 'entitativity' which dictates that 'for identification with the EU to occur, the EU must be perceived as a real entity'. In Risse's (2005: 297) words,

> An imagined community becomes real in people's lives when they increasingly share cultural values, a perceived common fate, increased salience, and boundedness. The EU is certainly very real for Europe's political, economic, and social élites.

Thus, only elite actors will potentially shift their loyalties because only they 'deal with it [i.e. the EU] in their daily lives' (Risse and Grabowski 2008: 3; see also Hooghe and Marks 2006: 248). For most other citizens (and groups) the EU remains 'remote' (Risse and Grabowski 2008: 3). Nevertheless, the OMC was intended to widen the opportunities for participation for non-elite actors (see section 1.1.2 above). The following section intends to assess whether participation in the OMC

can promote socialisation in EU norms and/or whether such participation can be analysed by a rational assessment of the EU framework.

1.2.5 The OMC as a socialisation agent

The previous section analysed the potential of the European Commission to socialise its members in EU norms and therefore to promote EU loyalties. Although the OMC is very different from the European Commission as far as the deliberate diffusion of symbols and values as well as the entailment of supranational norms are concerned, the former also appears to have the potential to provide a framework for socialisation (Haahr 2004; Jacobsson 2004). The OMC's socialisation framework can be explained through the method's comparison with the Community method.

The Community method can be viewed as a top down imposition of hard law which member states are obliged to implement. The OMC instead tries to coordinate member state actions under soft law techniques. This encourages member states to identify best practices and draw up policies which acknowledge common European concerns and common European objectives (Jacobsson 2004). This does not imply that the policies decided on and implemented, according to the Community method, are drawn without reference to common European concerns and objectives. However, in the case of the Community method, goals and objectives are translated into strategies and binding laws which are decided on at the highest (or elite) political level. In the case of the OMC, member state actors are involved in every stage of the process from the initial expression of their common concerns, to the search for ways to implement commonly agreed actions (e.g. through instruments

such as peer review) to the monitoring and evaluation of each other's practices and policies. Member state actors are therefore very much in control of the OMC process. The Community method presupposes 'agency losses' for the member states or 'gaps in control' (Schäfer 2004: 1-2 who based his argument on Pierson's theory[21]). This means that under the Community method, member states (and EU institutions) make decisions for further integration which create EU institutions (i.e. 'political legal and social institutions associated with political problem solving' – Cowles *et al*. 2001: 3). Once the new institutions have been created, they form part of the EU governance system which cannot easily be changed by member states which consented to establish them (*ibid*: 2). If, for example, a newly elected government in a member state wants to revoke the previous government's decision which was adopted under the Community Method, then it will be able to do so only with 'unanimous consent' at EU level (*ibid*: 2). In other words, the Council and EP will have to agree to revise an EU law or another legally binding decision that was adopted under the Community method. Accordingly, the involvement of supranational institutions, restricted time horizons, shifts in governments' preferences and unanticipated consequences that may occur in the administrative and temporal space between the decision-making stage and the final outcome hampers their expected continuity (Schäfer 2004).

The OMC aims to identify first the common concerns before member states are asked to implement policy measures. The method encourages a policy-making process which consists of the following stages: setting of objectives → design of policies → implementation → monitoring → mutual learning. According to Zeitlin

[21] Pierson, P. 'The Path to European Integration: A Historical Institutional Analysis', 2004, in Comparative Political Studies vol. 29, 123-163

(2005b: 8), the 'OMC processes cannot be considered as truly external to national policy-making, since Member States actively supported their initiation and continuously participate in the definition of objectives, guidelines, and indicators'. Therefore, the OMC which has been seen as one of the 'forms of cooperation that limit agency losses' (Schäfer 2004: 3), keeps clear the continuity between the decision-making stage and its outcome.

The member states can be seen as agents which are working together to achieve a common goal. This 'working together' is not a simple cooperation, but a coordination of actions at every stage of the process (Haahr 2004). Haahr (*ibid*: 224) argues that, in such a way, the OMC reinforces 'the vision of the EU as an entity' and the vision of the EU as a 'community of destiny'. In turn, this community of destiny appears to have its own objectives, concepts and categories which are incorporated into domestic debates through the OMC (Zeitlin 2005b: 5).

As said above, the context for socialisation in which shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties from national to European level occur, requires the presence of EU norms, institutions and discourse that run throughout the processes. For Haahr (2004), the OMC facilitates this requirement by involving peer reviews, guidelines, common European indicators, tables and graphs, and by authorising supranational norms to influence the policies and their outcomes (see also section 1.1.1 above). Concerning for example one of the above features of the OMC (i.e. guidelines), Trubek and Mosher (2003: 77) note:

> The guidelines and the underlying strategy they reflect do, to varying degrees, challenge national policies in many countries and thus should destabilize prior understandings.

It must be noted that for Trubek and Mosher (2003) guidelines is one of the OMC's mechanisms which can potentially promote policy learning. Learning, in the context of the OMC-related policy-making processes, means the diffusion of ideas of problem solving across the EU and its member states (*ibid.*). Section 1.1.5 above has shown how in the context of Europeanisation the exposure of domestic actors to a wider forum of ideas is expected to help them overcome domestic constraints (e.g. veto points and policy problems). Studying in particular the European Employment Strategy (EES), Trubek and Mosher (2003) have argued that mechanisms such as benchmarking, sharing of good practices, dialogue and involvement of actors with new ideas have indeed promoted policy learning. Nevertheless, the authors have added that the OMC has not been used according to its potential and there is yet unexploited space for even better results, always in terms of policy learning (*ibid.*).

Jacobsson (2004) goes on to argue that common learning together and through other mechanisms (i.e. the use of common language, common indicators, benchmarking, evaluations and statistics) trigger shifts of loyalties from the national to the EU framework. These mechanisms also contribute towards the creation of a 'common "Europe"' amongst EU elites and citizens (*ibid*: 355). However, Jacobsson has noted that while the OMC on employment has been increasingly intending to mobilise different groups of actors, it has rather been a method which mainly involves

officials. The conclusion is that through the above mentioned mechanisms, national policy actors:

> have begun to rethink national policy in the light of 'common problems' and to redefine it in terms of 'common concerns' and something that is legitimately the concern of other states and nationals (*ibid*: 367).

In other words, Jacobsson argues that through such mechanisms, actors are 'hedged in' an emerging system of governance (*ibid*: 359). This is similar to Shore's (2000) concept *engrenage* as has been explained above. Both authors appear to use these concepts to describe an EU-related socialisation process. However, in the case of the above cited studies on the OMC (i.e. carried out from Haahr (2004), Jacobsson (2004) and Trubek and Mosher (2003)), such evidence for socialisation appears to concern only the elite actors. This is inevitable since these studies focus on policy fields such as labour market and employment where the application of the OMC has in practice not managed to mobilise wider groups of stakeholders (in particular, primary and secondary stakeholders).[22] Contrary to these policy fields, the OMC in social inclusion has managed to mobilise groups of secondary and primary stakeholders, as has been shown earlier in this chapter.

De la Porte and Pochet (2005: 371) have shown that new actors, to whom the national framework does not provide the necessary 'institutional means', are eager to participate in the social inclusion OMC to pursue their interests. The social inclusion OMC therefore seems to be a particularly useful policy field to test Haas's (1958)

[22] In fact, while Haahr and Jacobsson refer mainly to elite actors, Trubek and Mosher (2003) refer also to the social partners.

argument that actors shift their loyalties from the national to the European level because the latter appears able to realise their interests better than the former. The participation of primary and secondary stakeholders through the social inclusion OMC cannot only be seen as participation within a framework for socialisation in EU common concerns and objectives. Instead it should also be seen as a reason for a positive rational assessment due to which the emergence of expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU can emerge.

Because the OMC can either provide the framework for socialisation to participants or because stakeholders participate in OMC initiatives for rational reasons, one can expect to find an impact on the expectations, political activities and loyalties of the involved stakeholders. As Zeitlin (2005: 37) has argued,

> [t]here is even evidence that participation in OMC process can contribute not merely to advancing domestic actors' pre-existing interests and goals, but also to subtle shifts in their preferences and identities.

This thesis intends to assess whether this claim can be supported with new empirical evidence on the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC. Before being able to put forward the main research question and hypotheses it is important to clarify how participation of primary and secondary stakeholders' is assessed in the chapters that follow.

1.3 Methodology and country selection

1.3.1 Stages, degree and level of participation

In the context of the social inclusion OMC, participation of stakeholders started in 2000 as a broad, overarching objective. No further specification was provided regarding which stages of the policy-making process and which level of governance (EU level or domestic level) participation was referring to. The Nice conclusions (European Council 2000c: 9) indicated that participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the fight against the various forms of exclusion should be intended 'according to national practice'. This was clearly referring to participation in the domestic policy-making process but it was leaving ample room to the member states to decide where (i.e. which stage of the policy-making cycle) the stakeholders would contribute to. The streamlining of the social inclusion OMC in 2005 underlined the need for participation in specific stages of the policy-making process. As shown in section 1.1.2 above, the European Commission (2005a: 5) has set the objective of stakeholders' participation in the 'design, implementation and monitoring of policy'. Particularly by referring to the stages of implementation and monitoring, the Commission seems to follow core public policy textbooks which differentiate between stages of the policy-making cycle. For example, in his model of the policy cycle, Heywood (2007, 2000) also refers to the stages of policy implementation and monitoring, among others. Yet, the Commission's reference to the *design* of policy seems to be imprecise. In fact, instead of the three stages policy cycle being used by

the Commission, Heywood's (2007: 430; 2000: 32) policy cycle model is consisted of four stages. Apart from implementation and monitoring, Heywood also assesses the stages of policy initiation (bringing an issue to the concern of the administration) and policy formulation (specification of targets and decision-making regarding the policies to pursue commonly recognised objectives). For Heywood these are the first and the second stages of the policy cycle respectively, with policy implementation being the third and evaluation the fourth stage. The Commission does not explain further whether the design stage involves the initiation of policies and/or the decision-making.

Approaches to different stages of the policy cycle are not beyond criticism. For example, Corkery and colleagues (1995: 7) argue that such 'linear models' of the policy-making process fail to account for the interrelation of the different stages. They tend to approach the policy-making process as a 'sequence of steps' (*ibid.*). However, in the context of the OMC, research has indeed used linear models in order to analyse the policy cycle. The increasing interest in the mobilisation of stakeholders in the context of the OMC has been reflected on developments in studies of participation in the different stages of the policy-making cycle. According to a study carried out for the European Commission, the participation of stakeholders in the OMC must be analysed in respect to the different stages of the policy-making process, namely preparation and design (including agenda-setting), decision-making, implementation, monitoring and assessment (Inbas and Engender 2010). Independent experts who contributed to the Inbas and Engender study appear to consider preparation and design as one stage (they mostly focus on the agenda-setting) and they separately refer to the stage of decision-making (e.g. Delistathis *et al.* 2009).

Since, as said earlier, design has a rather convoluted meaning, the present thesis follows a linear model focusing however in the following stages of the policy-making process: agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring.

As has been explained earlier, the member states' response to the OMC overarching objectives is drafted and reflected in the NAPs/NSRs. Various scholars have indicated that primary and secondary stakeholders' participation refers to participation in the NAP process (e.g. Armstrong 2006; de la Porte and Pochet 2005). Therefore, the focus of the present thesis is on the different stages of the NAP/NSR process i.e. agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring.

For the present thesis the *degree* of participation is another important variable. Research on the participation of stakeholders in the social OMC gained momentum while the present thesis was being written. Thus, an EU wide study has been conducted by Inbas and Engender (2010; regarding the UK and Greece also see Delistathis *et al*. 2009 and Johnson 2009). This study showed that the OMC has triggered domestic participation of stakeholders at different degrees of involvement. According to the study (*ibid*: 3 –emphasis added), the degrees of involvement[23] are the following:

> to *inform*: one-way dissemination of information [by the government] to stakeholders on a specific issue; to *consult*: to inform and get feedback from stakeholders, a two-way information channel; to *involve*: gathering stakeholders' views and ensuring that their concerns and views are

[23] Based on the framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation

> understood and considered; to *collaborate*: to work with stakeholders as partners throughout a process, including in analyses, development and decision-making; to *empower*: to place final decision-making in the hands of stakeholders.

Secondary stakeholders participate in all member states' OMC led social inclusion processes although in different degrees of involvement and in different stages of the policy cycle. Moreover, the OMC has triggered the participation of primary stakeholders in about half of the currently 27 member states (*ibid*.). Particularly the British government appears to be successful in promoting the participation of people in poverty in the domestic social inclusion policies (Johnson 2009). In fact, Johnson (2009) identified the participation of primary stakeholders in the UK as good practice which (in the context of the OMC) should be shared by other EU member states. A similar study in Greece showed that the OMC triggered the participation of only secondary stakeholders in the social inclusion policy-making process (Delistathis *et al*. 2009). According to Delistathis' and colleagues' (2009) study, Greek primary stakeholders have not been mobilised by the OMC to participate in the domestic policy-making process. This seems to question a 2005 study by de la Porte and Pochet (2005). According to this last study (*ibid*: 379):

> There is a relatively high level of correspondence between the level of participation of NGOs and people experiencing poverty. In nine out of ten cases, where participation is good for NGOs [such as in the UK and in Greece], it is medium for people experiencing poverty.

Despite reaching at different conclusions (partly explained by the different periods the research conducted), the contribution of these studies to the understanding of the nature of domestic participation is notable. Instead of degrees of participation, de la Porte and Pochet (2005: 378) approach the issue by mentioning 'medium' and 'good' participation. Good participation means that 'there is genuine consultation by the government' with these stakeholders during the drafting of the NAPs on social inclusion. Medium participation means that 'there is only information by the government' for the stakeholders (*ibid.*).

However, the studies of Inbas and Engender (2010) and de la Porte and Pochet (2005) do not produce evidence regarding the assessment of the participation by stakeholders who either participate or are willing to participate in OMC processes at the domestic level. As will be shown below such assessment is vital for the understanding of potential shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties.

Regarding participation at EU level through the OMC, up to now the *Impact study on the European meetings of people experiencing poverty* (Dierckx and Van Herck 2010) is the only study which refers to its impact on primary stakeholders. Dierckx and Van Herck concluded that these meetings 'provide a kind of European identity' (*ibid*: 20) to the participants in the sense of belonging to a wider community of people with shared problems. However, their study does not appear to assess adequately the impact of such participation in the EU instigated OMC activities on the expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants. This thesis aims to make a contribution in helping to close this gap in the existing literature on the (social inclusion) OMC.

1.3.2 Research question and hypotheses

This thesis draws upon new empirical data findings in addressing the following main research question: *To what extent will primary and secondary stakeholders who participate in the social inclusion OMC shift their expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic to the EU level*?

In order to be able to answer the research question, this thesis puts forward two hypotheses. First, the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic social inclusion OMC process leads to shifts in their expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. In order to test this hypothesis, a two-step research process is carried out. The first step seeks to analyse domestic participation of the concerned stakeholders through the social inclusion OMC. For reasons explained in the previous section, this first step assesses whether primary and secondary stakeholders have been involved in the agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs and what the degree of their involvement has been. The second step analyses the impact of participation on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties in relation to the EU. Importantly, the main focus of the analysis is on the views which the participants hold on their own participation and on the EU participatory framework which is provided by the OMC. It is hypothesised that possible satisfaction from their participation could lead to a positive rational assessment of the EU.

The second hypothesis put forward focuses specifically on EU-level participation. It hypothesises that the participation of stakeholders in OMC-sponsored EU conferences of people who experience poverty, will lead to shifts in their expectations, political activities and loyalties to the EU level. Primary stakeholders from every member state meet in Brussels for a two-day annual event, with the main purpose of this event being to enable EU policy-makers to consult the participants about their views and experiences concerning issues of poverty and social exclusion. Again the opinions of individuals who participate in these meetings are central for a better understanding of the potential for the emergence of a shift in expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU.

It is ironic that the existing studies have largely ignored primary and secondary stakeholders' opinions on their participation in social inclusion OMC. As was mentioned above, most scholars have exclusively focused on elite actors in their studies on participation through the OMC. In order to overcome this deficiency in the existing literature, this thesis makes wide use of interviews with primary and secondary stakeholders who were involved in the social inclusion OMC.

1.3.3 Qualitative research

In order to answer the main research question, this thesis uses qualitative research methods. However, 'the use of such a broad label [i.e. qualitative research] masks a great variety of approaches, which perhaps should not be taken together as some sort of coherent whole' (Symon and Cassell 2004: 2). Therefore, the methodological approach adopted for this thesis relies heavily on semi-structured interviews with

primary and secondary stakeholders in Greece and the UK as well as with some stakeholders on the EU level.

Many of the empirical findings put forward in this thesis concern the context in which the shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties are expected to take place. The researched context may contain variables which could not have been expected when formulating the original hypotheses. This richness therefore, 'means that the study cannot rely on a single data collection method but will likely need to use multiple sources of evidence' (Yin 2003: 4). This thesis relies on different sources of information to extract new empirical evidence related to the hypotheses and for answering the research question. A more thorough understanding can be derived when different sources are analysed which produce relevant data (Olsen 2004). The present thesis intends to answer these and related issues by making use of semi-structured interviews, an analysis of primary documents issued by the Commission and member states (e.g. communications, Joint Reports, and NAPs) and reports from projects and workshops on the application of the OMC. This thesis therefore draws on a range of unpublished primary sources in addition to an analysis of the existing secondary literature.

1.3.3.1 Interviews

Conducting interviews is a widely used method for collecting new empirical data. It can be defined as a method with the objective 'to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand how and why they come to have this particular perspective' (King 2004: 11). One major advantage of interviews is

the interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. This does not mean that the procedure is limited to a question and answer session and that the interviewees should be treated simply as vessels of information (Marvasti 2004). Thus,

> [f]or a growing number of sociologists and other social scientists the interview process in no longer limited to the simple give-and-take of asking and answering questions. While gathering information about people remains a central purpose of interviewing, exceedingly, qualitative researchers are moving beyond technical and procedural matters and into the realm of meaning, interaction, and social context (*ibid*: 29).

The interviewees were not only seen as people who have the information about participation, but also as people who can discuss the meaning of such participation for secondary and primary stakeholders. The advantage of the interview is that it can help towards the understanding of participation and its impact on three different levels of participants' attitudes towards the EU, namely expectations, political activities and loyalties. According to King (2004: 21), '[t]he qualitative research interview is ideally suited to examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored'.

The above remarks do not intend to obscure the major disadvantage of the interviews. This thesis acknowledges that the information which is gathered with the help of semi-structured interviews (that can be carried out only with a relatively small number of interviewees) cannot provide statistically relevant data (Read and Marsh 2002). However, the earlier mentioned advantages advocate for the scientific

utility of the interviews by answering the particular research question. Additionally, the impact of these weaknesses has been intended to be mellowed with the extensive use of primary documents such as reports from projects and workshops on the application of the OMC, as section 1.3.3.2 shows.

King (2004) sees the interviews as a process which starts long before the interviewer and interviewee meet. This method's preparatory phase starts already from the time the research question is shaped. The form that the questions will have is of decisive importance for the interviews. All topics discussed during semi-structured interviews are closely related with each other to enable the collection of new empirical data which will help to answer the main research question. The next step in this research approach is the creation of specific interview questions. For this thesis the interviews were not conducted according to a rigid standardised questionnaire. Instead the interviews were structured in such a way as to allow in depth conversations about issues of participation as well as the loyalties and interests of the participants. In this sense, the questions have been grouped in different sets according to the groups of interviewees (i.e. primary or secondary stakeholders). Before these sets of questions are explained, it must be said that the theorising of the OMC as a tool which fosters participation requires purposive sampling instead of statistically relevant random sampling for both secondary and primary stakeholders. In the case of secondary stakeholders, the reasons for the purposive sampling include the awareness of the OMC, knowledge of the interviewees of the EU and domestic policy-making process in the field of social inclusion, and their knowledge of issues which are related to secondary and primary stakeholders' participation. Most of these stakeholders are members of the EAPN networks in Greece and the UK. As shown earlier in the

present chapter, the EAPN-EU (with its national delegations, e.g. EAPN-Greece and EAPN-UK) is the most active anti-poverty network in the social inclusion OMC process. However, interviews were conducted with representatives from organisations which do not belong to the EAPN network. For example the Klimaka NGO in Greece and the Off the Streets into Work NGO in the UK are both members of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (*Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri* – FEANTSA). The reason for these interviews was that the FEANTSA network is also very active in the field of the social inclusion OMC mainly in issues of mental health and homelessness. Interviewees from these associations were approached with an email or with a telephone call.

People who participated and/or have facilitated the participation of primary stakeholders have also been interviewed (i.e. key actors in the *Get Heard* and *Bridging the Policy Gap* projects; see chapter 4). Representatives from anti-poverty associations are (due to their activity in the field) able to provide an overview of primary stakeholders' participation and potential shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties. However, because the account of a third person cannot be treated as totally accurate (as in some cases interviewees themselves admitted), primary stakeholders' views have been vital for the present thesis. Thus, primary stakeholders from Greece and the UK who have participated in OMC-led domestic and/or EU level projects have been interviewed. For example, a person from Crete has been interviewed due to her participation in the Brussels European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty. Another interview was conducted in Wales due to the fact that the person was a member of the Anti-Poverty Network Cymru (the

grassroots anti-poverty network in Wales) and also a participant in the above mentioned European meetings. In these cases the technique of 'snowball sampling' was used (Atkinson and Flint 2004: 1043). The contact details of participants in the OMC process who live in poverty and/or experience social exclusion were in principle not easy to find. Therefore, already identified interviewees were asked to provide the contact details of primary stakeholders which they had at their disposal. In total, sixteen interviews were carried out between November 2009 and January 2012. Seven of them took place in Greece, eight in the UK and one in Brussels. The list of interviewees consists of twelve secondary and four primary stakeholders (see Appendix III).

The semi-structured interview questions are not 'based on a formal schedule of questions to be asked word-for-word in a set order' (King 2004: 15). Instead, they changed somewhat depending on the interview context and the interviewees (see Appendixes I and II[24]). In the case of secondary stakeholders, the first set of questions inquired about the interviewee and his/her organisation's involvement in the field of social inclusion. The second group of questions focused on the participation of secondary stakeholders before asking the same questions about primary stakeholders. The third group of questions asked about whether participation is redirecting primary and secondary participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU as well as about the evidence for it. In the case of primary stakeholders, the groups of questions centered on the following three main issues. First, their own participation domestically or/and at EU level. Second, whether participation has had an impact on their expectations, political activities and

[24] Appendixes I and II provide a simplified example of interview questions in the context of the present thesis. They do not intend to draw up a full list of questions asked during all interviews.

loyalties towards the EU. Third, in cases where there was an impact, the extent of the apparent shift in expectations, political activities and loyalties was enquired; in cases where there was no impact, the questions focused on the reasons why the hypothesis was wrong.

1.3.3.2 EU, national and third sector documents

As has been stated above, there are assessments of the OMC based on state/ sub-state and EU actors. Ironically, the views of primary and secondary stakeholders have been largely ignored by the OMC literature (see introduction). This thesis has sought to study participation in the social inclusion OMC and the (potential) changes it induces in participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. In order to fill the gap in the literature, this thesis focuses on primary and secondary stakeholders in the OMC process. For this reasons, interviews have been conducted exclusively with these stakeholders. Where the official stance on the social inclusion OMC has been necessary, official documents have been analysed. As said earlier in this chapter, the OMC has been developed as a new form of governance to increase accountability and transparency, among others. Independent experts (e.g. PPMI 2011) argue that the OMC has not yet managed to meet these objectives in full. Nevertheless, a vast amount of official documents (NAPs, NSRs, Joint Reports, Council conclusions, Commission communications, government gazettes etc) which provide the official assessment of the issues concerned is available to researchers. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 rely also on such documents to draw conclusions about the OMC process.

Therefore, important evidence for this thesis has been provided by OMC-related documents. Official national and European reports (such as NAPs and Joint Reports and Commission Communications) have been used to assess the Greek and British adaptation to the OMC (for the latter see section 1.1.5 above). Official documents' evidence on participation of primary and secondary stakeholders is also compared with the views which NGOs, anti-poverty networks and primary stakeholders hold about this participation. The aim is to assess whether the same type and extent of participation of secondary and primary stakeholders is perceived differently by decision-makers and (primary and secondary) stakeholders. Another category of documents that has been analysed are the reports of domestic and European participatory projects (e.g. reports of the annual European meetings of people who experience poverty and the UK-based *Get Heard and Bridging the Policy Gap* projects). These reports, which are produced by secondary stakeholders, can be seen as important sources of data for the participation of primary stakeholders and the impacts it has on the participants. Finally, during the interviews many respondents provided the interviewer with unpublished documents which were of great value as primary data for this thesis.

1.3.4 Research timeframe

The timeframe of the study includes the first ten years of the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece and the UK. It therefore focuses on the period which starts with the application of the social inclusion OMC in the member states in 2001. It ends with renewal of the Lisbon strategy (and therefore the social inclusion OMC) in 2010 with the setting up of the new strategy *Europe 2020.* A part of this strategy, the

European platform against poverty and social exclusion, has now become the new framework for the social inclusion policy-making process (e.g. Copeland and Daly 2012). According to de la Porte and Pochet (2012), poverty and social inclusion issues will, in the context of the strategy *Europe 2020*, be coordinated not by an OMC but by the above mentioned platform. In fact they note that 'the OMC label is no longer used in the EU's newest medium-term political project, Europe 2020…' (*ibid*: 339).

Key stakeholders also appear to be critical to *Europe 2020*, particularly in regards to the participation of stakeholders in the *European platform against poverty*. As the director of the EAPN-EU has put it during an interview (telephone interview 09.01.2012), 'since the new agenda [*Europe 2020*] it is very hard to know what exactly it is meant by the OMC and even harder to know what the process is about'.

The lack of clarity of the type of coordination promoted in the context of the *Europe 2020* strategy is the second reason why the timeframe of the research ends in 2010. De la Porte and Pochet (2012: 338) hold that the implications of the *European platform against poverty and social exclusion* on the coordination of the member states' relevant policies 'are still [in June 2012] unclear'. In particular to participation of stakeholders, the first years after the launch of the *Europe 2020* have been hard to be followed by empirical evidence that show either intensified, stable or reduced participation.

1.3.5 Country selection: Greece and the UK.

1.3.5.1 Europeanisation through the Lisbon strategy

According to Börzel (2002: 199), countries which seek to influence European policy outcomes for their own benefit need to have both 'established domestic policies' and 'the capacity to push them through the European negotiation process'. The UK has been a leading member state in the shaping of the Lisbon agenda and especially issues of competitiveness and economic reform (Bulmer 2008). Issues that had emerged in the British political discourse before the Lisbon summit in 2000 seemed to have had an impact on the EU's strategy for social cohesion. Particularly in the social inclusion field, the 1997 Labour Party manifesto was heavily based on the need for social inclusion (Atkins 2008). Their 2001 Labour manifesto also argued that developments at EU level had followed British expectations. According to this manifesto (Labour Party 2001: 38):

> Britain has secured a shift in economic policy in Europe –away from harmonisations of rules and towards a system based on dynamic markets allied to comparison and promotion of best practices.

The 2001 Labour Party manifesto appeared to be in line with the social inclusion OMC's provisions for wide mobilisation of actors. Thus, a few months after the Nice European Council in December 2000, the Labour Party manifesto underlined the need for the involvement of voluntary organisations and grassroots actors in the

policy-making process on issues concerning social inclusion (Labour Party 2001: 29).

In contrast to the UK, Greece was from the beginning of the Lisbon strategy expected to be the '"least likely" case in relation to structural reform' (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008: 5). In the words of Featherstone (2005b: 223),

> [p]olitics and policy-making in contemporary Greece display the tension between pressures for reform, on the one hand, and the structural impediments to their realisation, on the other.

In the context of Europeanisation, Greece has been described as a 'foot-dragger' in uploading and downloading policies (Börzel 2002: 203). In fact, the PASOK government had from 1996 its own aspirations for the modernisation of the economic and social policy which actually matched those of the Lisbon strategy (Featherstone 2005b). However, these aspirations did not meet their objective and the intensions for positive responses to the EU pressures for reforms have been proven largely unsuccessful as can be seen from pensions, health and labour market policies (Tinios 2005; Mossialos and Allin 2005; Papadimitriou 2005). As a result, Greece has been attributed only a poor 'reform capacity' (Featherstone 2008: 3).

1.3.5.2 Loyalties to the EU

Greece and the UK have the most peculiar attitudes as far as their citizens' attitudes towards the EU are concerned. They appear to be in the last places regarding the

loyalties towards the EU. According to a study carried out by Jiménez, only 27.8% of the respondents in Greece felt close or very close to the rest of the EU citizens, while in the UK the figure is even lower with only 19.4% (Jimenez 2003: 12). For the sake of comparison, in the same study 45.8% of the respondents in Hungary, 43.5% of the respondents in Italy, 40.5% of the respondents in Spain and around 30% of the respondents in Germany felt close or very close to the rest of the EU citizens.

Finally, due to the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, first Greece and then the UK adopted major budget cuts which have been expected to 'hit the poorest harder than the better off' *(The Guardian* 21.10.2010). Consequently, the social inclusion OMC has arguably become more relevant than ever before. However, the crisis had a (negative) impact on citizens' attitudes towards the EU (Fraile and Di Mauro 2010). While this thesis was being written, the 2011 Eurobarometer survey showed that in Greece 50% and in the UK 54% of the population did not believe that membership has benefited the country (Eurobarometer 2011a: 34). While in the UK this trend is not new, in Greece there has been an important decrease in citizens' positive attitudes towards the EU in the years after 2008. This of course cannot be seen independently from the economic crisis which has fundamentally changed the citizens' attitudes towards the EU. In 2008, before the economic crisis hit the EU, 73% of the population in Greece believed that the EU membership had benefited Greece (Eurobarometer 2008). Yet, the economic crisis influenced negatively these stances, as table 1 shows.

Table 1 (author's compilation): The financial crisis and citizens' attitudes.

	Membership is a good thing (is a bad thing)			Tend to trust the EU (tend not to trust the EU)		
	EU	UK	Greece	EU	UK	Greece
2008	54(31)	36(50)	73(27)	50(36)	29(56)	59(41)
2011	52(37)	35(54)	47(50)	41(47)	24(63)	32(67)

Source: Eurobarometer (2011a), Eurobarometer (2008).

Additionally, the trust in the EU in Greece was in 2011 reduced to only 32% from 59% in 2008. At the same period, trust of the EU in the UK declined to 24% from 29% in 2008. In terms of the total EU population, the 2011 Eurobarometer (three years after the outbreak of the crisis) concluded that 'fewer people tend to trust the European Institutions than tend to distrust them' (*ibid*: 21). Thus, comparing the Eurobarometer in 2011 with this of 2008, EU citizens' trust to the EU declined from 50% to 41% (see table 1).

The impact of the above mentioned issues on the participation and expectations, political activities and loyalties will concern chapters 3 and 4. For now, the following chapter will show how participation in the OMC social inclusion emerged as a counter-weight to the focus on growth and jobs in the EU's Lisbon strategy. In this context, special care will be given to the issue of the participation of primary stakeholders in the Brussels European Meetings of People who Experience Poverty.

Chapter 2: The European Union, poverty and social exclusion

2.1. Introduction

Poverty and social exclusion are difficult to define in a generally accepted and unambiguous manner (Barr 2004; Deleeck *et al.* 1992). And it is even more difficult to take public policy actions which will alleviate or eradicate poverty and social exclusion based upon these ill-defined terms. Short or long term public policies can either reduce or increase poverty or fail to make any difference (Barr 2004). It is often very difficult to measure the efficiency of public policy measures and their impact on poverty. Things get even more complicated when the EU adopts anti-poverty and social inclusion measures because they have to be implemented at the national level by member governments (Townsend and Gordon 2002: xii).

For all these reasons, this chapter intends to explain what poverty and social exclusion are, to see how the EU has approached these issues and to understand the context in which participation of stakeholders in public policy emerged. Section 2.2 is concerned with the concepts of poverty and social exclusion. Section 2.3 discusses how the EU has approached these forms of social deprivation. Section 2.4 shows why the EU's focus on growth and jobs to combat poverty and social exclusion has been criticised by academics and anti-poverty associations. It also shows why participation of stakeholders has been considered as a counter-weight to the growth and jobs strategy. Section 2.5 analyses the European Meetings of People

Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP) in the period 2001-2010 (i.e. the timeframe of the present thesis). Finally, the last part of this chapter discusses the conclusion.

2.2 The concepts of poverty and social exclusion

2.2.1 The concept of poverty

An early effort to approach the nature of poverty was made by Benjamin S. Rowntree (1908: x) who proposed the term 'primary poverty' for families with income 'insufficient to obtain the minimum necessaries for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency.' Physical efficiency, at the time when Rowntree carried out his research, was referring to the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, shelter, and household sundries (e.g. light, fuel, clothing and water). This term was replaced by the term 'absolute poverty' which amounted to an individual 'being without the minimum necessary requirements for life or subsistence within life' (Alcock 1987: 3).

Another effort to approach the nature of poverty was the concept of a 'poverty line' which was developed in the late 1880s (Booth 1887). The term poverty line was used to distinguish those in poverty from those in comfort in terms of sufficient income to meet *basic needs* (*ibid.*). In the US, a 'basket of goods' is used to distinguish those who are able to satisfy basic needs from those who are not (Borgeraas and Dahl 2010: 74, 76). However, Spicker and colleagues (2007) argue that by linking poverty to basic goods, the blame for poverty is put on the individual who cannot keep up with social and economic changes. Thus, the social dimension of the problem of

poverty is not being taken into consideration (*ibid*.). Other researchers have argued that by measuring poverty in absolute terms (i.e. by focusing exclusively on specific subsistence needs) other needs such as social and psychological needs are underestimated (Borgeraas and Dahl 2010; Boltvinik 2009).

An additional reason why approaching poverty through the inability to satisfy basic needs has been criticised is that goods for basic needs vary among people in different societies and time periods. As Townsend (1979: 50) has put it: 'Needs arise by virtue of the kind of society to which individuals belong'. Such concepts are static and fail to take into consideration the 'style of living' of individuals and their families (*ibid*: 59). For example, while basic needs in the past were limited to food, shelter, clothing and water, basic needs today include education, cultural facilities and transport (Spicker *et al.* 2007). Therefore, approaching poverty through its relation with minimum standards of living cannot provide a dynamic concept which is needed in order to understand a social problem in different societies and across time. As a result, 'if poverty cannot be measured accurately, it cannot easily be eradicated'[25]. The concept of absolute poverty has therefore been discarded as too vague.

In the place of absolute poverty, a new approach to poverty was introduced by Townsend (1979: 31) who argued that

> [i]ndividuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are

[25] Web-site of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research 2011, http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/defining%20and%20measuring%20poverty.html, accessed on 24.03.2011

> customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

Therefore, the concept of 'relative poverty' no longer links poverty to individualism. Instead, it incorporates a social dimension, since an individual's poverty is seen in the context of the standards of living in a set society. As Alcock (1987: 5) has argued, 'the numbers of people deemed to be living in poverty, can only be determined in relation to the standard of living of all members of any particular society'. This approach is used by the EU in order to measure and act against poverty. Thus, in 2004 the Joint report by the EU Commission and the Council of the EU on social inclusion concluded that

> [p]eople are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted (Council of the EU 2004: 8).

The EU has also adopted the 'at-risk-of-poverty' concept (e.g. Eurostat 2010a: 1). This concept means that the EU has set the threshold of poverty at the 60% of the *median* income in each member state (*ibid.*). In such a way the EU has made it possible to make comparisons between countries since the 60% index reflects poverty rates across the member states on the basis of proportionality. This definition also shares similarities with Townsend's definition. While Townsend (1979) has put poverty into a social context by arguing that insufficient resources excluded people from the average living patterns, customs and activities, the EU argues that poverty often leads to social exclusion and marginalisation.

These approaches to relative poverty appear to focus primarily on the lack of an adequate income as the reason for poverty. Admittedly low income is indeed a crucial indicator of poverty. However, adequacy of income does not necessarily mean the elimination of poverty. Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and it has to be approached as such. Section 2.2.2 will explain these remarks. For now, it has been argued that the approach to relative poverty, which dominates the public policy agenda of countries and international institutions (such as the OECD and EU), can be criticised as having exaggerated poverty. As will be shown in chapters 3 and 4 respectively, both British and Greek governments have in the past defended their ineffective policies for social security with such arguments. While Greece has pointed out high rates of house ownership to downplay the issue of homelessness, the UK has insisted that domestic economic growth has not left many, if any, people in poverty.

2.2.2 The concept of social exclusion

Social exclusion is a political discourse which appeared first in France in the early 1970s and from there it was uploaded to the EU (Armstrong 2005; Levitas 1998). In fact, in the 1980s and 1990s, social exclusion was 'inextricably' linked with poverty. At that time it was claimed that only a 'substantial redistribution of resources' could solve the problem of poverty and therefore of social exclusion (Levitas 2004: 44). The core of social exclusion was therefore purely redistributive or, according to Levitas, who is one of the pioneers in the studies of social exclusion, social exclusion was explicitly referred to a redistributive discourse (RED) (Levitas 2004; Levitas 1998). However, soon the debate on social exclusion was enriched with the social integrationist discourse (SID) whose main argument is that the solution to social exclusion is paid work (*ibid.*). This discourse has also been criticised because it has overestimated the benefits of paid work without taking into consideration problems such as in-work poverty, low wages, and insecurity in the labour market (Forrester 1999, in Levitas 2004). Additionally, in cases such as lone parenting the SID approach overlooks the value of unpaid work for society while it also neglects the gender participation in forms of non-employment (Levitas 2004, 2001).[26] Finally, the third discourse about social inclusion which has been put forward is the social underclass discourse (SUD). This discourse has focused on the lack of values from those who are excluded, or the different social values that they have in comparison with the values of the society to which they belong (Levitas 2004).

[26] For example, women are six times more likely to be involved in caring unpaid activities than men (Levitas *et al.* 2000: 55).

The inextricable linking of social exclusion with poverty leads to a one-dimensional description of social exclusion. Conversely, all one-dimensional approaches to exclusion are based on its one-way relationship with poverty; they are therefore urging for paid employment as a treatment for poverty and the eradication of social exclusion through income (Bradshaw *et al.* 1998: 13). Despite public perceptions that poverty and social exclusion are indeed static and a one-dimensional (i.e. the result of inadequate income) phenomena, they do not refer only to the lack of an adequate income (Whelan *et al.* 2001: 1). In fact, there is little evidence to show that low income is the only factor for social deprivation (*ibid*: 2). A similar line of argument holds that poverty should not be measured according to the income which people have, but according to the kind of life they wanted to live (Sen 2006). Thus, '[w]hereas income is merely one of the means of good living, we have reason enough to look directly at the quality of life that people are able to lead, and the freedom they enjoy to live the way they would like' (*ibid*: 34).

Studies in the UK have shown that income poverty is not the only dimension of social exclusion. Instead, 'labour market exclusion', 'service exclusion', and 'exclusion from social relations' are equally important factors which can result in social exclusion (Levitas *et al.* 2000: 54). Starting with the labour market exclusion approach, paid employment is not only important because it can provide an adequate income, it is also important because it promotes social 'contact' and 'interaction' (*ibid.*). The concept of 'employability' has also been added as an analytical tool to assess the barriers to work for short and long term unemployed and the resulting

danger in terms of social exclusion and poverty (Lindsay 2009: 13-4). It has been argued that

> since the late 1990s, employability has emerged as one of the intellectual pillars of social, and labour market policies in the UK; and for some time it was (and less explicitly remains) *the key element* in the European Employment Strategy (Lindsay 2010: 124 –emphasis in the original)

Nevertheless, the barriers to employment have been narrowly seen by the member states and the EU as a lack of personal skills (*ibid.*). For this reason, domestic and European public policies are still falling short of providing a remedy against social exclusion (*ibid.*). Tackling social exclusion takes more than attempting to remove barriers to paid employment (Grover 2006). Studies of British rural areas have shown that young people who are employed in these areas are more likely to face social exclusion compared to young employees in cities (Pavis *et al.* 2000; Cartmel and Furlong 2000). This disadvantage of the rural areas derives from the fact that paid employment cannot guarantee sufficient income while factors such as transport problems and shortage of housing make the situation even worse (Pavis *et al.* 2000; Cartmel and Furlong 2000).

Regarding the above mentioned indicator 'exclusion from services' (Levitas *et al.* 2000: 54) within a household (e.g. water, electricity and telecommunications) or from public services (e.g. hospitals, libraries, transportation, shopping and banking) it has been argued that '[f]or both publicly and privately provided services, lack of availability rather than lack of affordability is the main barrier to use' (Levitas *et al.*

2000). This follows from the fact that only 54% of those who participated in Levitas and colleagues' study could access the whole range of public and private services while for the rest the biggest problem was that such services were unavailable (e.g. train and bus services) or unsuitable (e.g. for the disabled) (*ibid*: 56). Another study has shown that the complexity of some services (e.g. benefits, tax allowances, employment services and banking) has prevented people from taking advantage of them and this is obviously something which is irrelevant to the affordability of these services (Finn *et al.* 2008). In this context one should also include publicly funded services which are provided by the third sector. These services (e.g. services for asylum seekers and refugees) are targeting social exclusion. However, the complexity of such services makes it difficult for people to use them (Perry and El-Hassan 2008).

Finally, 'exclusion from social relations' (Levitas *et al.* 2000: 54) has to do with non-participation in social activities, isolation, lack of support, disengagement and confinement (Levitas *et al.* 2000 in JRF 2000) Participation in certain social activities (e.g. eating in restaurants, going to cinemas and going on holidays) is prevented by the lack of income. However factors such as lack of interest, lack of time, illness, disabilities, and caring responsibilities are very important as well. All these factors contribute towards isolation, disengagement and confinement (Hole 2011, Levitas *et al.* 2000: 62-5).

Overall, apart from the economic side of social exclusion, there are also social and political aspects such as social relations, isolation, availability of public services and political rights (e.g. Laparra and Begoña 2010). Furthermore, the debate about social

exclusion is also a debate about housing, health, public services, education and whatever relates to individuals' 'non-participation in the important values of society' (Deleeck *et al.* 1992: 3).

In order to provide a definition which takes into consideration some of the issues mentioned above, the EU Commission and Council of the EU issued a Joint Report on social inclusion in 2004 which defined social exclusion as follows:

> Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day to day lives (Council of the EU 2004: 8).

However, the EU's response to poverty and social exclusion has been belated and largely based on employment and growth. Therefore, the next section of this chapter offers a brief assessment of how poverty and social exclusion arrived on the EU level, how the EU intended to tackle these forms of social deprivation, and what the main criticism has been about the EU's strategy.

2.3 The EU, poverty and social exclusion

2.3.1 The early steps of the EU and limited social provisions

The Treaties which established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (1951) and the European Atomic Energy Community (1957) did not stipulate any provisions for a European policy against poverty (Falkner 1998). They called for growth in employment and the improvement of living standards, but only within the context of the sectors on which the Treaties focused (i.e. coal, steel and atomic energy) (*ibid.*). The Commission was ascribed the task to promote member states' cooperation in employment issues such as 'vocational training', 'prevention of occupational accidents', 'working conditions', and 'collective bargaining' among others (*ibid*: 57). According to Falkner, these provisions were not creating an independent social policy; instead they were aimed to benefit the creation and functioning of the common market. The provisions were limited to the free movement of people who should enjoy a basic level of social rights in the member states (*ibid.*). Attempts for a European social policy were hindered by 'a protectionist stance towards their own social policy territory on the part of member states' (Daly 2007: 2). In 1970 the Werner Report on the prerequisites for a future Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) claimed that such a union would improve the welfare in the EU, and called for the 'cooperation of the various economic and social groups' for the benefit of growth, employment, stability and the prevention of 'regional and social disparities' (Werner 1970: 9).

Therefore, the first serious considerations for EU actions on common social policy measures can be traced to the early 1970s. These attempts were made by social partners, members of the European Commission and governments at the national level (Daly 2007). The developments were reflected in the declarations of the Paris summit by the Heads of State and Government (Bulleting of the European Communities 1972) of the then nine member states. These states started to admit that a European intervention in the social field was part of the European integration project (Falkner 1998). The declaration of the Paris summit emphasised that social policy was as important as the planned establishment of the EMU (Bulletin of the European Communities 1972: point 6). For this reason, 'the increasing involvement of labour and management in the economic and social decisions of the Community' was described as 'essential' (*ibid.*). However, these statements were related only to employment issues and did not address provisions for social inclusion or social protection for wider groups of the European populations (Herman and Lorenz 1997).

The political will for the promotion of a European social policy, which was reflected in the declarations of the Paris summit, led to the Community's first Social Action Programme which, once again, equated the importance of action in the social field with actions to establish an economic union (Hantrais 1995: 5). The programme increased the Community's efforts in the social field in areas 'of education and training, health and safety at work, workers' and women's rights and poverty' and intensified the monitoring of the developments (Hantrais 1995: 6).

However, the level of poverty recorded across Europe in the 1970s was different from the levels of poverty which emerged in later decades. During years of economic

expansion in western economies the paid employment earnings could guarantee a decent standard of living (Hantrais 1995). Additionally, the young working population had access to employment, and the welfare states were not under pressure because 'the life expectancy was shorter' and the 'earnings-related pensions' were less generous (*ibid*: 146). Thus, the member states' non-contributory benefits were sufficient to cover certain groups of people who were living below average standards of living (mostly older people) (Hantrais 1995). However, the 'faith in the power of economic growth to enhance the life chances of all the citizens … started to be shaken during the eighties' (Ferrera *et al.* 2002: 228). Poverty started to threaten a 'wider range of socio-economic groups' such as the long term unemployed, single parent households, and young people (Hantrais 1995: 147). This led to social and regional inequalities (Commins 1995). According to Commins, it was in the late 1980s when poverty started to pose threats which could not be explained with existing theories let alone solved with existing policies. First, the number of poor people within the EU had increased sharply from forty to fifty-five million people. Second, the fact that poverty was a multi-dimensional problem (as discussed in section 2.2 above) became clear and it was acknowledged that poverty was not only about insufficient income but there was 'a wide range of poverty conditions' (*ibid*: 138). Third, 'agricultural reforms', 'industrial restructuring', and an intensified 'international competition' affected new groups of people who were now facing 'new forms of disadvantages' (ibid.).

2.3.2 The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)

The Hanover summit (1988) achieved agreement on the implementation of the single European market. A few days before the summit, Commission President Jacques Delors, who considered a common social policy as a counter-weight to the emerging competition, stated:

> We hope and desire that the European Council will give a political signal to workers and trade union organizations to indicate that what we wish to create is a common economic and social area rather than just one big market (Delors 23 June 1988: 2).

Nevertheless, in the same press conference, Delors acknowledged the difficulties in deciding on common action for an EU social policy because of the diversity of member states' social systems. He stated:

> Even if we were able to overcome this diversity –which would not be easy– we are clearly far from being able to conclude European collective bargaining agreements –and in any case does everyone want that? (*ibid.*)

For Delors, concrete and common guidelines on growth and job creation were absolutely needed throughout the EU. In fact, the 1988 Hanover summit concluded that by eliminating the barriers to growth, job creation would be favoured, and this would increase 'the general prosperity of the Community to the advantage of all its citizens' (European Council 1988b: point 3). This statement reflected the EU's main

objective, which was growth and jobs. Employment and prosperity were expected to be achieved through unhindered economic growth.

The late 1980 and the 1990s were characterised by member states' willingness to increase employment and promote social inclusion (Hemerijck 2002; Ferrera *et al.* 2002). At the EU level, the intention to tackle the increasing inequalities which the single European market was now creating were expressed by the Council in a resolution which noted that the reasons for social exclusion 'lie in structural changes in our societies' (Council 1989: point 3). Moreover, the Council urged to tackle social exclusion by stating that 'combating social exclusion may be regarded as an important part of the social dimension of the internal market' (Council 1989, as cited in Ferrera *et al.* 2002: 228). This was a new approach for the EU in its efforts to tackle forms of social deprivation. The concept of social exclusion was given extra attention when it was acknowledged that 'social exclusion is spreading in a number of fields, resulting in many different types of situation affecting various individuals and groups of people in both rural and urban areas' (Council 1989: point 2). The preoccupation of the EU in this period with social exclusion becomes evident by focusing on the Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion (1990-1994) and the *Poverty 3 programme* (1989-1994). The following sections briefly explain these two initiatives and show why they can be regarded as pioneering initiatives for the social inclusion OMC.

2.3.3 An OMC on poverty and social exclusion before the Lisbon strategy?

The Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion reaffirmed the need for social cohesion 'in the context of the development of the Single Market' (Observatory on National Policies 1992: 13). It referred explicitly to groups 'at risk of marginalisation' such as people with disabilities, young people, long term unemployed, one parent families, migrants and so on (Observatory on National Policies 1992: 13). Social exclusion was defined 'first and foremost in relation to the social rights of citizens' which in turn referred 'to a certain basic standard of living' and to the participation in the 'major social and occupational institutions of the society' (*ibid*: 14).

At the same time, another EU programme was launched, namely the *Medium-term Community action programme to foster the social and economic integration of the Least Privileged Groups*. The novelty of this programme, which is also known as *Poverty 3 programme 1989-1994*, in comparison with the two previous programmes (*Poverty 1, 1975-1980* and *Poverty 2, 1985-1989*) was that it was not relating social exclusion only to the shortage of goods. Instead, 'deprivation was no longer to be seen simply as the lack of material goods but as exclusion from the opportunities, benefits and rights commonly available in contemporary society' (Commins 1995: 137). However, the concepts 'poverty' and 'social exclusion' were used synonymously and only during the implementation of the projects were their differences understood (*ibid*: 142).

Apart from their importance in terms of mainstreaming the concept of social exclusion within the EU political discourse, the above mentioned EU initiatives can be interpreted as the first intentions to coordinate member states' actions on issues of poverty and social exclusion. Thus, the Observatory on National Policies made it clear that it was not intending to harmonise national policies but to combat social exclusion by transferring 'know-how between the member states' and by intending to improve 'the effectiveness of their interventions' (Armstrong 2006: 81). The same intentions can be found in the *Poverty 3 programme*, which was according to Commins (1995: 138 –emphasis added) aiming to:

> serve as a catalyst for *mainstream* actions in Member States by creating a programme of innovative and exemplary measures to formulate *new models of local administration* and to demonstrate the relevance of the *lessons learned* from mainline policies and administrative practices. It aimed to identify *good practice*, to encourage policy development and public debate on poverty, social exclusion and processes of social integration.

Based on sharing of good practices and mutual learning, this new form of coordination called on the member states to mainstream actions for social inclusion. Eventually, in the context of the *Poverty 3 programme*, forty-one projects throughout the Community were created. Twenty-nine of them were labelled as 'model actions', which focused on 'geographical areas', while twelve of them constituted 'innovatory initiatives' which focused on 'categories of [socially deprived] people' (Commins 1995: 140). The Commission had the task to monitor the whole process. A central

unit was established to monitor the presence of the basic principles[27]. Additionally, research and development units were created at member states level which organised domestic actions and promoted mutual contacts between member states. Finally, the *Poverty 3 programme* established the Advisory Committee which facilitated the contact between the national and the EU level. With these actions the programme sought to establish its 'animation and management strategy' (*ibid*: 141) which bears similarities with a method of coordination. Like the OMC, the *Poverty 3 programme* made use of a 'soft method' of governance which left a 'considerable legacy on policy-making' in member states (Walsh *et al.* 1998: 32)

In terms of participation, local and regional authorities together with public and anti-poverty organisations were involved in the management of anti-poverty projects. In this context, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-EU) was created by the Commission with Community funding (Commins 1995). The programme's principle to build 'partnership models of organisation' and to involve 'all economic and social actors' as well as its intention to promote 'the participation of target groups' in the policy-making (*ibid*: 137, 143) shows that the OMC cannot be entirely considered as a new method as Hatzopoulos (2007) has noted (also see chapter 1 section 1.1). Overall,

> [t]he EU Poverty 3 programme was unique in its nature … Its design had to reflect the delicate –and evolving– balances inherent in the authority and decision-making relationships between local and national interests on the one hand and those of the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the

[27] Partnership, multi-dimensionality and participation (European Commission 1993: 5)

> Commission on the other. This context called for constant consultation and negotiation instead of simple top-down process of planning and implementation. Its projects were located in very differentiated settings in terms of socio-economic environments, social welfare regimes, administrative systems and political cultures (Commins 1995: 145)

Commins' comments on the EU *Poverty 3 programme* resemble core features of the OMC which 'has its own logic' and 'recognizes the interrelation between different spheres, promoting interaction between different levels of power and spheres of action' (de la Porte *et al.* 2001: 294). As has been shown in chapter 1, in the context of the OMC bodies (such as the Social Protection Committee) were activated in order to help with the coordination of member states' actions. Besides, the OMC is called open but '[i]f the actors of civil society are not concerned, consulted, implied as partners and negotiators, one of the characteristics of the openness of the new method will be denied (Telò 2002: 265). Finally, as a new mode of governance, the OMC 'preserve[s] the diversity of national and even local experiences' (Bruno *et al.* 2006 :520

2.3.4 The Community Charter on Fundamental Social Rights of Workers

Apart from the above mentioned programmes which targeted poverty and social exclusion, the so-called Social Charter was presented by Vasso Papandreou, the European Commissioner for Social Affairs and Employment, at a summit in Madrid in June 1989. At that time, it was adopted by eleven member states at the European Council meeting in Strasbourg in December 1989. Although the UK failed to sign up

to the Social Charter, its adoption by the other member states confirmed once again the intention of the Community to focus on the social dimension and as well as the economic dimension which had dominated the earlier years of European integration (European Commission 1990). In the words of the Charter,

> in the context of the establishment of the single European market, the same importance must be attached to the social aspects as to the economic aspects … therefore, they must be developed in a balanced manner (*ibid*: 1).

The priorities set were 'job creation', 'social consensus as a factor of economic development' and the 'rejection of all forms of discrimination' (*ibid*: 2). In particular under the part entitled 'social protection' it referred to people who were excluded from the labour market and called for 'an adequate level of social security benefits' and for 'sufficient resources and social assistance' (*ibid*: 5). The provisions for the elderly, young persons and women were provisions against their exclusion from the labour market. Finally, the Charter aimed at the participation and consultation of workers and was intended to monitor progress of its implementation through member states' annual reports.

However, despite the efforts which were put into a social inclusion strategy, the primary concern of member states remained employment. This was the main reason why specific actions towards combating poverty and social exclusion were not prioritised at the Community level. Thus, in its Green Paper *Options for the Union* the Commission acknowledged that 'a new look at the link between economic and social policies, both at national and Community level' was required (European

Commission 1993b: 6). According to this norm the EU seemed to question whether the objective of pursuing economic progress as a necessary and sufficient condition for achieving social progress (e.g. social inclusion and poverty elimination) was still up to date. This document showed that prior to the Lisbon strategy the EU was in 'search for a model of sustainable development which combines economic dynamism with social progress' (*ibid*: 32).

2.4. Criticisms of the focus on growth and jobs

The focus on the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the 2000 Nice European Council was incorporated into the Lisbon strategy and an OMC with its own specific common objectives. These objectives called for unhindered access to employment, actions against the risks of exclusion, help to the most vulnerable and mobilisation of 'all the relevant bodies' (Ferrera *et al.* 2002: 231, European Council 2000b). Importantly, the Nice Presidency conclusions also underlined that '[t]he return to sustained economic growth and the prospect of full employment in the near future do not mean that poverty and exclusion in the European Union will automatically decrease' (European Council 2000b: Annex I, point III). Moreover, the same EU document (i.e. the part that referred to the social agenda which was annexed to the Nice Presidency conclusions) stated that '[m]ore and better jobs are the key to social inclusion.' (European Council 2000b: Annex I, point 2.10). Consequently, despite being considered as the 'turning point' for common policies against social exclusion (Ferrera *et al.* 2002: 230), the Lisbon process reintroduced

the ‘active inclusion’ strategy as a strategy towards participation in the labour market (Daly 2008: 7).

The communication of the EU Commission for a reformed Lisbon strategy (European Commission 2005b) repeated, once again, the Union’s belief that growth and jobs are necessary and sufficient conditions for social (as well as wider economic and environmental) improvements. In the words of the document:

> The Commission proposes a new start for the Lisbon strategy, focusing on efforts around two principal tasks – delivering stronger, lasting growth and creating more and better jobs. Meeting Europe’s growth and jobs challenge is the key to unlocking the resources needed to meet our wider economic, social and environmental ambitions (European Commission 2005b: 7).

Despite the fact that the same communication acknowledged that ‘partnership’ with ‘full involvement’ of social partners and civil society are essential to help the EU meet its goals (*ibid*: 12), the whole approach to social cohesion has received criticism. This criticism is applied to both the means (growth and jobs) which have been proposed in order to eradicate poverty and the interpretation that the EU has given to the terms ‘partnership’ and ‘full involvement’.

2.4.1 Criticising growth and jobs

Concerning ‘growth and jobs’ which have been seen as a panacea for the treatment of most social problems, several researchers have shown that growth and jobs do not

always help people to overcome poverty. On the one hand, it has been argued that the EU faces the consequences of a 'jobless growth' according to which 'high employment is no longer necessary for economic development' (Rumford 2002: 127). Moreover, productivity means that fewer people can produce more or that '[e]conomic growth … presupposes a reduction in the number of jobs…' (Beck 2000: 62). On the other hand, research on grassroots communities has shown that even in periods of high(er) employment rates and economic growth, poverty and social exclusion are persistent in society (Green 2007). A central explanation for the persistence of these forms of poverty is the unequal distribution of the produced wealth (see also the RED discourse in section 2.2.2 above). Thus, one of the central statements of the sixth European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP) in Brussels was that prosperity in the EU grows but the gap between the rich and poor is growing as well (Sixth EMPEP 2007). Growth has not been considered a sufficient condition if it is not followed by a fair societal distribution. However, according to the workshops of the meeting, the need for such fair distribution 'plays a marginal role on the political agenda' (*ibid*: 10) despite the centrality of the distribution of growth to achieve a more inclusive society.

The approach to social inclusion through growth and jobs has been fiercely criticised by NGOs. This happened primarily because these organisations have in the past promoted 'innovative approaches, democratic values, user empowerment and social transformation…' and they consider market prioritisation through growth and jobs as a threat to these principles (Herman and Lorenz 1997: 19). For example, the EAPN-EU, which is a specialised NGO in the field of poverty and social inclusion, has criticised the growth and jobs policy. The network believes that growth and jobs is

based on a neo-liberal model which has increased poverty and social exclusion and has led the EU to face economic and social crises (EAPN-EU 2009). In the words of the EAPN-EU:

> Too often this model has exacerbated the position of the poor and undermined social commitments by prioritising 'growth and jobs' at any price. It has failed to put the 'public good' at the heart of EU actions. The EU has prioritised liberation and defence of largely unregulated markets, at the expense of strategies that promote equity, social justice and the reduction of poverty and inequality within the EU and globally (*ibid*: 1).

The reformed Lisbon strategy and the Spring European Councils (2007 and 2008 respectively) appeared to take these criticisms into account when they launched the concepts of 'feeding in' and 'feeding out' as a new approach to the links between growth and jobs and social cohesion (e.g. Frazer and Marlier 2009). According to the feeding out concept, '*renewed growth is vital to prosperity, can bring back full employment and is the foundation of social justice and opportunity for all*' (European Commission 2005b: 4 –emphasis in the original). According to the feeding in concept, 'by strengthening the human capital…' the member states will manage to raise 'the long-term growth potential of the economy' (Council of the EU 2007: 3). However, this normative reciprocal relationship between growth policies and inclusion policies has not been proportionally reflected in practice where the feeding in and feeding out strategy 'is only true for some Member States and in most cases the progress made is quite modest' (Frazer and Marlier 2009: 8). In general, the feeding in and feeding out strategy 'has achieved less than might have been

expected…' while it 'is exacerbated by governments which prepare relevant documents as reports on what they are already doing, rather than statements of strategy that build on the ideas and energy of the actors responsible' (Begg and Marlier 2007: 44). Overall, the growth and jobs policies have been prioritising competiveness and job creation, viewing social inclusion as a matter of secondary importance (*ibid*.).

2.4.2 Criticising the approach to participation

Although the terms 'involvement' and 'partnership' are used interchangeably throughout the EU Commission's communication (European Commission 2005b), they should not be confused, since partnership does not automatically emerge from the participation of primary stakeholders or organisations in the field of social inclusion. In other words,

> [t]he notion of participation is broad and varied and is often used in the same context as partnership. It may help to see that participation strives to achieve many of the same objectives as partnership, but focuses on local people: users, residents, citizens. (Pierson (2005[2002]: 56).

However, the EU seems –once again– to avoid obligating the member states to include in their policy-making processes the primary stakeholders (i.e. people experiencing poverty) and secondary stakeholders (e.g. anti-poverty NGOs and networks). In fact, the Nice Presidency conclusions paid extra attention to the involvement of NGOs by stating:

> [t]hat political will [to eradicate poverty] has been affirmed at the highest level in each of the Member States and must be transmitted to the grass roots by mobilising all the local actors, in particular NGOs and the social services (European Council 2000b: Annex 1, point III).

Yet, unlike the area of employment, in the field of social inclusion there are no specific treaty provisions for the fight against social exclusion, which would force the member states to create inclusive partnerships with non-state actors (de la Porte and Pochet 2005). However, there are some signs of political will as quoted above or 'political commitment' from the member states for actions to combat poverty and social exclusion, and more specifically for wider actors' participation (*ibid*: 372). This last remark –combined with the fact that the NGOs have 'weak institutional means for setting issues on the national policy agenda'– has made the NGOs more willing to take advantage of the participatory provisions of the Lisbon strategy (*ibid*: 371). Through the OMC, NGOs and primary stakeholders are intending to be included in the national policy-making process. However, political commitment for actors' participation varies among the member states. In general, anti-poverty NGOs have criticised the fact that the participation opportunities in the context of the OMC in social inclusion are, in reality, limited to the consultation of the public policy (ATD Fourth World 2000). They insist that the fight against exclusion cannot be efficient without primary stakeholders' widened participation. Therefore, they call for wider participation not only in terms of the numbers of people who participate and are represented as participants but also in terms of the different stages of the policy-making process (*ibid.*).

Besides, one of the 'demands' of the EAPN-EU from the EU refers to the upgrading of the governance and the decision-making process by:

> ensuring the participation of anti-poverty NGOs including people experiencing poverty in the development, implementation and evaluation of all policies that impact on poverty and social exclusion (EAPN-EU 2009: point 3).

While the EAPN-EU asks from the EU to implement its participatory provisions as these have been set by the Nice Council in 2000, the above mentioned demand resembles the remarks stated in chapter 1 (section 1.1.2) on the reasons why the EU stressed the need for wide actors' participation (i.e. efficiency and legitimacy). According to the people who are working to combat social exclusion in collaboration with people in poverty, participation of primary stakeholders can serve not only to improve public policy in terms of efficiency and legitimacy but also to promote stakeholders' empowerment, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.4.3 Participation and empowerment as equilibrium to growth and jobs

The above paragraphs have shown that for many academics and most (primary and secondary) stakeholders, the growth and jobs dogma is far from being a sufficient strategy for tackling poverty and multiple disadvantages. Growth does not necessarily mean improvement of living conditions for everyone. Apart from the objective difficulties for a just redistribution of growth, it has been shown that

opportunities for better living conditions as a result of growth or through the supply of jobs, do not always produce advantages for primary stakeholders. This is so because these stakeholders find it difficult to access the offered services. For example, they may find the ways to access the services complicated, they may be unaware of their rights and they may feel uncomfortable and undermined when they come into contact with the service providers (Green 2007). In the case of employment, many individuals (who are, for example, homeless), 'want to work but have multiple barriers to tackle before being able to gain –or sustain– employment' (OSW 2008: 4) This results in a situation in which entitlements that are provided for certain groups are not claimed or used (Green 2007). For organisations which specialise on issues of poverty, 'the solution to poverty lies not so much in enrichment as in the empowerment of people' (*The Guardian* 17.10.2009). Thus, '[m]aterial benefits alone do not guarantee an end to discrimination, or improve security, or give voice to those living in poverty' (*ibid.*).

Therefore, 'there is a need for a more fundamental review of the ways in which services are provided to people experiencing poverty' (*ibid.*). This does not only highlight the need for improved services but also the need for people to be 'able to take advantage of the improvements' (*ibid.*). In terms of participation, this review in services should not be limited to the participation of grassroots (or secondary stakeholders) for the better planning and implementation of user-friendly policies in order to make target groups better off. On the contrary, the review should equally refer to the participation of the mentioned groups in the policy-making process as a means for empowerment. In this way it enables the service users to make the most out of the available services.

Other NGOs pay more attention to participation of stakeholders in the policy-making process, while they argue that poverty cannot be eradicated without the 'expertise' of people who live in it (ATD Fourth World 2000: 5). Accordingly, '[o]nly when there are consistent, on-going opportunities for people with direct experience of poverty to be involved in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy will policies be devised that work' (*ibid.*). This brings forward the argument that 'political inclusion is an aspect of social inclusion' (Levitas 1998: 173) or, in other words, that '[f]or citizens not to be involved [in the policy-making process] is itself exclusionary' (Pierson 2005[2002]: 56). However the exclusion from the policy-making process does not only mean that 'users' views [are] not taken into account…' but also that those users' 'sense of powerlessness is also reinforced' (*ibid*: 56). What follows from those statements is that participation leads to empowerment and vice versa. Empowerment is also a means for membership in society. And when this membership is reduced to participation in the policy-making process and is seen as 'an end in itself' (Braye 2000: 9), then empowerment is a means for participation. Empowering people through support from the organisations has been often seen as a prerequisite for a constructive and fruitful participation. Participation without empowerment tells only half the story. In the words of a primary stakeholder involved in the social inclusion policy-making process (Interview in London, 16.02.2010b):

> Even in the UK now, where the governments offer lots of opportunities, the background support to give people confidence and motivation and stamina to carry on and take those opportunities is often not in place. And I find out that

> this happens in conferences, where people are brought along to say 'this is what happens where I am, this is what happens with my family, life, area…' This is not enough. They have to know why they are saying that and not just to try to satisfy a group [of policy-makers] that goes there and from which they try to get help and support … We have to understand this collectively, if we want to change things, we have to continuously work on things, and develop things and have a dialogue –not just a one-off conference.

However, there is a second perspective which views participation as a means for empowerment. Empowerment of people in this case occurs when there are on-going opportunities which aim to put people experiencing poverty 'at the heart of all efforts to eradicate poverty' *(The Guardian* 17.10.2009). This is the perspective that is commonly shared and defended among different NGOs. Thus, '[p]articipation encourages individuals to take control of their own lives rather than have things done for them. For the individuals who take the opportunity to participate, they can gain new skills and develop self-confidence' (OSW 2007: 7). It also makes them take control and gives them a 'sense of ownership' of the services that are directed at them (*ibid*: 8-9). All this strengthens the argument that participation can promote empowerment while the latter can be viewed not only as the way to get people heard and involved in the policy-making process, but as also as a way to get people to reclaim their membership to society (Leister 1990).

One of the initiatives of the European Social Fund was the Equal initiative which ran between 2000-2006. This was built around the principle of empowerment, among

other principles[28]. According to this principle, the aim was the 'prioritising [of] the "bottom-up" approach by involving and engaging the beneficiaries and partners (government, employers and trade union representatives) in the DP [a project called Equal Development Partnership] activities from the very outset'[29]. The involvement of the people facing multiple disadvantages was promoted by NGOs. The leading organisation of the Tackling Multiple Disadvantage partnership (TMD London –a project under Equal) took advantage of the Equal initiative's focus on the 'four pillars of the EES', namely employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities (*ibid.*). In fact, the OSW organisation helped, through the TMD project, homeless 'clients' to set up their own businesses, and to run programmes and conferences (interview in London 15.12.2009). According to the OSW (2007: 4):

> The TMD London partnership, led by OSW, strongly supports a service user empowerment and participative approach in service provision, as a key element in overcoming exclusion and building on employability. OSW believes that the basic principle of participation is to consult with and actively include service users in the decision-making process. It is a process of involvement which empowers individuals and creates projects and services based on need rather than assumptions.

Instead of a definition, '[e]mpowerment denotes a kind of social and political process and a pattern of structure and organization that provides citizens with a growing range of arenas for access to the public sphere, reduces barriers to action,

[28] Along with partnership, innovation, transnational cooperation, and mainstreaming (Equal Official Web-site, http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/, accessed on 18.12.2009)
[29] Ibid.

and creates conditions that enhance a sense of self-worth and recognized personal as well as collective identity' (Oxhorn 2002 in Levine and Romero 2006: 9-10).

2.4.4 Barriers to participation

The empowerment of the socially excluded has a twofold relationship with the participation in the policy-making process. First, participation is the cure to the feeling of powerlessness and second, powerlessness is a barrier to participation. Barriers to participation can be such things as poor physical health, problems in 'moving on' from one issue to another, time and money resources for the NGOs, and resources for the participants (OSW 2010: 15-16), or ignorance regarding the ways through which stakeholders could participate. In the words of a participant (Interview in London 16.02.1010b):

> Some people don't have the money to buy the bus fare to go from the one place to the other for the meeting and some people –we have many Polish with us– don't know whether there is a Polish organisation in Hackney. You know, people have to know what is out there before they contribute. And they have to be able to be given time and space to put their lives in perspective and their thoughts in perspective and think. It only works when organisations prepare people and support people. But who is going to give them the money to do that?

The above remarks show that people in poverty and social exclusion are 'far from a homogenous group' (Beresford and Hoban 2005: 3). Instead, they face different

barriers or the same barriers but with different gravity, depending upon the group or the community to which they belong, or on their individual situation. Research on various participatory schemes has shown that the barriers to participation can be classified into four main categories, namely 'personal; political and institutional; economic and cultural; and technical' (*ibid*: 1). People may be hindered to participate because of the following reasons (Beresford and Hoban 2005):

a. They are reluctant to identify themselves as poor;
b. They may be overloaded with other responsibilities and difficulties;
c. They believe their opinions will not count and no positive experience or outcome will be extracted;
d. Policies are complex and top-down;
e. Lack of time, preparation and support; and,
f. Lack of funding.

However, one interviewee from London, who experienced poverty and participated in roundtables across the EU, offered a different perspective on the obstacles to widen participation (Interview in London, 16.02.2010b). Even when people participate, this does not necessarily mean that they express their views and concerns easily or that these views and concerns are taken into consideration by the policy-makers. As the interviewee stated:

> When we first went to Denmark, I thought I would be the talking poor person from England. I was very worried. And if I had not had the preparation here before I went there, I probably would not have gone. I would not have the

> confidence … It is okay to say you want to involve all actors, but at that conference there were homeless people who were feeling uncomfortable. They were quite shabby. They had had a drink. Some of them were a bit high with various substances and some of them were just desperate to be heard. But you could see the very fight of the people in the suits sitting with people that normally sit in front of the building asking for money. Both sides were uncomfortable. The difference was, the people who came from the streets desperately wanted to be heard. They really wanted something to be done. And the other people wanted something to be done, but it would not change their lives. They came prepared to hear but not necessarily to decide actions according to what they heard (*ibid.*).

What the interviewee wanted to say, in the last sentences of the above quotation, is often described as 'self-actualisation' (Lister 2002: 42). It is about building the capacity of the socially excluded to participate in the public policy process and raising their confidence. However, this self-actualisation and therefore the empowerment of the participants should not be limited to individuals. It is the 'importance of collective empowerment' that will be able to 'achieve social change and to alter the distribution of power' (Lister 2002: 42). For this reason, the organisations acknowledged that grassroots communities should be supported in order to 'enable involvement on both an individual and collective basis' (Beresford and Hoban 2005: 3)

Yet, the interviewee highlighted another issue: the participation as a multilevel process. In many member states people in poverty, and NGOs who try to help those

people, are struggling to get heard even in early consultation stages. However, there is a common belief that participation limited to consultation is far from being efficient and inclusive participation. In other words, 'consultation is not the same as participation' the latter of which means 'on-going dialogue, with the involvement of people from the planning of a project to its implementation, monitoring and evaluation' (ATD Fourth World 2000: 5). Thus, involving people only in the consultation phase bears the risk to use participation in order to 'achieve outcomes which had largely been decided already' (Beresford and Hoban 2005: 1). Additionally, consultation can be promoted by the policy makers as a tool 'to obtain feedback on services and to win support from users when options are limited and the overall aim is already in place' (Pierson 2005[2002]: 59). In this way, participation is not offering added value to the efficiency of the policy-making process and it does not promote the empowerment of the participants. It can be said, that it is used by the member states' administration to claim legitimacy for the decision-making process, and to show to the Commission that the member states are respecting the participation objectives of the OMC on social inclusion.

The chapters 3 and 4 focus on whether the OMC in social inclusion has promoted participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic policy-making process in the UK and Greece. In chapter 1 it was also shown that the social inclusion OMC has promoted the participation of people who experience poverty at the EU level. The next section intends to provide evidence about the participation of primary stakeholders in the annual European meetings of people who experience poverty. Whether this level of participation (i.e. EU level) has triggered shifts in participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties will be analysed in

chapters 3 and 4 which provide national case studies on the UK and Greece respectively.

2.5 The European meetings of people experiencing poverty

The assessment by the Commission of the second round of the NAPs on social inclusion (NAPs 2003-2005) showed again that the EU was acknowledging the importance of people in poverty sharing their experiences concerning the policies that affect them. According to the Commission, only when these people's views are taken on board are the policies able of being 'better focused and more relevant' (European Commission 2003: 111). The Commission's assessment also criticised the fact that there were certain groups (e.g. children and young people) which were excluded from the consultation of the policy-making process (*ibid.*). Pierson (2005[2002]: 59) has urged that '[t]he nature of social exclusion requires complex programmes with new ways of involving diverse groups of people dealing with difficult and conflicting issues'. It seems that the EU has indeed intended to involve diverse groups of people in combating social exclusion. Within the context of the OMC's provisions for participation of all relevant stakeholders and particularly people who experience poverty, the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP) was launched in 2001. As was acknowledged by the German European Presidency in 2007 (Sixth EMPEP 2007: 38):

> It has been confirmed that the open dialogue between those affected by poverty and government representatives on the occasion of the European

> Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty is important for shaping the Open Method of Coordination at the European level.

Therefore, in 2001 responding to the social inclusion OMC's calls for the self-expression of people in poverty, the Belgian Minister for Budget, Social Integration and Social Economy, Mr. Vande Lanotte, proposed a meeting which for the first time would bring together primary stakeholders from the fifteeen member states to discuss the European social inclusion policy (Interview in London, 16.02.2010a). People without permanent housing, people living in hostels and family centres were only some of those who attended in the first meeting in Brussels on 1 and 2 December 2001. Representatives from the Commission, members of the EP and NGOs were also attending the meeting. The text which the citizens in poverty adopted at the end of this meeting flagged up the importance of participation as a means of democratic legitimacy and decision-making efficiency. According to the text:

> Participation is a key element in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Everybody has the right to express his or her opinion. We consider this to be a vital complement to representation in our democratic society … In addition, participation also provides us with leverage to take our lives into our own hands, to get a grip on our circumstances … Participation improves the standards of the decision making process itself. Decisions and measures are more appropriate to their goals. This is better for all groups in our society, but particularly for those facing social exclusion and poverty … The contribution of citizens who are themselves excluded is thus vital if fundamental improvements are to be made (First EMPEP 2001: 19-20).

However, at the same meeting the participants admitted that participation was not a panacea for democracy and efficiency. Therefore they demanded financial, educational and legal provisions which would create the preconditions for empowerment towards an active participation. Furthermore, they argued that their participation should be extended to all stages (i.e. from agenda-setting to monitoring) of the national and European social inclusion policies (*ibid*.).

On 10 and 11 May 2003 a second meeting took place in Brussels under the auspices of the Greek Presidency. The meeting was named 'We Also Participate in Europe'. After the first meeting's focus on the importance of participation, the second meeting referred to the obstacles people in poverty face to participate in domestic and EU level. The participating citizens acknowledged that a possible legal framework, even though important, would not be enough for efficient public policy; if the policy-makers were reluctant to listen to those citizens then their participation would be in vain. Therefore 'a good strategy of persuasion is to show policy makers where their measures have fallen down through not listening to us' (Second EMPEP 2003: 14). Additionally, participants warned that if the policy-makers would not recognise that the people experiencing poverty are not all the same, in terms of needs, targets and opportunities, the participation through representation would be weak. (*ibid*: 18) They thus questioned the efficiency of NGOs and other large organisations to represent them. Instead they highlighted the need for small coherent groups and for strong solidarity among these groups.

What was important during this meeting was the way in which people in poverty criticised the NAPs procedures. They described their participation in the first NAPs as 'negligible' and claimed that it was hindered by policy-makers. For the second NAPs, 'attempts were made to consult, but unfortunately at too short notice to enable a proper process to be run' (*ibid*: 19). The conclusion was that the NAPs were drafted at a higher level and therefore remained distant from the reality of people in poverty. Efforts for participation were eventually limited to the involvement of large organisations at the expense of small 'grassroots' groups.

Importantly, for the first time an official reaction at European level was noted. It showed that member states had started to take the need or the pressure for participation into consideration. Following the second Meeting of people in poverty, the Greek Presidency proposed to the Council of Ministers in June 2003 that the member states should 'intensify their efforts to foster participation at all levels of the people experiencing poverty (*ibid*: 9)

The next meeting was called in Brussels on the 28 and 29 May 2004 under the Irish Presidency. Its aim was 'to develop further ways of promoting the participation at all levels of people experiencing poverty and exclusion and to strengthen or develop the structural networks to facilitate this involvement' (Third EMPEP 2004: 7). In this meeting it was discussed that more opportunities for widened participation should be offered by European and national policy-makers since there was still unequal communication of the needs and targets of the people in poverty and exclusion: asylum seekers, refugees and minority ethnic groups were not represented at all.[30]

[30] The Romas were mentioned as the most accurate example

However, the common position was that the governments were now recognising participation as unavoidable even if progress in improving participation was not yet noteworthy. The social inclusion OMC was criticised for being too weak to make governments promote participation adequately. More actors had to be mobilised at local, regional and national level. Direct contact with policy-makers was once more demanded by the participants. Nevertheless, this time participants acknowledged that the presence of NGOs should also be strengthened. (*ibid*: 31)

During the May 2004 meeting, a survey was presented which had measured the participation at national level of all the actors relevant to social exclusion. The results of this survey rather discouragingly reflected the differences in the participation among member states. For example, the survey showed that in countries like Greece 'there are no organisations working explicitly for the participation and involvement of people experiencing poverty and exclusion in policy making and implementation' (*ibid*: 37). The same applied for Spain. On the contrary, in the UK there was participation through an umbrella group of civil society organisations (see chapter 3). France was also intending to promote NGOs' involvement. The best form of representation was reported from Ireland where a network of NGOs had started working officially with the government in the implementation of the anti-poverty strategy.

The situation described above reflected an improvement compared to previous years (with even more potential for improvements for the future). Yet participants appeared to demand more opportunities for participation at national and European

level. Under the Luxemburg Presidency a fourth meeting took place in Brussels on 10 and 11 June 2005. It focused again on the issue of participation. The novelty was that the meeting introduced direct dialogue between people in poverty and policy-makers. This was perceived by participants as reflecting governments' desire to take more progressive steps towards broader participation (Fourth EMPEP 2005).

At that time the common perception of the participants was that, even though participation in the meetings did not have the desired impact on the European and domestic policy-making process, at least the meetings were not in vain. As Mr. Bruno Gonzales, who had been a participant also in the previous meetings, pointed out: 'for two days we are the voice of groups who have never believed or dared to believe that their voices would be heard in their country, still less reach Brussels' (*ibid*: 9)

A fifth meeting was organised under the Austrian Presidency on 12 and 13 May 2006. Mrs Lenia Samuel, a Commission representative, made a review of what had been achieved by that time and what still needed to be done. According to this review, the voices of the poor and excluded had been heard, dialogue was advancing, and member states had at last accepted civil society and local and regional stakeholders in various stages of public policy. Countries such as Greece, which in previous meeting had been accused of excluding stakeholders, were now praised (*ibid*: 27). However, what was still missing was the direct involvement of people in poverty in the decision-making processes across the EU. It was acknowledged that a maximum level of participation should not yet be expected at the national level.

The sixth European meeting took place in Brussels on 4 and 5 May 2007 under the German EU Presidency. This time participants argued that wealth inequalities were increasing in member states. They described as an 'illusion' the possibility that the Lisbon strategy would have 'a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty' (Sixth EMPEP: 10). In terms of participation, participants appeared to complain that member states only formally acknowledge the importance of participation, while in practice they do not facilitate it. However, there were also some signs of improvement. For example, participants from the French delegation argued that a 'direct consequence' of people's participation in these EU meetings was that participants had created domestic associations which were bringing together people experiencing poverty and social workers (*ibid*: 19). Participants from the UK argued that the 'National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion in the framework of the Lisbon strategy have certainly led to greater participation on the part of those concerned' (*ibid*: 21). However, all participants underlined that the social inclusion OMC was not adequate since it did not oblige member states to take 'concrete' actions (*ibid*: 32).

On 16 and 17 May 2008, the seventh European meeting of people experiencing poverty took place under the Slovenian Presidency. In the introductory note, the Presidency was calling the member states to foster their efforts to promote domestic participation of primary stakeholders (Seventh EMPEP 2008). It also stressed the importance for the member states and the EU Commission to take participants' concerns as expressed in the EU meetings into serious consideration when deciding on policies. Participants were divided into four workshops to discuss minimum income, housing, social services and services of general interest which were

according to the title of the conference the *4 Pillars in the Fight Against Poverty* (*ibid*.). The novelty of the seventh meeting was that the workshops were structured around two questions in terms of social inclusion policies: what is working and what is not working? The discussions of these two questions were followed by proposals of the participants about what should be done. As will be shown in chapter 3, this has been the structure of *Get Heard* in the UK which took place in between December 2004 and December 2005. It seems that this practice, which facilitates a feedback from the participants regarding the implementation and monitoring of policies, was uploaded from the UK to the EU level.

The next meeting was organised on 15 and 16 May 2009 in Brussels under the auspices of the Czech EU Presidency. This time participation in the domestic and European policy-making process did not seem to be the primary topic for the discussion. The participants only referred to the need for more participation of stakeholders in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process. In the face of the financial crisis the focus of the meeting shifted to housing, financial inclusion and accessibility of basic services. Across the EU, loans, individual bankruptcies and unemployment were on the rise and the Deputy Minister for Social Policy in Czech Republic, Mr Marian Hošek, was expecting the growing importance of these and similar problems (Eight EMPEP 2009).

The last European meeting of people in poverty within the timeframe of the present thesis was organised by the Spanish Presidency. It took place in Brussels on 25 and 26 June 2010. Referring to participation, participants stressed once again the need for involvement in every stage of the policy-making process. It seems that the ninth

European meeting did not change the rhetoric concerning participation. Participants noted that participation in the member states had improved compared to the years before the Lisbon strategy and the launch of the European meetings of people experiencing poverty. However, there was still a lot of work to be done in order for participation to be considered satisfactory by the Commission and the primary and secondary stakeholders. In the words of Lenia Samuel who was the Deputy Director General for DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 'progress has been made but a lot remains to be done (Ninth EMPEP 2010: 5).

Despite the quasi-institutionalisation of the European meetings of people who experience poverty, these events and their impact seem to have been largely neglected by academic studies. It was only in September 2010 when the first evaluation of the impact of these conferences on the policy-making process, civil society and the people who experience poverty was published on behalf of the EAPN-EU (Dierckx and Van Herck 2010). According to this study, personal merits (e.g. self-respect and psychological support), solidarity, learning, and new relationships, skills and experiences were among the positive results that participation in these meetings produced for the primary stakeholders who participated between 2001 and 2010 (Dierckx and Van Herck 2010). Importantly, Dierckx and Van Herck referred to a 'kind of European identity…' based on 'a sense of affiliation or membership of a broader community facing shared problems' (*ibid*: 20). However, as was mentioned already in chapter 1, a deeper analysis of this sense of European identity and its links to the possibility of participants' redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties was not provided.

Nevertheless, a key finding of the study was that the vast majority of people who experience poverty and who participated in these meetings believed that they did not have any impact at all on policy-makers. Both primary and secondary stakeholders, who were interviewed for the Dierckx and Van Herck's study, believed that the only impact on the policy-making process was that 'policies concerning participation have been influenced in a positive way' (*ibid*: 35). According to this statement, the EMPEP have led to an increased participation of primary stakeholders in member states across the EU.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed concepts such as 'primary poverty', 'absolute poverty', 'relative poverty' and 'at-risk-of-poverty' to show how poverty has been perceived across countries throughout different time periods. Thus, section 2.2 showed that while poverty was previously linked to the lack of certain goods to satisfy basic needs, it is today considered as the result of the lack 'income and resources' (Council of the EU 2004: 8). This lack prevents people from living to the standards of the society they belong to.

Section 2.2 also focused on the concept of 'social exclusion' which was borne in France, uploaded to the EU and diffused among the member states. The purpose was to show that people are excluded from the society not only due to the lack of income or the lack of paid job. Other obstacles such as service exclusion, exclusion from social networks, exclusion from education and exclusion from the policy-making

process also prevent them from participating in the society. In fact, due to these obstacles neither income nor employment can be seen as panacea against social exclusion.

This chapter has provided a brief historical background of the EU's responses (or the lack of them) to the issues of poverty and social exclusion. Especially after the 1970s when poverty started threatening wider socio-economic groups and the welfare-states started being under pressure, the EU started focusing on the combating of poverty. While it acknowledged that the single market would aggravate poverty and social exclusion the EU prioritised growth and jobs. The growth and jobs strategy has been fiercely criticised by academics and NGOs and networks which aim at social inclusion (e.g. EAPN-EU and ATD Fourth World). In this context, participation of relevant stakeholders in the social inclusion policy-making process has been proposed (e.g. by the EAPN-EU) as a counter-weight to growth and jobs.

In this context participation of primary and secondary stakeholders has been perceived by the Commission, various academics and anti-poverty associations (NGOs and networks) as a means to counterbalance the 'neoliberal' policies of the EU. These intentions for participation in the policy-making process have been intended to be put in practice through the OMC. Apart from the promoted participation in the domestic level policy-making process as the previous chapter showed, the annual European meetings of people experiencing poverty were launched and quasi-institutionalised in the context of the social inclusion OMC. This chapter discussed the most important developments regarding these meetings and the views of participants regarding their own participation. It emerged that until the mid-

2000s participants in the EMPEP were satisfied with the fact that their participation at domestic and EU level was steadily increasing. However, after 2005, primary stakeholders participating in the EMPEP started realising that, despite the fact that participation had increased this had no impact in terms of policy outcomes. Particularly after the 2008 outbreak of the financial crisis, participants acknowledged that the Lisbon strategy's objective to eradicate poverty was an 'illusion'. The impact of these developments and of the EU level participation on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: The Open Method of Coordination in the United Kingdom

3.1 Introduction: the Open Method of Coordination in the UK

The analysis put forward in this chapter has three main aims: First, it analyses the participation of new stakeholders that the social inclusion OMC has triggered in the British social inclusion policy-making process. Second, it examines the possible impact of participation on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. Third, it examines the impact of the participation at the European conferences of people experiencing poverty on the participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. The main purpose of chapter 3 is to analyse the potential redirection of stakeholders' expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level through their participation in the OMC domestic, and EU processes and projects.

The fieldwork for chapter 3 took primarily the form of six interviews with anti-poverty NGOs and networks as well as two individuals in poverty and/or social exclusion in the UK. There was an effort to conduct interviews across the UK. Interviews took place with representatives from England, Scotland and Wales. Additionally, empirical evidence has been gathered by analysing documents from anti-poverty NGOs and networks across the four British nations (i.e. such in the case of *Get Heard* and *Bridging the Policy Gap* [BTPG] projects; see section 3.4 below).

Section 3.2 provides important statistics on poverty and social exclusion. These statistics are used for two reasons. First, to provide an overview of the scale of social deprivation in the UK which is the field where the social inclusion OMC is applied. Second, and more importantly, to show that significant deficiencies exist if conclusions are drawn merely on the basis of quantitative data. Thus, section 3.3 shows why a qualitative approach to the OMC is necessary and discusses participation as forming part of the domestic response to the OMC pressures. In section 3.4 the participation of anti-poverty organisations and networks (i.e. secondary stakeholders) and people in poverty (i.e. primary stakeholders) is analysed with the help of a bottom-up approach. Additionally, section 3.4 shows that despite the fact that the OMC triggered the launch of two major participatory projects (i.e. *Get Heard* and BTPG) the method itself remained invisible. Section 3.5 seeks to understand shortcomings in the Europeanisation of the British social inclusion policy-making process in terms of participation of primary and secondary stakeholders. Section 3.6 assesses potential redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. Therefore, it is focused on the impact of both domestic participation and EU level participation on such attitudes. The final part of chapter 3 draws conclusion from the research carried out in the UK.

3.2 Indices of poverty and exclusion in the UK.

3.2.1 People at risk of poverty

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) *Households Below Average Income* (HBAI) series provides a quantitative overview of the social situation in the UK. According to the latest data (within the timeframe of this thesis), the main indicators of the HBAI series for 2009-2010 are listed in table 3.1. However, for reasons of comparison, data in parentheses refer to the period 2001-2002 which is the first year of the application of the social inclusion OMC in the UK.

The risk of poverty refers to a household income below 60% of the 2009-2010 median disposable (after taxes and mandatory contributions) household income, usually Before Housing Costs (BHC). The DWP report mentions however indices of deprivation After Housing Costs (AHC). It refers to 'median', in contrast to 'average' or 'mean' income because it is adjusted to avoid extreme values which arise from the few families who earn the highest incomes (DWP 2001: 222)[31]. However, since household income depends on the size and composition of the family, it is also adjusted through the process of 'equivalisation' which takes these two variables into consideration for the benefit of more accurate comparisons (DWP 2011: 235). For 2010, the UK median household income for a family with two parents and two children was estimated to be €24,426 (Atkinson *et al.* 2010: 105)

[31] The mean or average income is calculated by the sum of the all incomes divided by the number of the people who earn these incomes. The median income is the estimation of the income less than which 50% of the population is earning.

Another indicator of poverty which is commonly used in the UK is the number of school children who qualify for free school meals. Free school meals are offered to children with a household income less than £16,000 a year. Compared to 2008, this number increased by 21,000 to the total of 1,095,430 pupils in January 2009 *(The Guardian*, 11.08.2009). In fact, child poverty has been a major problem for Britain where the indices show that children who live in poverty, or at risk of poverty, are in higher percentages than the rest of the population (Noël and Larocque 2009: 7).

Table 3.1: The social situation in the UK in 2009-2010 (in parentheses data from 2001-2002)

People at Risk of Poverty	%	Absolute Numbers
Total population BHC	17 (18)	10.4 (10.7) million
Total population AHC	22 (23)	13.5 (13.2) million
Children BHC	20 (23)	2.6 (3.0) million
Children AHC	29 (31)	3.8 (4.0) million
Working-age adults BHC	16 (15)	5.7 (5.1) million
Working-age adults AHC	22 (19)	7.9 (6.5) million
Pensioners BHC	18 (25)	2.1 (2.6) million
Pensioners AHC	16 (26)	1.8 (2.7) million
Living in persistent poverty* BHC	9 (10)	N/A
Living in persistent poverty* AHC	10 (12)	N/A

Source: DWP 2011

*Living at risk of poverty in at least 3 out of four years (2005-2008). In parenthesis data for the period 2000-2003

Another database can be found at poverty.org.uk website which is a website that publishes statistics from the New Policy Institute with the support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. A close look at the figures published in December 2010 (for data between 2007-2009) for the ages 18 to 64 (working ages) reveals that among those who are employed almost 8% live at risk of poverty (EU-27 8%) while the same applies for almost 55% of those who are unemployed (EU-27 45%).[32] More to the point, 12.5% of the people (around 4.7 million) who want a paid job are actually unemployed and 25% of the people with work-limiting disabilities who want to work are unemployed.[33] Additionally, surveys have shown that nine out of ten Human Resources professionals 'agreed that employers would choose a non-disabled candidate over an equally qualified disabled candidate.' *(The Guardian* 14.10.2009a) According to this source, '[d]isabled people are also twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications, and twice as likely to live in poverty … The extent of disability poverty in the UK should be a national scandal' (*ibid.*).

Moreover, '[o]ne in seven adults aged 25 to retirement age from ethnic minorities are not working but want to'[34] while '[a]round two-fifths of people from ethnic minorities live in low-income households, twice the rate for White people'[35]. At the same time, 40% of the people who do not possess a car find it hard to access certain services such as hospitals while 18-20% of them have difficulties in accessing doctors, post offices and supermarkets.[36] Concerning education, it has been found that poverty can determine GCSE performance since children on free school meals

[32] http://www.poverty.org.uk/e01b/index.shtml (accessed on 22.10.2011 – graph 1)
[33] http://www.poverty.org.uk/44/index.shtml (accessed on 22.10.2011 – note that this number includes both officially registered unemployed and economically inactive people who want to work)
[34] http://www.poverty.org.uk/47/index.shtml (accessed on 22.10.2011)
[35] http://www.poverty.org.uk/summary/ethnic.htm (accessed on 22.10.2011)
[36] http://www.poverty.org.uk/75/index.shtml?2 (accessed on 22.10.2011 – graph 2)

are less likely to achieve A-B-C grades *(The Guardian* 15.12.2009). Furthermore, '[t]en million adults who are neither in paid work nor in full-time education do not participate in any social, political, cultural or community organisations'.[37] Moreover, '[d]ebt problems shot up by 27% and queries about welfare benefits soared by 22% in the three months to the end of June [2009], compared with the same period the previous year' (*Guardian* 04.09.2009). Last but not least, '61,000 households (excluding the intentionally homeless) in England were officially recognised as newly homeless by their local authorities in 2010'[38]. Street counts and estimates in the autumn of 2010 were showing that, only in England, there were 1,768 rough sleepers (DCLG 2011). Another '4 million households in England were classified as being in fuel poverty in 2009 (18% of all households)' which is the highest figure in the period 2001-2000[39].

3.2.2 Evaluation of indices

The snapshot data has been presented in order to show a general overview of poverty and social exclusion in the UK and serves to illustrate the context in which the OMC has been applied. There are certain limitations with the existing statistical data. For example, different official sources and organisations produce different indices. A study carried out for Eurostat highlighted this fact by comparing data from the World Bank, the Luxemburg Income Study, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

[37] http://www.poverty.org.uk/88/index.shtml?2 (accessed on 22.10.2010 – graph 1 see explanation regarding the relation unemployment and education with social networking)
[38] http://www.poverty.org.uk/81/index.shtml?2 (accessed on 22.10.2010)
[39] http://www.poverty.org.uk/80/index.shtml?2 (accessed on 22.10.2010) Fuel poverty definition from the same source: 'Households are considered by the Government to be in 'fuel poverty' if they would have to spend more than 10% of their household income on fuel to keep their home in a 'satisfactory' condition. It is thus a measure which compares income with what the fuel costs 'should be' rather than what they actually are.'

and Development (OECD), and Eurostat itself. While there has been a relative coherence between the OECD and Eurostat this has not always been achieved among the other sources (Atkinson *et al.* 2010: part 5.2.3). The problem of the compatibility of data on the social situation in member states has of course been dealt with, inside the EU, through the harmonisation of the member states' statistics according to Eurostat methodology. This may facilitate comparative studies and a numerical overview of different areas in the EU but it does not provide the full picture.

This is not to argue that a quantitative approach is superfluous. Nonetheless, until now, every comment on the efficiency of the OMC which is based merely on numerical outcomes has produced rather unclear results (Buchs 2008, Zeitlin 2005b). Table 3.1 may reflect improvements of the social situation among certain groups of the population (i.e. children and pensioners) for the period 2001-2010. However it is not clear whether such improvement should be attributed to the OMC. It is not only that these figures were declining even before the application of the OMC and the first NAP in social inclusion in 2001 (DWP 2011). In its assessment of the five years of the European Employment Strategy (EES) the Commission acknowledged that,

> the technical difficulties of a precise impact evaluation should not be under-estimated, considering the interaction between different policies, the simultaneous improvement of the economic situation and the relatively short period under review as compared to the long term nature of certain structural reforms (European Commission 2002: 7)

According to the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis, in many cases there is actually a manipulation of the statistics. One interviewee from an NGO specialised in issues of homelessness, explained how such manipulation takes place by commenting on the (Labour) government's enthusiastic claims on the minimisation of the homeless in the UK:

> It is debatable how many rough sleepers there are in the UK. In 1997 the government that came in, the Labour, made a commitment to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds. They have now made another commitment to extinguish it completely by 2012 … There are now –well the government statistics say there are– actually less than 500 [rough sleepers], around about 300, but other statistics and people who go out and do street counts show they are actually more (Interview in London, 15.01.2010).

In fact, according to the above cited statistics, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) street counts and estimations referred to almost 1,800 rough sleepers in England during autumn 2010. Even if this estimate can be disputed, it does not really change the point that the interviewee was trying to make (*ibid.*):

> In each borough around the country, every three months they have a government organised count. So people are able to count how many people, actually they can see, are sleeping rough on the streets. They [people who carry out those street-counts] are not allowed to go anywhere that it could be dangerous to them, the can't go down to dark places, shops, dirty buildings

> all that kind of stuff where homeless people hide themselves because they do not want to be found. So they cannot count them because they are well hidden. In certain areas such as Westminster, the night before [the counting] you get lots of police coming out and threatening people to move on and this sort of people may not appear in the counts … That, kind of, reduces the figure, but when you come out and do it separately you find out that the amount of those sleeping rough is three times bigger around the country.

The same interviewee (*ibid.*) also revealed a fact that is not widely known:

> What also happens is, when you do the street count, if you have less than ten people sleeping rough in your borough, that doesn't count. If they are less than ten, it's nothing; it will be reflected as zero and if you count all the zeros reported, there is actually a lot of them and that could actually hide a lot of people from the statistics … How many people are sleeping rough, who knows?

This statement clearly casts doubt on official government statistics on homelessness. However, in 2011 the DCLG corrected its method by including rough sleepers even when they were less than ten in the area of the relevant street counts (DCLG 2011).

What is more, it is not only NGOs such as the above mentioned which challenge official figures but also the political parties which interpret in different ways the same data, making the evaluation of the OMC a challenging task. Examples of different interpretations of figures have played a role in the debate about poverty

between the Labour and Conservative Parties, in particular, only a few months before the British elections in 2010. The Blair and Brown governments claimed that progress had been made on issues of poverty and social inclusion. The Conservative Party rejected these claims by stating that even if some progress had been made, it was not sufficient. They also argued that the actions by the Labour government for over a decade did not reduce the gap between rich and poor; but instead widened it. In the words of the then leader of the opposition, David Cameron, '[i]n the past decade, the gap between the richest and the poorest got wider. Indeed, inequality is now at a record high. The very poorest in our society got poorer – and there are more of them' (Cameron 2009). However, Cameron's conclusion was in turn challenged. According to *The Guardian* (14.10.2009b), after the Labour government took office in 1997, the rich indeed became richer but there was some progress for the poor too.

From these figures it seems that one cannot draw a definite conclusion regarding the success or failure of the fight against poverty and exclusion in Britain. The widening of the gap between poor and rich was also apparent during the Conservative administrations of Thatcher and Major from 1979 to 1997 (Pantazis and Gordon 2010: 1, Noël and Larocque 2009: 7) It was John Moore, a former Tory Secretary of State for Social Security (1988-1989), who said that the word 'poverty' was used for reasons of impression by those who reject capitalism to enforce their arguments. 'Poverty' was for Moore an unfair term which was used instead of 'simple' inequality (Moore as cited in Pantazis and Gordon 2000: 4). Regarding the critique to Labours' thirteen years in government, the gap between the rich and poor widened despite the rise in the overall growth of incomes, a fact that shows growing unequal distribution (Pantazis and Gordon 2010: 1, Cameron 2009).

In any case, a numerical presentation cannot reflect the actual experience of living in conditions of poverty and social exclusion. In other words, '[s]tatistics give us a consistent picture of how poverty changes over time. What they cannot give us is a fuller picture of what day-to-day life is like for people experiencing poverty, and how people's experiences change over time'. (Green 2007: vii). For all these reasons, the evaluation of the OMC cannot be exclusively based on quantitative analysis. Instead, there is consensus in the literature on the need for qualitative analysis.

3.3 The need for a qualitative assessment of the Open Method of Coordination

The above numerical presentation aimed to give an overview of the social situation in the UK in the field of the social inclusion OMC. The evaluation of the OMC's application in the member states concerns the changes that it has caused at national level in the policies and policy-making processes (PPMI 2011: 8). As shown above, one of the impacts of the OMC is that it has launched debates around poverty and social exclusion on the political agendas of the member states in general, and the UK in particular. This view has been supported not only by academics (e.g. Armstrong 2006) but also in interviews by representatives from voluntary organisations and networks involved in the UK's OMC processes (e.g. Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010).

However, the evaluation of the impact of the OMC in the UK on the debate about social inclusion is not an easy task. Whether the OMC/EU or domestic developments triggered the British campaign against social exclusion, is unclear. For example, various scholars underline the role of partisan domestic politics in the launch of campaigns against social exclusion in Britain (e.g. Armstrong 2006; Levitas 1998). According to these scholars, the Conservative administrations had 'forgotten' the poor while the New Labour government 'rediscovered' them (e.g. Armstrong 2006: 79). As the ATD-Fourth World, a very active anti-poverty NGO in the UK was noticing in 2000 (i.e. before the OMC):

> The debate on poverty has developed considerably in the past three years. The Labour Government has recognised the existence of poverty in the United Kingdom and the scale of the problem - facts which the previous Conservative Government sought to deny. We have moved from a position where Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security could write to the UK Coalition Against Poverty in 1996, 'Poverty eradication plans are not needed in nations such as the UK which already have social protection systems to prevent poverty', to a situation where Alistair Darling, current Secretary of State for Social Security, declared at Wester Hailes, Edinburgh, in 1999, 'We are moving the fight against poverty back to the centre stage of British politics' (ATD Fourth World 2000: 5).

Importantly, the introduction of the social inclusion OMC in Britain and its first ten years of application refer to periods when the same political party was in office. This is one additional reason why is difficult to assess whether the domestic social

inclusion process in the period 2001-2010 was driven by the OMC or the New Labour government. Additionally, the election of New Labour in 1997 which moved the fight against poverty to the centre stage of British politics, took place when important developments about social exclusion were taking place at EU level (see chapter 2). Was the New Labour government's 'rediscovery' of the poor based on its own aspirations or did it follow an EU pre-existing campaign? Armstrong (2006) argues that it is the New Labour's commitment to the EU that is the factor behind the British anti-poverty/social inclusion campaign. Armstrong (2006: 79) also claims that '[d]espite the wealth of analysis of poverty and social exclusion in the UK, remarkably little is said about the European framework within which member states are elaborating their policies'. While for Armstrong (2006) the influence of the EU is indisputable, he does not seem to disagree that a strategy of social inclusion had started in the UK prior to the OMC. In this context, he compares the British with the OMC indicators and objectives to show that the domestic government used the former since they were much more relevant and precise than the latter.

For other scholars it was actually New Labour's aspirations which influenced economic and social reforms at EU level (e.g. Bulmer 2008). According to Bulmer, the New Labour government may have failed to play a central role in the EU developments such as EMU but it strongly influenced the Lisbon strategy especially its competitiveness and economic reform dimensions. One of the most notable initiatives of the social inclusion OMC is the combating of child poverty. It was first developed in the UK as there has been an anti-child poverty focus group since the 1970s (Schönheinz *forthcoming*). It could therefore be argued that the British anti-exclusion policy was uploaded to the EU. The social inclusion OMC and the 2001

Lisbon strategy made the inclusion of children one of its objectives and called for the elimination of child poverty by 2006 (*ibid*.; Paraskevas 2007).

The coordinator of the UK Coalition Against Poverty (UKCAP) generally assessed as positive, the domestic social inclusion policies between 1997 to 2010 (Interview in Liverpool 24.03.2010). She compared favourably the positive role of New Labour's political aspirations for social inclusion with the lower efforts of previous Conservative governments. Differences in the engagement between different British (Labour and Conservative) governments and the EU played a central role for the more positive evaluation of the New Labour government by the UKCAP representative. She also argued that the EU seemed to be an efficient agent (*ibid*.):

> We were really, really battered by the policies of the Tory government … [which] would not welcome Europe, and also by globalisation; this is from Margaret Thatcher from 1979 [onwards]. But when the Labour party took office in 1997, they were always a more outward looking political party. They became engaged to Europe and we were able to take the advantage the EU membership had to offer. So when the Labour party came in there were a lot of differences … Targets were set to address poverty; you didn't talk about poverty beforehand.

Therefore, there are different perspectives on how to assess the impact of the OMC in the UK. The favourable environment which existed during the launch of the OMC in the UK does not allow for an independent evaluation of the OMC's overall impact in the UK. For this reason, the next part of the present chapter will assess the

domestic response to the OMC provisions for participation of primary and secondary stakeholders.

3.4 Participation of primary and secondary stakeholders

As was pointed out in chapter 1, the social inclusion OMC requires member governments to produce National Action Plans (NAPs) or National Strategy Reports (NSRs). The NAPs/NSRs are the documents in which member states outline their policies to tackle social exclusion and serve as national government reports to the EU on the domestic application of the OMC. The UK's NAPs/NSRs will be taken as a baseline for the assessment provided in this chapter. Already in the first British NAP (2001-2003) the New Labour government tried to show that participation by stakeholders is important for the implementation of the strategy:

> [P]romoting inclusion is not a matter for central Government alone. The success of the UK's inclusion strategy will depend crucially on the contributions of local authorities, the voluntary sector, the social partners and individuals working in their own communities (UK NAP 2001-2003: 1).

In the same perspective, the first British NAP explained the way in which the UK government intended to meet the fourth objective of the 2000 Nice European Council which refers to the mobilisation of all relevant bodies. The first British NAP therefore reflected the UK government's commitment to 'a more open policy-making process, that includes those who are affected by social exclusion, and those

on whose efforts policy will depend for its success' (*ibid*: 2). Taking seriously the reference to 'open' in the name of the OMC, the NAP referred explicitly to the 'openness' of the policy-making process to voluntary and community organisations as well as other grassroots groups, among other stakeholders (*ibid*.). How the 'openness' worked in practice is assessed in the next parts of this chapter which will also explain how secondary stakeholders promoted the participation of the primary stakeholders.

3.4.1 Participation in the NAP process

The UKCAP and the British European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-UK) have been the anti-poverty networks which championed the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the NAPs process (see also Armstrong 2010: 166). The EAPN-UK represents the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-EU), which is the leading EU level umbrella network that lobbies for the participation of NGOs through the social inclusion OMC (de la Porte and Pochet 2005). The EAPN-UK consists of the EAPN-England, the Poverty Alliance in Scotland, the Anti-Poverty Network Cymru (APNC) and the Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network (NIAPN). These four-nation networks are also members of the UKCAP. In contrast to the EAPN networks, which focus on the links between EU and domestic policies, the UKCAP is an association that has been established to focus on the domestic social inclusion framework (Interview in Liverpool, 24.03.2010). The trustee board of the

UKCAP promotes the participation of people experiencing poverty. Out of the ten members of the board of UKCAP, five have direct experience in poverty.[40]

The involvement of primary and secondary stakeholders through the OMC in the domestic arena started with the setting up of a Social Policy Task Force (SPTF). The SPTF was set up by EAPN-UK and UKCAP in 2001 with the support of the DWP (Armstrong 2010). The main reason for its creation was 'for the DWP to consult an input into the NAP' (Interview in Liverpool, 24.03.2010). The former Deputy Director of the EAPN-UK offered extra evidence for the SPTF in an interview in London:

> We brought all stakeholders, every organisation which is interested in this work, working on anti-poverty issues and want to have direct dialogue with the government. It [the SPTF] has been a platform for dialogue with the government (Interview in London, 05.02.2010).

The generally positive feedback regarding the SPTF must however be seen in context:

> But this [SPTF] is very informal actually, it was never formalised. There is no budget for it and some members need to come from all over the UK. Some organisations which could fund these travel expenses have now stopped that funding [reference to the UKCAP] (Interview in London, 05.02.2010).

[40] Four are from England, two from Scotland, two from Wales and two from Northern Ireland. The total number of the Trustee Board is 11 people as there are ten representatives from the 'four-nations' structure and one chairperson. (UKCAP's official web-site: http://www.ukcap.org/blogs/aboutus/whoweare.html, accessed on 02.03.2010)

Even unofficially, the British government recognised the SPTF as a partner in the NAP process. The SPTF represented a list of organisations and networks in the UK which have been dedicated to combating social exclusion. In the case of the SPTF's last contribution to the preparation of the NAP 2008-2010, eight networks and eleven organisations contributed. Table 3.2 shows which these networks and NGOs were.

UKCAP and the EAPN-UK can be regarded as particularly active in the social inclusion OMC. They are indeed representative of a wider list of associations active at local, regional, national and through 'umbrella' networks at the European level.[41] In order to understand how these associations operate within the OMC and within the guidelines of EU level networks, the case of the Off the Streets into Work (OSW) organisation in London can be brought forward. As shown in table 3.2 the OSW is a member of the SPTF. A representative from the organisation interviewed for this thesis argued that the SPTF was 'fundamentally shaping the NAPs' (Interview in London 15.12.2009).

[41] EAPN-UK official web-site, http://www.eapn.eu/content/view/72/21, accessed on 02.03.2010

Table 3.2: British anti-poverty NGOs and networks mobilised in the social inclusion OMC policy-making process.

Networks	• British Black Anti-Poverty Network • UK European Anti-Poverty Networks: Anti-Poverty network Cymru, European Anti-Poverty Network England, Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network, Poverty Alliance • Migrants' Resource Centre • Single Parent Action Network • UK Coalition Against Poverty • UK Race and Europe Network
Organisations	• Age Concern • ATD Fourth World • Child Poverty Action Group • Fawcett Society; Irish Travellers in Britain • Leonard Cheshire Disability • National Group on Homeworking • Off the Streets and into Work • Oxfam UK Poverty Programme • Royal National Institute for the Blind • Runnymede Trust

Source: Social Policy Task Force (2008: 6)

The OSW is a member of the EU umbrella network European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (*Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri* –FEANTSA). FEANTSA is the 'only major' network at EU level which focuses exclusively on homelessness and receives funding from the EU Commission (FEANTSA and OSW 2005: 5). The FEANTSA and OSW published jointly a participation audit which highlighted the best participatory practices among the member states' NGOs (*ibid.*). The audit did not only show the efforts for participation which were undertaken in different member states. It also showed the barriers which exist to mobilise individuals who experience poverty for the participation in public policy, and outlined what participation should ideally look like. Thus, the joint audit argued that the 'active participation of

homeless people in the design and implementation of their care and reintegration plan is absolutely fundamental to its success' (FEANTSA and OSW 2005: 1).

Apart from secondary stakeholders such as the OSW, important actors in the SPTF have been primary stakeholders themselves. Apart from the case of the UKCAP where primary stakeholders are members of its board, other networks of primary stakeholders play a stronger role in bringing poor and socially excluded people's interests forward. In fact, one important research finding is that the involvement of the NGOs in the tackling of poverty is not always welcomed by primary stakeholders. A member of the board of the grassroots' anti-poverty network in Wales (the APNC), which participated in the SPTF, explained that the members of the APNC rejected the idea of the continuous working together with NGOs (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.1010). In fact, the APNC was made up by NGOs but since grassroots communities joined the network in 2004 they did not want 'NGOs in charge anymore' (*ibid.*). They thus formed an executive committee which was 'all grassroots led' and even adopted a 'clause that no NGO can join' (*ibid.*). Today the APNC has only grassroots individuals in its board.[42] Therefore, the participation of the APNC in the social inclusion OMC through the SPTF meant simultaneously the participation of only primary stakeholders –without the involvement of secondary stakeholders.

Drawing on the Europeanisation literature, a mediating factor which has been expected to facilitate Europeanisation (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5) has been in place in the UK. Secondary stakeholders' organisational culture to work *with* and not only

[42] This development is not mentioned let alone analysed in the NGOs' reports on participation.

for primary stakeholders has led to the inclusion of the latter in the policy-making process. For example, the inclusion of the UKCAP in the SPTF meant simultaneously the inclusion of primary stakeholders. This happened because primary stakeholders were members of the board of the UKCAP. Additionally, the inclusion of the EAPN-UK in the SPTF meant simultaneously the inclusion of anti-poverty networks (e.g. the APNC, a member of the EAPN-UK) which were run exclusively by primary stakeholders. Since the organisational culture of the anti-poverty associations has been favourable to the participation of primary stakeholders, a positive response to Europeanisation pressures has been made possible.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed perceived the SPTF as a forum which has managed to promote participation. For those respondents, the EU provisions for participation have been indeed put into action with the SPTF. The former Deputy Director of the EAPN-UK described how the SPTF works in an interview in London (05.02.2010):

> We express our views and we tell them [the DWP representatives] what is happening on the ground, how their policies are affecting the people. It is just a place for dialogue with the government … we chair the meeting and they support us sometimes, because they sometimes come to meet us and many times we had meetings in the DWP! This is us, invading in the dialogue of the policy-makers, if you want.

This can be seen as a positive evaluation of the developments after the launch of the social inclusion OMC in 2001. The use of the word 'invading' in the above interview

can be interpreted in such a way as to show that there was not participation before the OMC. However, this last remark needs further analysis because different actors have given different standpoints on that. The director of the Poverty Alliance argued that projects for participation 'predated' the application of the social inclusion OMC (Interview in Glasgow 02.10.2010). Armstrong (2005) has shown that the Scottish government was consulting anti-poverty associations after the delegation of powers to Scotland in 1997 but prior to the launch of the OMC in 2001. At that period the Scottish government was funding organisations to help 'grassroots to take part in policy-making process' (Interview in Glasgow 02.10.2010). For example, the Poverty Alliance established the Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum (TPSF) before the OMC was implemented. The TPSF managed to bring together people from different backgrounds in the fight against poverty so as to have 'direct and regular dialogue' (*ibid.*). In 2010 there were forty members in the Forum which were 'evenly' chosen from the following three groups: policy-makers from central and local government, senior officers from the third sector, and people who are experiencing poverty (TPSF 2010: 1). This project has not been under the auspices of the OMC (or the European Social Fund –ESF), but has been supported by the Scottish parliament and the Big Lottery Fund.[43]

However, according to the same interviewee, the OMC has helped the anti-poverty organisations to acquire a stronger role at local and at national level. It has also helped to build a 'culture' of primary stakeholders' participation (Interview in Glasgow 02.10.2010). For the director of the Poverty Alliance, 'it is difficult to say, if you compare the participation in 2001 with 2010, whether it is now better' (*ibid.*).

[43] The Poverty Alliance official portal: http://www.povertyalliance.org.uk/projects_detail.asp?proj_id=1, accessed on 28.09.2010

There have been periods (i.e. 2006-2007) when, due to the launch of *Get Heard* and BTPG, the participation of primary stakeholders was remarkable and periods when participation was lower than expected (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, even before participation had reached its peak, the Poverty Alliance (2005: 1) had published a paper which expressed a very positive stance towards the OMC:

> [T]he four objectives [of the social inclusion OMC] have been a very useful way of 'organising' policy. UK and devolved administration have had to show how they contribute to meeting these objectives, giving a better understanding of the 'approach' behind the adoption of certain policies. As such the OMC provides something of a framework around which it is possible to develop a more 'joined up' approach to policy-making between different actors at the UK level.

Overall, the Poverty Alliance thinks that the OMC was applied in an already favourable environment in Scotland. Yet, the OMC added value to participation efforts and created an on-going dialogue between relevant stakeholders and the government. Importantly, the Poverty Alliance mentioned that the fourth objective mentioned above was not interpreted as 'an ordinary consultation but as an on-going dialogue that wouldn't step forward without the OMC' (Interview in Glasgow 02.10.2010). Thus, this kind of on-going dialogue was seen as 'opposed to consultation' (Poverty Alliance 2005: 2) and was, as will be seen shortly, referring to participation in different stages of the NAP process. The Poverty Alliance's 2005 evaluation report and the interview with its representative, which was conducted in 2010, allow for a better understanding of the pre-existing patterns of participation.

These not fully developed patterns have been strengthened by the efforts for application of the OMC in general, and of the method's fourth objective in particular (i.e. to mobilise all relevant bodies). A study on the impact of the OMC in the UK comes to the same conclusion (Schönheinz *forthcoming*). According to this study, a process of involving non-state stakeholders in the social policy-making process had started to be established by New Labour before the launch of the OMC. According to Schönheinz (*ibid.*), the OMC must be seen as a contributor to the strengthening of this process.

However, other key stakeholders (i.e. representatives from the ATD-Fourth World, the EAPN-England and the UKCAP) denied the existence of a pre-OMC process of participation. As one representative from the ATD-Fourth World argued before the method was applied, there was no participation at all (Interview in London 16.02.2010). In the respondent's own words:

> The thing about the OMC and the UK is that you have to understand before there was this Open Method of Coordination there was no speaking to the government about poverty in the UK. There was no dialogue. There was no participation. We were the opposite from Belgium and France where dialogue, consultation, participation were already established. There was nothing here. And it is only because of this slight opening, coming down from the EU, as part of this Open Method of Coordination where you have to include all stakeholders; that involves people in poverty' (*ibid.*).

Therefore, even if a process of participation of primary and secondary stakeholders had started before the OMC, it was too weak to involve such stakeholders satisfactorily. Interviews with key stakeholders showed that the biggest change which the OMC has brought about in the UK is the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders rather than the strengthening of a pre-existing domestic process. Regarding the Europeanisation of the British public policy, the fact that the social inclusion OMC provided opportunities for participation to primary and secondary stakeholders, created a misfit between the EU public policy and the domestic public policy. For domestic change to occur the misfit between the EU promoted public policy and the domestic public policy is only a necessary but not sufficient condition (Börzel and Risse 2003). Domestic change eventually depends on whether the EU pressures are facilitated by different mediating factors. As shown earlier in this chapter, the EU pressures for domestic adaptation were responded by domestic actors with the establishment of the SPTF. Thus, as the following quote from an interview shows, the OMC's pressures for participation were accommodated by secondary stakeholders. In the interview the importance of the OMC in producing a positive image for the EU is also highlighted:

> There is the UK process which was started by some of the people who started the EAPN actually here in the UK. They took advantage of the OMC process by saying: 'Right, let's do something'. And that's an important part of European structures, if you like, that no matter what government there is in a member state country, if you have got something at European level which says that all parties need to be involved in the process of creating and delivering activities to overcome poverty then that gives a really good lever

> for organisations to talk to their governments about getting the process going. Without that you would be battling for years to get them to do it. … But because it is a process expected by Europe it gives you a recognised position, within a process, making policy. So that's fantastic! And when people realise this, that's the case, that gets them excited about Europe' (Interview in Nottingham 24.11.2009).

In the case of the UK, secondary stakeholders perceived the OMC's pressures for participation as an opportunity to participate in the domestic policy-making process. It seems that, using the words of Cowles and colleagues (2001: 11), these domestic actors used 'Europeanization as an opportunity to further their goals'. Since their goal was participation in the domestic policy-making process, secondary stakeholders saw the EU pressures for participation as an opportunity to circumvent domestic obstacles (e.g. representative democracy) which were excluding them from participating.[44] By doing so, they promoted the Europeanisation of the British social inclusion policy-making process since they intended (and managed) to widen the participation.

Additionally, the fact that Europeanisation through the OMC has helped anti-poverty organisations such as the EAPN-UK to get involved in the policy-making process has also triggered the redirection of their expectations towards the EU. The enthusiasm used by the previously mentioned interviewee to describe the promoted participation shows that participation is seen as a benefit from the OMC since the method offers to the stakeholders a 'recognised position' in this process. Therefore,

[44] Regarding the viewing of representative democracy as an obstacle, this has built on Johnson (2009). Johnson (*ibid*: 3) argues that one of the reasons why the British government did not formalise the SPTF was that it did not want such process to 'override representative democracy'.

the interviewee's opinion reflects arguably the existence of a positive rational assessment of the EU framework. According to the analytical framework put forward in chapter 1, such an assessment leads to the redirection not only of expectations, but under certain circumstances of political activities and loyalties towards the EU if the EU satisfies interests which cannot be satisfied on the domestic level. Whether the redirection of expectations among the British participants in the OMC process led to redirections of political activities and loyalties will be analysed in the following sections of this chapter. Prior to this, the stages of primary and secondary stakeholders' participation in the NAP process will be discussed in detail.

Inside the DWP, the team which has been responsible for the composition of the NAPs and for the talks with the social organisations has been called the Social Inclusion Team:

> The whole UK social inclusion work is designated to one team and that team is based in the DWP. They are basically responsible for all this sort of logistics and possible arrangements and reporting and… as you know the NAP is supposed to be cross-departmental work. But they are the ones to involve all the different departments. It's their responsibility to produce this document [i.e. the NAP]. They are civil servants… (Interview in London 16.02.2010a)

In fact, the DWP is the government's centre for the entire social inclusion and employment strategy in the UK. It is responsible for the production of the NAPs and NSRs but has delegates in European level committees such as the Social Protection

Committee (SPC) and Employment Committee (EMCO); see Schönheinz *forthcoming*). However, the above cited statement by the interviewee not only provides information about the Social Inclusion Team and the DWP but also shows that the production of NAPs has stimulated a cross-departmental link. Accordingly, in the UK the relevant departments (i.e. Department for Children, Schools and Families, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Health, DWP etc.) are informed about the composition of the documents (Armstrong 2006).

The interviews presented this far show that from 2001 to 2010 the SPTF was engaged with the DWP's Social Inclusion Team in a dialogue first at the agenda-setting stage of the NAPs/NSRs process. What was seen by the SPTF members as more important than participation in the agenda-setting stage however, was that examples of the dialogue with the DWP were listed in the NAPs as 'challenges identified by UK stakeholders' (UK NAP 2008-2010: 2-3). As one participant in the SPTF stated: 'We worked together in the NAPs in Social Inclusion; that was one of the most important activities. We worked together!' (Interview in London 05.02.2010). Another, even more positive assessment was provided earlier in this chapter when the representative from the OSW stated that the SPTF shaped the NAPs 'fundamentally' (Interview in London 15.12.2009). This enthusiasm actually emerged from the fact that, as will be shown below, the SPTF members were also participating in the stages of implementation (e.g. by organising the *Get Heard* and BTPG) and monitoring (as the term 'on-going dialogue reveals) of the NAP/NSR process.

Thus, some interviewees were even more enthusiastic while praising the OMC as the main factor behind the mobilisation and participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the British policy-making process. An interview held with a representative from EAPN-England (Interview in Nottingham 24.01.2009) revealed the following:

> Owing to the OMC process we, as SPTF, have meetings at national level between people in poverty and the team responsible for writing the NAPs on social inclusion. We meet every six weeks together with civil servants who write the NAPs. The reason is to fulfil the OMC's provision on participation on writing the NAP and then evaluating and monitoring the effect of it.

This quote seems to clarify what the on-going dialogue means by referring to the frequency of the meetings. It also gives further evidence of participation in the different stages of the NAPs process. In addition to the participation in the agenda-setting stage, empirical evidence collected for the present thesis show that the on-going dialogue (which the OMC had quasi-institutionalised in the period between 2001-2010) between the government and primary and secondary stakeholders was also taking place at the stage of monitoring. Additionally, anti-poverty networks and organisations took part in the implementation of the NAPs. They did so by helping towards the implementation of one of the social inclusion OMC core objectives, namely the mobilisation of people in poverty and social exclusion. Section 3.4.2 below analyses two major (in terms of participation of primary stakeholders) projects which were organised in the UK by the SPTF. Importantly, the next part also shows that the participants in the *Get Heard* and *Bridging the Policy Gap* projects remained

unaware of the fact that the reason behind their mobilisation was the EU involvement in the field of social inclusion and the OMC provisions for participation.

3.4.2 Participatory projects undertaken by the Social Policy Task Force

3.4.2.1 The Get Heard project

In the OMC context, the DWP and the SPTF have been behind by far the biggest participation project in the field of social inclusion in the UK –to date– which is the *Get Heard Project*. The project was intended to feed the primary participants' views and experiences into the NAP 2006-2008. *Get Heard*'s importance and size was flagged up by the UKCAP (2006: 4):

> *Get Heard* was one of the largest projects undertaken in the UK to involve people with first-hand experience of poverty to give their views on government policies designed to combat poverty … With funding supplied principally by the EU and with some match-funding from the Department for Work and Pensions, the project ran a total of 146 workshops around the UK between December 2004 and December 2005: 81 in England; 45 in Scotland; 14 in Northern Ireland; and 6 in Wales.

The overall objective of the project was the participation of people in poverty through a series of workshops to enable their views to have an impact on the national policy-making process. Their views would be reflected in the NAP 2006-2008. In other words, the *Get Heard* project was 'designed to enable people living in poverty

to have a say in national policy making –and especially the next [2006-2008] National Action Plan on Social Inclusion' (UKCAP 2004a).

The EU was not the passive recipient of people's views through their participation in the *Get Heard* and its impact on the British NAP. The participating organisations officially acknowledged the role of the OMC behind the *Get Heard* project. The anti-poverty networks were describing the OMC as the 'NAPs process' (NIAPN 2004: point 3). The Commission supported the project by being its main funding source. Additionally, it can be argued that without the OMC's call for participation of grassroots individuals, without the existence of the SPTF (launched in response to the OMC) and without the OMC's crucial role in the fight against social exclusion in Britain, the *Get Heard* project would not have taken place. As the then Deputy Director of the EAPN-UK admitted (Interview in London 05.02.2010):

> I think that Europe definitely played a role. If it was not for the EU I don't think that we would have done it. So, this was, if you want, a one hundred percent European initiative, European activity. Because it started in Europe, it took shape and it was promoted there … So yes, Europe was important essentially.

In the same vein, the director of the Poverty Alliance, has also been praising the OMC for the mobilisation of people in poverty. Recognising the value that the OMC offered for the participation in the UK, the interviewee stated:

> I think that the main periods [of participation] were around the preparation of the 2006 NAP when NGOs in the UK were involved in the *Get Heard* project. The OMC was responded to by the NGOs who supported the involvement of grassroots organisations through projects like the *Get Heard* (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010).

In terms of the OMC/EU's role behind the project, the official document which explained the *Get Heard* project clarified that the project 'aims to have two outcomes: improved national and European policies on social inclusion, and increased capacity of excluded people to be involved in policy-making processes on the part of excluded people' (UKCAP 2004a). Furthermore, the whole project was facilitated by the *Get Heard* Toolkit which was steering the workshops around the following three main questions: 'What's working?' 'What's not working?' 'How should things be done differently?' (UKCAP 2004b: Section 2.1).

The toolkit referred explicitly to the NAPs as a process which would help to 'understand complexities and differences in poverty across the EU' and would direct action according to the 'agreed objectives for tackling poverty across the EU' (*ibid*: section 1.2). In this sense the toolkit offered a clear account of the European framework in which the project was taking place. Importantly, by referring to common EU objectives it was also providing the framework for redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties through learning (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5). Some networks, which ran the workshops on behalf of *Get Heard*, offered even more extensive details on this EU framework. For example, the NIAPN, which was behind the setting up of *Get Heard* in Northern Ireland, called for participation

of primary stakeholders as a response to the EU's democratic deficit. Participation was seen as a political activity which had the potential to influence the European level that had increasingly become involved in the daily lives of citizens (NIAPN 2004). According the NIAPN (2004: point 2):

> We need to put pressure on governments at national and at European level and to do this we need to link the two levels to promote our approach to welfare and social protection. Participation in the NAPsincl [NAPs on Social Inclusion] is one way of linking the national and European level.

However, an analysis of the reports of the *Get Heard* workshops shows that participants did not seem to acknowledge the EU's presence in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. This became evident despite the EU and OMC's indispensable role in the launch of the project, the expertise of the steering organisations in EU and OMC issues and the project's intentions to help primary stakeholders to understand and contribute to the EU social inclusion policy. What is more, while *Get Heard* was one of the tools of the OMC in the UK which had the objective to approach local concerns as European concerns and to call for actions towards EU common objectives, there was no reference to the method in the workshops nor did grassroots participants appear to be aware of an antipoverty process across the EU. Key actors confirmed that 'a lot of people in the UK did not know [the EU/OMC's role]. We knew it because we are activists and we are working in Europe' (Interview in London 05.02.2010). Interviews with other participants, such as the member of the APNC presented in earlier sections of this chapter, produced similar empirical evidence (e.g. Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010):

> Maybe the EU was behind the project but I did not recognise it. I have never heard any mentioning of the EU … I am aware of the NAPs and the *Get Heard* but I did not know that these were coming from Europe.

Concerning the *Get Heard* process, five workshops took place at the Migrants Resource Centre (MRC) in London. As part of *Get Heard*, the workshops focused on raising awareness among people in poverty about the NAPs and on enabling them 'to give their views and to inform the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006' (MRC 2006: 6). The participants discussed both external barriers (injustice, racism) and internal barriers (lack of money, difficulties to find jobs) to inclusion. They criticised the British government on issues such as low benefits, tolerance of the mass media's denigrating portrayal of migrants. At the same time they praised the project for facilitating access to health, legal aid and education facilities. However, despite the detailed analysis of social exclusion, the report (MRC 2006) did not make reference to the perspectives that the EU offers on combating poverty, exclusion and discrimination.

One of the most detailed reports on *Get Heard* has been published by the Merseyside Social Inclusion Observatory (MSIO). This 103 page-long report showed the experiences, findings and recommendations of 'more than 320 participants with direct experience of social exclusion or poverty in a number of workshops across Merseyside' (MSIO 2005: 7). It also contained detailed information on the methodology and the organisations, networks and authorities which participated as well as the steering group. The major part of the report was dedicated to the

workshops. It put forwards the views of groups of primary stakeholders[45] and was structured around the above mentioned three main questions which had been set by the *Get Heard* toolkit. Moreover, the report offered a more extensive background of the NAP process than the *Get Heard* toolkit and additionally referred to the Laeken indicators (Appendix 2) and the SPTF. The role of the EU was briefly mentioned by the report and reference was made to the OMC as the tool which would help to achieve the Lisbon strategy's objective 'to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010' (MSIO 2005: 22).

Regarding the expertise of organisations which facilitated the project in Merseyside, information events took place before the workshops and conferences. The events were delivered by the Merseyside Network for Europe (MNE) (*ibid*: 25). According to the official website of the MNE, one of its core objectives is to provide 'information services to the Voluntary and Community sector covering a wider field of European affairs'[46]. Despite all these, throughout the rest of the MSIO report, the EU was mentioned only four times[47] mainly because of Merseyside's classification as an Objective 1 region under the Structural Funds. The report made no other reference to the EU or the OMC.

The analysis of the final report of the *Get Heard* project (annexed to the NSR 2006-2008), which summarised the issues raised in all workshops around the UK, confirmed the fact that there were no discussions of the EU's involvement (UKCAP

[45] Children and families, young people, working age adults, people in unemployment or/ and on benefits, older people, Black and Racial Minority ethnic communities (BRM), Irish community and Irish Travellers, gender and social exclusion, refugees and asylum seekers, disability, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans groups (LGBT), mental health and social exclusion, homelessness (MSIO 2005)
[46] http://www.merseynetwork.com/, section: 'What we do'. Accessed December 17, 2011
[47] These references to the EU were not made by the participants but by the author of the report for reasons of providing information to the reader.

2006). Participants lacked any awareness of the OMC and/or the role which the EU had played in the fight against poverty. The lack of awareness had been clearer in part 3 of the report which provided 'an opportunity to see what unique or particular issues were raised by groups of participants with experience of particular types of exclusion' (UKCAP 2006). This part did not make any reference either to the OMC or EU.

3.4.2.2 Bridging The Policy Gap

Get Heard has been the major project in terms of participation of people with direct experience of social deprivation. However, other important participatory projects have also been funded under the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002 – 2006 and initiated by the EU in the context of the OMC. A notable example has been the *Bridging the Policy Gap* (BTPG). Similar to the *Get Heard*, one of the objectives of BTPG was aiming 'to raise awareness of European Union social inclusion processes (and their relevance to the UK) among a range of key stakeholders' (Poverty Alliance web-portal)[48].

Prior to the launch of the BTPG project, the low visibility of the EU process on social inclusion issues was the driving force behind the European Commission's (2006) call for proposals regarding *National Awareness Raising Actions on Social*

[48] (http://www.povertyalliance.org/btpg/html/project/objectives.asp, according to the other three objectives the BTPG was also aiming to 'shift the culture and attitude within statutory agencies towards stakeholder dialogue on issues of policy formation and implementation; to address the "implementation gap" of social exclusion policies by improving communication between different levels of government, and within a wider range of stakeholders, including people with experience of poverty; and to contribute to the development and evaluation of participatory mechanisms for mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation of practical anti-poverty strategies within the framework of the National Action Plan on social inclusion (NAP)'. Accessed 17.12.2011

Inclusion. Thus the Commission was allocating funding in order to highlight the need for stakeholders' involvement as a means to achieve its objective of

> improving information and raising awareness among concerned stakeholders and the wider public about the relevance of the European Union's social inclusion and the social protection processes with regard to the efforts undertaken at national level to prevent and reduce poverty and social exclusion (European Commission 2006).

In the context of this programme, the proposal which was selected from the UK was the BTPG which had been submitted by the Scottish anti-poverty network Poverty Alliance. Compliant with the source of funding, the project's overall target was 'to increase awareness of European action in the field of social inclusion and social protection' (BTPG 2008: 2). According to the final report of the BTPG project, the attempted awareness raising of EU action had been achieved though participation of people and organisations:

> The project put participation at the heart of the awareness raising work; achieving increased awareness through actively engaging a cross-section of people and organisations in the development and evaluation of policies designed to tackle poverty and social exclusion at the local level (*ibid*.).

Moreover, the project adopted the 'European concept of a "Peer Review" as a basic structure that allowed for thoughtful and reflective discussion amongst participants' (Armstrong 2010: 184; EAPN-EU 2009: 65). The Peer Reviews were organised in

three different local authorities (Swansea, Newham, and Glasgow) with 300 participants (*ibid.*). For example, in Glasgow a two-day event brought together fifty participants in October 2007. The participants were local, regional or central government officials, NGOs, academics and people who experienced poverty (BTPG 2008d). Similar groups of representatives participated in the events in Newham and Swansea. Like the *Get Heard* reports, the BTPG also confirmed that the whole NAP process was applied in the context of the OMC through which the EU was intending 'to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010' (BTPG 2008d: 4).

However, despite the objectives of the Commission and the project's claims of awareness raising, participants who actually discussed complex OMC issues (such as minimum income schemes and labour market participation) did so without knowing that these issues were related to the OMC and without considering the EU level. These effects of the OMC have been defined as 'capillary effects' (PPMI 2011: 9). According to this term, 'the actors use many concepts and themes with clear linkages to the OMC (flexicurity, active ageing, active inclusion, multi-dimensional of poverty and exclusion, at-risk-of-poverty rate, child poverty or placement rate, etc.), but often without recognising such linkages' (*ibid.*).

As in the case of *Get Heard*, the final report of the BTPG incorporated the findings of the three Peer Reviews. These finding were annexed in the NSR 2008-2010 (annex 2.8). Once again, the focus was on the relations, lessons, and findings at the different levels from the 'local experience' to the 'national policy' but omitted the EU dimension (BTPG 2008a).

3.4.2.3 An open but invisible method

The above mentioned reports and the new empirical findings all confirm the invisibility of the EU and its OMC despite the openness of the method (de la Porte 2010; Armstrong *et al*. 2008: 439; Frazer and Marlier 2008b; see also chapter 1). It seems that both *Get Heard* and BTPG have failed to meet one of their core objectives, namely the raising of awareness of the EU processes and the NAPs in the social inclusion field (see also Pemberton 2008). In fact, the structure of the workshops has not facilitated the awareness raising of the OMC/EU. As the analysis of the interviews and reports' showed, the projects were actually structured around questions about the local, regional and national level. This was a multi-level approach of poverty and social exclusion but it excluded the EU level. As representatives from involved organisations argued in interviews (e.g. Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010) they regarded the projects as exclusively UK-driven.

Anti-poverty associations, which were assigned to implement the project, were arguing that they are specialists in EU issues, proponents of the mobilisation of grassroots actors and fully aware of the OMC. However, as the field work for this thesis showed, only some but not all of the people who worked for anti-poverty associations were aware of the EU and its OMC. The majority of the participants were not aware of the OMC. According to one interviewee 'actually there are not many people who know about the [OMC] process anyway' (Interview in London 16.02.2010a).

This lack of 'stakeholder visibility' (de la Porte 2010: 10; see also chapter 1) of the OMC was also the result of insufficient funding e.g. for the Scottish network) or no funding (as was the case for the English network). In those terms, the UK anti-poverty networks are still weak whereas, 'obviously in a country where you got a strong network of organisations that know about the EU issues, there will be more transparency, more understanding for the EU' (Interview in London 16.02.2010a). All these issues are reflected in the following citation from an interview with a primary stakeholder in London (16.02.2010b):

> Often what happens is that the originators will diffuse it down to organisations who will then ask the people who work in these organisations at various locations to run workshops on a specific issue without necessarily giving them the background of where it's all come from and where it's all going back to. It is lack of information sharing, lack of clarity.

However, even people who are fully aware of the process and work for the anti-poverty NGOs and networks do not consider the diffusion of this awareness an easy task, nor do they think that this is an essential issue. Thus, on the one hand they argue that such a process would require 'resources [i.e. funding] and time' which are currently not available (Interview in London 05.02.2010). On the other hand, they perceive the feedback from the projects as 'feedback for the UK' and not for the EU (*ibid*.).

This statement confirms the previously mentioned issue according to which even members of EU oriented organisations (in this case, the EAPN-EU) do not prioritise

the EU dimension. This happens either in order to avoid complexity or because of time and funding resources. It also seems to dissociate efforts at EU level from efforts at national level. A similar statement was made in another interview by the representative of another notable NGO (i.e. the ATD-Fourth World) involved in the *Get Heard*:

> The thing is to break it down. That's the main difficulty because the NAP is supposed to be presenting action taken *in the country* against poverty.[…] The fact is that it is part of the EU process but the dialogue is not about the EU, it's not about an EU process… (Interview in London 16.02.2010)

Overall, the knowledge about the EU's involvement of some of the key actors does not seem to have been diffused to grassroots participants. Antipoverty organisations and networks did not communicate the involvement of the EU/OMC to the primary stakeholders. This seemed to happen for reasons of time and money resources, as well as for the simplification of information, and the preparation provided by the associations to the grassroots participants before their participation (Interviews in London 05.02.2010, 16.02.2010a and 16.02.2010b). Apart from this, even if they acknowledged the role of the EU behind the launch of the project, they did not feel the need to return the feedback to the EU.

Despite their potential, the projects did not eventually raise the participants' awareness of the EU framework. The use of this framework could have been a framework for socialisation. One of the initial aims of these OMC projects was involving awareness on 'common European concerns' and actions according to

‘common European objectives’ (chapter 1 section 1.2.5). However, neither were the European common concerns and objectives apparent nor were the EU institutions perceived as relevant in the workshops.

3.5 Shortcomings in participation.

The above analysis of participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the NAPs process reflects the satisfaction of the participants regarding their participation in the policy-making process. However, the picture would not be completed if drawbacks in the participation were not taken into consideration. An important issue which is a drawback in participation is the (unsuccessful) effort by the government to institutionalise the on-going dialogue with primary and secondary stakeholders. Another issue refers to the NGOs and networks’ criticisms to the government regarding whether wide numbers of primary stakeholders are really represented in this dialogue. These issues will be discussed in sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 respectively.

3.5.1 Towards a formal participatory process.

Until 2010 the SPTF was a working group that had the opportunity to work together with the UK government and more specifically with the DWP. Since the process of the dialogue between the DWP and the SPTF had not yet been formalised at that point, the DWP took a step towards its formalisation by planning to establish a new group, the Social Inclusion Advisory Group (SIAG). Interviews with secondary

stakeholders (e.g. Interview in London 16.02.2010a) who were invited to be members of the SIAG revealed further details about this initiative:

> The Social Inclusion Advisory Group would have different levels. So the one part would be the governmental level, the representatives from each governmental department and then an advisory group which has representatives from NGOs, academics and people experiencing poverty. But there has been this consultation, saying that 'okay, you have an advisory group, you've got like twenty members and two of them are experiencing poverty. Who are they going to represent? Are they representing poor people? Are they representing themselves? Are they representing their organisations?' So it was decided that this was not enough, not sufficient … There should be a third space, a forum where the people in poverty would come together and would be able to discuss the issues that the advisory groups are working on and then feed into the advisory group.

The conditional tense which the respondent used to describe the SIAG's establishment has probably already revealed the outcome of the DWP plans. According to the research carried out for this thesis, the idea for the establishment of the group started with the change in leadership of the Social Inclusion team in the DWP (Interview in Liverpool 24.03.2010). It was actually the idea of the new team leader. At the time, however, some secondary stakeholders appeared concerned about whether this new leader would be as committed as the previous one. The previous team leader, who was eventually replaced, was known because of:

> his commitment and his knowledge … and his experience and also his empathy with the subject … he had started from a street level and worked his way up rather than coming to us as high-flyer (*ibid*.).

Therefore, the commitment of one senior officer was a very important factor behind participation of the SPTF in the dialogue with the government. This prompts towards a new look at the picture of the Europeanisation of the British public policy. Apart from the secondary stakeholders (or actually, together with them), DWP senior officers also responded positively to the OMC pressures for participation. Therefore, as has been shown in chapter 1, the lack of sanctions does not necessarily mean that the OMC is ineffective. According to Vanhercke (2010: 133), the change via the OMC depends on the ability of the domestic actors to appropriate creatively the OMC's toolkit (i.e. objectives, concepts, indicators etc.) 'for their own purposes and independent policy initiatives'. It seems that due to their position in the DWP's Social Inclusion Team, senior officers were able to make use of the OMC's provisions for participation.

Regarding the SIAG, to the disappointment of the concerned stakeholders, neither the 'third space' for the participation of primary stakeholders was introduced, nor did the newly established SIAG managed to replace the SPTF. The preparations for general elections had a negative effect on participation in particular but also on the whole social inclusion process in general. As the coordinator of the UKCAP revealed in an interview in Liverpool (10.03.2010):

> To my knowledge the SIAG has not met. The SPTF hasn't met either since last year some time. I think they had a final meeting in January of this year [2011] just to get together. But there has been no news since. This had been one of our greatest fears because this year is the EU year to combat poverty and all the mechanisms that we had are not happening. We are waiting for the general election in this country and what normally happens is when the general election is called it is like a shut down; nothing happens. And I think the civil servants have been expecting that the general election will be called soon and no new mechanisms have been put in place in case a new government comes in and changes everything.

This citation flags up again the importance of issues of partisan politics. It is an important issue also in Greece as will be explained in chapter 4. Returning to the SIAG, according to Schönheinz (*forthcoming*), the group which met with the DWP twice since its establishment in June 2010, had its funding cut due to the financial crisis. Therefore, plans for greater and more formalised stakeholder involvement have been put on ice since the Conservative-Liberal coalition government has implemented its austerity budget.

3.5.2 A non-inclusive participation

When analysing participation and the possible cognitive changes that it produces, it is important to answer the question 'who actually participates?' Why do certain people take part in conferences, projects, consultations, round-tables and meetings with policymakers and not others? It has been argued that socially excluded people

are labelled as such because they are excluded from every practise of the society including the participation in the policy-making process (e.g. CEFET 2007). In other words, 'excluded people – by definition – do not have an organized voice in framing policy or shaping programmes, articulating need or conferring' (*ibid*: 3). This form of political exclusion has implications for active citizenship and the right of dignity (Bassett and Walsh 2011). The NGOs acknowledge that people in social exclusion rarely decide to get involved in political activities and to go to organisations with the intention of getting involved (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010).

In some cases organisations have criticised the British government's efforts as well its claims for wide participation, for example, in the NAP 2008-2010. Anti-poverty networks have accused the British government of abandoning the effort to involve people in combating exclusion, by substituting excluded people with 'people already *included* but with multiple disadvantages' (CEFET 2007: 3 –emphasis in the original). An issue which has been raised is that instead of facilitating the participation of excluded people, policy-makers are looking for disadvantaged people assuming that they are facing social exclusion. According to this criticism, the criteria that policy-makers consider as disadvantages are 'mainly demographic categories (black or minority ethnic, disabled, single-parents…) [which] do not however in *themselves* constitute exclusion' (*ibid*: 4, emphasis in the original). Contrary to policy-makers' beliefs, organisations conceptualise social exclusion as something which,

> [b]y definition … relates people or communities that are beyond their [statutory agencies'] grasp – if the agencies were working with them they would not be excluded! (*ibid.*).

As a consequence, the organisations have urged the government to avoid presuppositions on who is potentially excluded and to approach the issue of exclusion on a case-by-case basis. In fact, this approach refers to an ideal representation and assumes that all forms of social exclusion should be taken seriously in the policy-making process. The truth is that participation through the OMC works differently in reality.

Apart from the above arguments, the interviews with primary stakeholders carried out for this thesis, have also shown that not everyone has the same opportunities to express his/her concerns and to influence the decision-making process. The anti-poverty associations acknowledge these issues. Nevertheless, they try to act on behalf of as many people as possible while attempting to represent as many forms of poverty and social exclusion as their limited resources allow them to do. Additionally, they have prioritised actions to search for the socially excluded and to motivate them to participate (see, for example, ATD Fourth World 2000).

The fieldwork of this thesis shows that once the opportunities for participation are offered by policy-makers, those who often decide who will participate are NGOs, networks and organised grassroots communities. Their decision may depend on the participation project and the size and experience of the NGOs. For example, an NGO which has a long tradition in organising projects with the involvement of primary

stakeholders, people in poverty can be at the same time organisers and participants of conferences and round tables (Interview in London 15.12.2009). In terms of participation in meetings, conferences, and round tables, one of the main criteria is the ability of the participant to speak on behalf of a wider group of vulnerable people. Thus:

> It is more about where people are in their life. In short, for us, it's important that people are in a sort of position where they are not just speaking about themselves, exposing themselves and their own problems. You know, it is people who have managed to be in a sort of position where they can reflect a little bit, so to speak, on behalf of other people. That, for us, would be a criterion. That someone is not consumed with their own situation, so consumed with their own troubles that they can step out of that to speak (Interview in London 16.02.2010a)

It is not clear why people who are 'consumed with their own situation' are not offered opportunities to participate. However, other organisations do not have these criteria. They claim that they try to offer opportunities for participation to as many people as possible:

> This is the limit of representation; you can never represent everyone… People who participate are not necessarily better off because, some of them - we identify them, we approach them, we encourage them to participate - some are very shy, they don't have confidence. And we actually search for the minority because other people will have the confidence, will find a way

> to speak up, to go to consultations, to write to their MP etcetera. Actually, we try to find people who don't usually come forward who would not take part, who have actually never taken part in their lives. (Interview in London 05.02.2010).

These shortcomings illustrate the fact that the emerged participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the British policy-making process in the period between 2001 and 2010 was far from being considered as ideal types of democratic governance some of which were discussed in chapter 1. Nevertheless, the fact that not everyone can be represented in the SPTF and the fact that the SPTF ceased its operations in 2010 –and was not reactivated in a similar fashion ever since– do not mean that within the timeframe of the present thesis participation was not satisfactory, at least for the primary and secondary stakeholders. Thus, the following section intends to see whether participation was able to redirect participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties.

3.6 Expectations, political activities and loyalties

3.6.1 The domestic level

Regardless of the issue of unawareness of the EU's role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, participation triggered by the OMC had indeed had an impact on the participants. As the report of a series of workshops for the *Get Heard* project acknowledged, 'the atmosphere in each [workshop] was one of excitement … There was a sense of solidarity, a belief that together we can support each other and have a

stronger voice' (MRC 2006: 4). The same report offered an overview of the participants' feelings after their participation. According to the report, participants valued their participation as positive. They spoke about the respect they received and stated that this form of participation gave them confidence, information about their legal rights, opportunities and encouragement to speak up regarding their problems (*ibid.*). Regarding their expectations, the report showed that participants expressed the strong belief that they will be taken into account when the policy is planned (*ibid.*). Interviewees also argued that the participation established by the OMC indeed changed participants' attitudes (e.g. Interview in London 05.02.2010):

> In a number of events that we took part in, at the beginning you can see that people are very careful and they keep the distance from you. But once they start taking part in the conference they come forward and they say 'Oh! We did not know that. Oh! That is how things are…' and then by the end of the event they become so supportive and they change their views. So this is for us the importance of participation. Because it raises awareness and it changes public attitudes.

In fact, as the cases of *Get Heard* and BTPG have shown, awareness raising (at least in regards to the EU framework) has not been the main outcome of participation. However, both the above cited report and interview offered evidence about a type of loyalties to a community, a sense of solidarity and a process of empowerment for the participants. In order to better understand these changes, the same interviewee was asked to explain more explicitly their nature (*ibid.*):

> So, yes, we came together and our voices got heard [by the policy-makers]. I think for a lot of people they had the sense of solidarity that we are not alone. There were other people who came with them and together they felt support. That's why we called it 'Stronger Voice' [i.e. the name of this series of workshops]. Because after the conference when people were asked about it they said: 'Well, it was really good. We talked together and we felt that together we can have a stronger voice'.

Thus, loyalties to an emerging community were a very important outcome of the coming-together of the participants. The transformation from feeling socially excluded, to loyalties was followed by solidarity and empowerment. Regarding solidarity, this was not a form of passive solidarity in the sense of receiving attention from other stakeholders. On the contrary, what seems to have emerged is an active form of solidarity in the sense of active support for other participants. Therefore, at the beginning of the workshops,

> every participant has their own priorities; they are talking about their stories. But by the end of every event people become supportive, they are talking to us, we have been together in the event, and they put some of our priorities in their list of priorities. And this for us is a success; this is how we change public attitudes (*ibid.*).

Once primary stakeholders saw there were opportunities for participation, once they felt that their voices could indeed be heard, they felt part of a community and they expressed loyalties to that community. They raised their expectations and started

being engaged in political activities which were intended to improve not only their own situation but also the situation of the whole community within which they were working. In other words,

> once people heard that it was possible to do something about it [social exclusion], they tried to raise it to the press, to the policy-makers, to the House of Commons, they discussed amongst the groups. So, people started to come forward … People who had no idea before started to come back and they took part in other activities, they invited us to their activities and this has created something new! For us it is encouraging, it is positive (*ibid.*).

However, the emerging community and the changes in expectations, political activities and loyalties did not entail any 'European' specification. Since participation in OMC activities took place without any awareness of an EU framework (see section 3.5 in this chapter), these changes were not developed into shifts of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. It seems that when domestic participation does not entail awareness of the EU framework then the expectations, political activities and loyalties cannot be identified as having shifted from national to the EU level. As the analysis of *Get Heard* and BTPG projects showed (section 3.5 above), the existence of European common concerns and objectives is due to the invisibility of the social inclusion OMC for the grassroots participants. Therefore a process of socialisation under an EU framework did not take place.

However, this is not the case among the members of the SPTF. Those who participated in the activities of the SPTF, were all well aware of the role of the social inclusion OMC in the mobilisation of stakeholders in the UK. The former Deputy Director of the EAPN-UK admitted that changes in expectations, political activities and loyalties among the participants in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects were emerging for the first time since 'there was no established formula [for participation] before' (Interview in London 05.02.2010). For the interviewee, it was due to the OMC framework that people started to participate and experienced changes in their attitudes and awareness of the common concerns of a wider community of people.

This arguably shows the impact of the OMC on the attitudes of the primary and secondary stakeholders who participate in the social inclusion policy-making process through the SPTF. Empirical evidence put forward in this thesis has shown that positive evaluation of the importance of the OMC's application and, through this, of the role of the EU comes mainly from these stakeholders. Owing to the OMC, stakeholders who were participating in the SPTF appeared to evaluate the EU as an institution which changed government's attitudes towards the mobilisation of people in poverty and anti-poverty associations (Interview in Nottingham 24.01.2009; Interview in London 16.02.2010a). As was shown in part 3.4.1 above, the establishment of participation in an on-going dialogue with policy-makers has given a recognised position to the members of the SPTF (i.e. primary and secondary stakeholders) at the domestic level. De la Porte and Pochet (2005) have argued that anti-poverty associations seek to be more active in the OMC framework since this is offering more opportunities for participation than the pre-OMC domestic framework (see also chapter 1). Therefore, the opportunities for participation for both the

secondary and primary stakeholders created enthusiasm among these people (see also part 3.4.1). This enthusiasm emerged after an evaluation of the benefits which the OMC offered to the domestic social inclusion strategy. In other words, participation *per se* has been a main reason for the positive rational assessment of the EU. Furthermore, the stakeholders who assessed the EU framework positively redirected their expectations towards the EU level. SPTF's primary and secondary stakeholders saw it as a framework which they could use to put pressure on domestic public policy-makers to bring about improvements through the social inclusion strategy. In other words:

> because it [i.e. the OMC] is out there, it has been an objective of the way of designing policy. It is small steps in a long process. They [i.e. stakeholders] can go to EU and you can go to EU and say: Look what has happened (Interview in Nottingham 24.01.2009).

Another interviewee explained the expectations that stakeholders had about the EU level as follows:

> I think people believe there is an increasing role for Europe. And as a member of the EU, the UK has to take some of the European policies. As I said, there are some good policies at the EU level. The governments are not adopting all of them. People hope that, yes, Europe will be able to add value, improve some of the policies and the UK cannot keep saying no to all European policies. There will be times when the UK will be embarrassed and

> adopt policies, accept European policies and implement them (Interview in London 05.02.2010).

The representative from the UKCAP argued in an interview conducted for this thesis in Liverpool (24.03.2010) that prior to the OMC the EU was intending to combat poverty mainly through allocation of funds. On the contrary, the OMC has turned out to be efficient in facilitating the primary and secondary stakeholders in an effort to influence domestic and –through the EU level umbrella networks– European policy-making. This resulted in the redirection of their expectations and their political activities towards the EU level. It is not only the EAPN-UK and organisations such as the OSW which partner with EU level networks. This partnership with EU oriented organisations is a domestic process as well. As the above interviewee acknowledged,

> We are purely concerned with UK policy; although we partner with organisations because we know that a lot of UK policy is governed by the EU. Because the Social Inclusion Unit. DWP is reporting to Europe with the NAP. (*ibid.*).

Stakeholders participating in the SPTF appeared to redirect their expectations and political activities towards the EU level due to the promotion of participation which the EU framework offered to them. According to the analytical framework introduced in chapter 1, this type of redirection emerges after the analysis of the benefits that the EU framework appears capable to offer. In this sense, the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU is not

emerging after a process of socialisation with the EU norms. It is not related to its web of meanings as Shore (2000) argues when referring to attitudes (see also chapter 1 section 1.2.4). The preference for the EU emerged after the positive evaluation of the benefits that the EU has provided for the purposes of the anti-poverty associations and for the people that these associations work for. Therefore, in the case of participation in the domestic application of the OMC it is safe to argue that there is a redirection of expectations and political activities based on rational reasons.

Finally, as said in the analytical framework of chapter 1, loyalties to the EU have been expected to decrease because of the declining social progress which resulted from the financial crisis that started in 2008. In 2010, the British Government adopted an austerity budget and a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) which, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, is expected to 'hit the poor hardest' *(The Guardian* 21.10.2010; IFS 21.10.2010). However, the dynamics of the OMC are surprising. One representative of one anti-poverty association in the UK reiterated his positive stance towards the OMC and the added value it generated through the participation of secondary and primary stakeholders. He explained as follows how this tool should be used in the financial crisis:

> I think that one of the major contributions of the EU and the OMC is that poverty has been on the political agenda of every member state. And we have the 2010 [European year of combating poverty and] the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this context the governments have to justify the measures they take, how they address poverty. But in this crisis, these policy changes have

> started going into a different direction. But we should see the OMC as one more front to argue on by organising international campaigns, street demonstrations and lobbying against the cuts and have direct talks with the government (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010).

This citation serves as an indication of the changes in attitudes in the UK regarding the EU. Expectations and political activities appeared not only to shift to the EU level for long periods but they remained at that level even in the period of the financial crisis. This is a strong indication of loyalties towards the EU since expectations and political activities were redirected towards the EU for long periods (Haas 1958). Especially, the persistence of these redirections in times of financial crisis shows that British (primary and secondary) stakeholders have expressed loyalties towards the EU.

While one of the social inclusion OMC's primary concerns has been the promotion of participatory practices within the member states (domestic level), chapter 1 has shown that the method has brought together primary stakeholders at the EU level. Prominent cases are the annual European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP). As has been argued in chapter 1, these meetings provide a good case to 'test' participants' attitudes towards the EU. Section 3.4 of this chapter showed that participation in domestic-level projects, which were actually driven by the EU, was not always followed by the visibility of the undisputable role of the OMC/EU in setting up particular workshops and in the field of social inclusion in general. Consequently, participating stakeholders were unaware of the European framework. In contrast to the domestic-level projects, the EMPEP provided a clearer view of the

EU's role in organising conferences and combating social exclusion. They referred to participation at the EU level (in contrast to participation at the domestic level which failed to mention the EU level) and can therefore be tested regarding their impacts on the participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. The next part intends to assess whether participation in an EU-level project where the OMC/EU's role is acknowledged will lead to the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic towards the EU level.

3.6.2 The EU level

The shifting expectations, political activities and loyalties of stakeholders who participated in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects did not relate to changes that entailed the redirection from the national to EU level. In general, the participants were unaware of the EU framework which had promoted their participation. However, stakeholder participation in conferences at which the role of the EU was explicitly acknowledged (i.e. EMPEP), has triggered partial redirection of expectations and political activities from the national to the EU level. Empirical evidence gathered from interviews shows that:

> the European conference [i.e. EMPEP] is the boost to their [i.e. participants'] confidence and it helped them to change. I mean, some of them were encouraged, after that, to start other activist work. Actually, all the people who took part started to become more active and interested in acquiring skills. All of those people! Now, they enjoyed that role and they felt, well there is a role for them and they can do something … they thought that there

> are other people like their selves in Europe and they are not the only ones. So, it created a form of solidarity and, I think, it helped their confidence in a way that they found out that not everyone is against them and there are a lot of people who are interested in listening to them (Interview in London 05.02.2010).

Like in the case of the domestic projects (i.e. *Get Heard* and BTPG) participation in these EU conferences created loyalties to a community. However, this time the loyalties were strongly connected to a European community. Thus, participants came to realise that they belonged to a community –although this time the community was specifically the European. Therefore, loyalties appeared to emerge towards the EU. These loyalties were not based on rational assessment of the EU since they were not the outcome of long-term redirections of expectations. Due to the fact that a process of participation started also domestically, participants seemed to expect more from the domestic level than the European (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010). As shown earlier in this chapter, participants in the *Get Heard* project expected domestic policy-makers to take into account their views and concerns (MRC 2006; see section 3.6.1 above). Instead, participants seemed to redirect their loyalties after a process of socialisation under EU concerns and common EU objectives.

Primary stakeholders realised through participation in projects at EU level that their concerns were not only the concerns of a certain group in a local, regional or national community. Instead they became aware that these were common European concerns when people came together and discussed common solutions. The issues that were

discussed in the EU's Brussels conferences were common for all the participants. In other words:

> [t]here were three themes [i.e. housing, basic services, financial inclusion], and we had to break them down. Individually we had to go around the room, we had the problem, the obstacle and we discussed how to combat it (*ibid*.).

However, the perception of an EU community was not only based on the perception of common concerns but it also served as the basis for the common expression of political actions. Thus, as the report from the ninth European meeting in Brussels reveals, according to the participants, issues such as child poverty, families in social exclusion and even participation of primary and secondary stakeholders had to be addressed at the European level (Ninth EMPEP 2010). For example, the participants demanded from the EU 'to support families because family is the society's driving force' (*ibid*: 18). They also argued that '[t]he legacy of EU 2010[49] should be that the proposed poverty platform [i.e. *European platform against poverty*] involves all relevant stakeholders, with people experiencing poverty at the heart of this' (*ibid*: 19). Finally, one of the main priorities identified by the participants was the building of a 'Europe for all' (*ibid*: 19). These last remarks showed that participants were not only aware of the EU but they were also ready to shift their loyalties to the EU which was a community that could include them.

In accordance with the analytical framework put forward in chapter 1 (section 1.2.5) these common concerns and objectives do indeed appear to have triggered the vision

[49] Reference to the year of the succession of the Lisbon strategy by the strategy Europe 2020

of the EU as an 'entity' and as a 'community of destiny' (Haahr 2004: 224; Jacobsson 2004) in the eyes of the participants. There are important differences among the participants in terms of the forms of social exclusion from which they suffer and in terms of the different welfare provisions to which they are entitled to in the member states in which they live. However, it seems that people are coming together within a community after the realisation of the similarities that their situations bear. As one interviewee pointed out:

> They might be surprised by the actual differences in laws, differences in participation but then people usually have an affinity with each other in terms of the things they have in common. And that even happens when people from Europe meet people from developing nations where obviously, materially, things are different but the effects that poverty has on the people - people getting humiliated or treated without respect. These kinds of things, transcend the countries or the cultures (Interview in London 16.02.2010a)

Participants appeared willing to strengthen the new community that emerged. This was the reason why participants demanded the sharing of information on good practices among the member states. In this way they expected that mutual learning would not only diffuse practices to domestic settings which lagged behind, but that it would also make the EU able to 'communicate its actions properly' (Ninth EMPEP 2010: 15).

In addition to the common concerns and common objectives, other important evidence of the existence of loyalties to the EU was the fact that participants realised

that ‘not everyone is against them and there are a lot of people who are interested in listing to them’ (Interview in London 05.02.2010). Through the Brussels conferences the participants felt that a wider EU community was including them; it listened to their concerns and it discussed common solutions. People saw this process as a European process (Interview in Nottingham 24.01.2009).

However, this empirical finding should not be overestimated in terms of its outcome. As the reports acknowledge, policy-makers’ attendance in these meetings has always been disappointing for the participants. For these reasons, anti-poverty organisations intended in advance to moderate participants’ potential expectations about the EU as will be shown below.

In fact, certain constraints exist which prevent a radical redirection of political activities and loyalties towards the EU level. For example, solidarity between participants was only built in the conference. It lasted only as long as the conference was taking place. A participant of the 2009 Brussels conference stated that she was still keeping in touch with some participants from Germany. However, this was more like an exchange of information about things that were happening at the domestic level rather than collective activist work to raise issues at the EU level (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010). However, forms of active solidarity emerged among the UK delegates who attended the events in Brussels. This again can be seen as empowerment which led to the creation of political activities which, however, are directed primarily to the domestic level. As one interviewee explained:

> I know that one of the effects was that after the conference they became quite close to the other delegates that they went with, who were from other organisations. I know the guy from ATD. He kept on going to the MRC, on returning he got involved in their course. That was a positive thing; that was different (Interview in London 16.02.2010a).

This statement shows the persistence of the domestic level for political activities and expectations. This was confirmed by another participant of the Brussels conferences who stated:

> I am interested in the EU but I have not pursued my interests. There is too much going on in my life and in my region … I would like to think European in the future, definitely. But because I am coping with my own life, living still in poverty, it is hard to think abstractly European ... I should be thinking as a European citizen the way I think as a British citizen, what laws and policies are affecting us, individually or as groups. I know that everything comes from Europe but… (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010)

Importantly, this statement came from a participant who participated in EU-level conferences more than once. The repeated participation at EU conference in Brussels may generate greater loyalties towards the EU than one-off participation. Another participant argued that her loyalties shifted from the domestic towards the EU level through her repeated involvement in Europe-wide participation projects, particularly roundtables and conferences (Interview in London 16.02.2010b). However, her expectations towards the EU were moderate and followed by significant fears about

possible EU decisions that might have a negative impact on the fight against social exclusion:

> Before all this started, it [Europe] was a place I'd like to go on holidays, I would like to go abroad and discover the people and the cultures. But when this [i.e. her involvement] begun, I begun to realise that there were dangers and advantages in having a unified Europe. The danger is if it becomes really radical right-wing and everybody begins to follow it. And the advantage is, more voices more power. You know, a lot of people saying things, but they have to say the right thing. It's important, when you are fighting poverty to have a unified voice to use because it is life changing, it is world changing. (Interview in London 16.02.2010b)

The fact that participants have raised fears about the possible different directions of EU policies confirms that they have come to realise the role of the EU in their daily life. In this sense, the above stated citation reveals that the EU is becoming *salient* in people's lives. As was argued in chapter 1, the more the EU is becoming salient in the daily life of people, the more those people are expected to develop EU-related community feelings. However, what emerged from the interviews about the EU conferences is that the involved stakeholders are disappointed that their participation does not result in policies (or changes of policies) whose impact can be experienced in their daily life. In fact, secondary stakeholders acknowledged that socially excluded people have a lot of expectations before and after their participation at EU level participatory projects. However, anti-poverty NGOs and networks appear

proactive when moderating such expectations. The reasons for this moderation were explained by one interviewee as follows:

> We have to manage their [i.e. participants'] expectations and say to them: 'This is an opportunity for you to raise your voice, your opinion, to speak up, to share your experiences with lots of people like yourself in Europe. And lots of policy-makers will listen. You may not change their [i.e. policy-makers'] views or their policies. But at least you might influence them. And this is an opportunity [for you]' ... Participants know it is a long process. I do not think they believe that this is going to change policy at once. They know that it is not an easy process, that policies are developed over time. They hope that they can influence policy-makers and they may bring about changes. But I do not think they felt, 'Wow, my life will change'. No, we are not under that illusion. (Interview in London 05.02.2010)

The moderation of expectations of the people in poverty who participate in EU level activities takes place in particular in respect to participation's ability to affect policy outcomes. In some extreme cases, the lack of apparent policy outcomes has made anti-poverty organisations question the value of their participation in EU level activities. In general, there is evidence that some NGOs have advised participants to take advantage of the opportunity to participate but to avoid seeing it as their only way of action. In other words, participation in EU level activities is not seen as the only way for primary stakeholders to influence positively public policy. According to anti-poverty associations such as the Poverty Alliance, people should use

participation in EU level activities in addition to other tools such as lobbying, campaigns and even street protests.

> I think that the people in poverty who go there year after year, I think we should expect that there is going to be some disappointment. For some people the question of policy change over the last ten years has been a poor one. So they are not satisfied only because their voices are heard; they also want policy change. I think this ends in disappointment because poverty in Europe has not declined as a result of the OMC or the Lisbon strategy. So I think there is disappointment. And I think what we have to do in our organisations is to try to support participation, try to show the benefits but do not oversell expectations. So I think participation is as much about civil society engaging people in poverty in the public policy [process] as much it is about people lobbying directly politicians to act against poverty in communities, at national level… And changes will come. We emphasise not only direct participation but also campaigns and direct lobbying of politicians. Change will not only come through participation. (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010)

The rational assessment of the EU has led to the disappointment of the British delegates to the EU conferences. However, as shown above, participants have expressed loyalties to the EU mainly as a result of their socialisation under common concerns and objectives. Before the case of Greece is presented, the last part of this chapter will draw the conclusion of the British case study.

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the UK in the social inclusion OMC and its impact on their expectations, political activities and loyalties. Following the analytical and methodological framework put forward in chapter 1, this chapter has used a qualitative approach to analyse the UK's implementation of the social inclusion OMC. In terms of Europeanisation and in the context of New Labour Party's commitment to tackle social exclusion, actors from the DWP and from anti-poverty NGOs and networks responded positively to the OMC's pressures for participation. Through a Social Policy Task Force primary and secondary stakeholders got *involved* in the NAPs process and in particular in the stages of agenda-setting and monitoring of the NAPs. The impact of this involvement was reflected into the NAPs which were referring to issues raised by the SPTF. Additionally, anti-poverty associations organised two major participatory projects (i.e. *Get Heard* and BTPG). This shows that they were *collaborating* with the government in the stage of the implementation of the NAPs/NSRs and towards the objective of mobilising wide numbers of stakeholders such as people in poverty.

Importantly, these developments happened in a favourable environment to social inclusion. According to Börzel's (2002) theory, member states which upload practices and policies to the EU level find it much easier to adapt to the emanating Europeanisation pressures. As has been argued in chapter 1 (see part 1.3.5.1), the UK was expected to respond positively to the Lisbon strategy since it has been an influential actor in shaping the Lisbon agenda and in particular issues concerning economic reform and competitiveness (Bulmer 2008).

One important finding of chapter 3 was that primary stakeholders who participated in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects were not aware of the fact that their participation was the result of EU level efforts for wide participation of stakeholders. Organisations and networks, which were aware of the role of the EU and OMC in those social inclusion activities, perceived these projects as not related to an EU-wide effort to combat poverty and they did not succeed in diffusing their knowledge about the EU framework to the primary stakeholders. As a result, despite the fact that both *Get Heard* and BTPG aimed at raising awareness of the EU, participants remained unaware of the EU framework and therefore they did not redirect expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. It seems that when domestic participation does not entail awareness of the EU framework then the expectations, political activities and loyalties cannot be identified as having shifted from national to the EU level.

The cases of *Get Heard* and BTPG can be seen as a result of the Europeanisation of the British social inclusion policy-making process at least in regards to the participation of stakeholders which emerged as a result of the application of the social inclusion OMC. Members of NGOs and networks who organised workshops for these two projects confirmed that these new practices had been 'downloaded' from the EU level. The *Get Heard* project was modelled on the Brussels meetings of people who experience poverty (Interviews in London, 05.12.2010 and 16.02.2010a). The BTPG was organised according to the European concept 'peer review' (Interview in Glasgow, 02.12.2010).

In the absence of features, that were according to the analytical framework, expected to promote socialisation (i.e. learning via the OMC's common indicators and objectives –see section 3.3 above) this chapter showed that the members of the SPTF redirected their expectations and political activities towards the EU level after a rational assessment of the later. Interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. ATD Fourth World, EAPN-England etc.) showed that prior to the OMC there were no opportunities for participation in the policy-making process. Therefore, the launch of the OMC and its participatory provisions redirected the expectations of the members of the SPTF towards the EU. The latter was seen as a framework which was able to create a participatory process in the UK that, in turn, had an impact on the NAPs. As evidence of redirection of political activities, the UKCAP which was a purely domestically oriented network started working with EU oriented networks such as the EAPN-EU, in order to take advantage of the EU's involvement in the field of social inclusion. Another network, the NIAPN, urged for participation in *Get Heard* as a means to address the issue of the EU democratic deficit. Empirical evidence brought forward showed that expectations and political activities were redirected to the EU for long periods (i.e. throughout the period marked by the timeframe of this thesis) and were persistent even during the financial crisis which has influenced negatively EU citizens' stances towards the EU (see chapter 1 section 1.3.5.2).

The European meetings of people in poverty, which are held annually in Brussels, have made apparent the EU's involvement. Participants did not seem to redirect expectations to the EU mainly due to an already emerged domestic participation process and the efforts of anti-poverty associations to moderate potential expectations from the EU. Additionally, British delegates in the EMPEP appeared

disappointed with the fact that their participation at EU level had no impact on policy outcomes. However, a socialisation process emerged under what Jacobsson (2004: 357) describes as 'common concerns'. This led in turn to redirection of loyalties and political activities to the EU. Yet, it is relevant to say that these are only annual two-day meetings and participants appear to be concerned primarily with problems they are faced with in their daily life. However, empirical evidence gathered from interviews (i.e. Interviews in Rhyl 24.02.2010 and London 16.02.2010b) showed that repeated participation at EU level creates stronger loyalties to the EU than one-off participation.

A more detailed assessment of the issues discussed in these concluding remarks will be offered in chapter 5 which aims to compare the UK and Greece in terms of participation and shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. Before this, the following chapter will discuss the Greek case study.

Chapter 4: The Open Method of Coordination in Greece

4.1 Introduction: The Open Method of Coordination in Greece

The structure of chapter 4 follows that of chapter 3 in order to allow for comparisons and to answer in a similar fashion the main research question which was put forward in chapter 1. The analysis in this chapter has a threefold aim. First, it intends to analyse the participation of (new) stakeholders that the OMC in social inclusion has triggered in the Greek social inclusion policy-making process. Second, it examines the possible impact of this participation on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. Third, it examines the impact of the participation at the European conferences of people experiencing poverty on Greek participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. Like chapter 3, one of the main purposes of chapter 4 is to assess (the potential for) the redirection of stakeholders' expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level through their participation in OMC activities on the domestic and EU level.

The fieldwork for this chapter primarily took the form of five interviews with anti-poverty NGOs and networks and two individuals who suffer from poverty and/or social exclusion in Greece. The use of this qualitative research methodology will allow for a detailed analysis of the views which participants have who are involved in social inclusion OMC activities on the domestic and EU level. Although an effort

was made to conduct interviews in different Greek regions, the vast majority of the organisations and networks involved in OMC activities were based in Athens.

The next part (4.2) provides a brief overview of the main indices for poverty and social exclusion in Greece. The official Greek statistical authority (*Elliniki Statistiki Ipiresia* –El. Stat.) acknowledges a relatively static situation for the years 1994-2008 (El. Stat. 2010). As will be explained below, an in depth analysis of the social inclusion OMC cannot be undertaken by focusing merely on quantitative data. Part 4.3 explains the main obstacles which EU-induced reforms face in Greece. Part 4.4 analyses whether the social inclusion OMC has promoted the participation of anti-poverty NGOs, networks and people who experience poverty and exclusion in the Greek policy-making process. Finally, part 4.5 analyses the possible shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties of Greek stakeholders who participate in the (OMC-sponsored) annual Brussels conferences.

4.2 Indices of poverty and exclusion in Greece

4.2.1 People at risk of poverty

A report from the El. Stat. (2010), the findings of which are identical with those of Eurostat, showed that 19.7% of the population in Greece was at risk of poverty in 2009. According to the gender breakdown the percentage figures were 19.1% (15.4% EU-27) for men and 20.2% (17.1% EU-27) for women (*ibid*: 6; Eurostat 2011). In 2009 the threshold of poverty risk for individuals was set at the annual disposable

income of €6,897.30 and for households with two adults and two children, aged 14 years or under, at €14,484.40 (El. Stat 2010: 3). Importantly, the index for people at risk of poverty 'shows relative stability for the last fourteen years (1994-2008) between 20% and 23%' (El. Stat. 2010: 1).

Despite the Lisbon strategy's objective to have a decisive impact on poverty, in 2009 in Greece, 13.8% of the people at working ages (i.e. between 18 and 64) were living under the poverty line (*ibid*: 7) compared to only 8% for the average of the EU-27[50]. Amongst the unemployed, the rate of those at risk of poverty increased to 38.1% (El. Stat. 2010) which was however lower than the average of almost 42% for the EU-27[51]. Nevertheless, the 38.1% figure reflects an increasing trend which started in 2004 when 30.8% of the unemployed were living at risk of poverty (El. Stat. 2012: 37). This means that unemployment has ever since started being a very important factor behind poverty and social exclusion. Statistics also show that in 2009, 23.7% of children up to the age of 17 lived at risk of poverty (El. Stat 2010: 1). This was the highest figure since statistics for children in poverty become available in Greece in 2004 (El. Stat. 2012: 35). Additionally, in 2009, 18.4% of pensioners were at risk of poverty compared with a much higher 28% in 2003 when this type of statistics became available (El. Stat. 2012: 37; 2010: 11).

The 2008-2010 NSR showed that in 2007 women's employment was 47.9% while men's employment was 74.9% and thus higher than the Lisbon target of 70% (NSR 2008-2010: 1-2). According to the same source average employment amongst women in the EU was 58.3% (*ibid.*). In contrast to the EU average, Greece's

[50] http://www.poverty.org.uk/e01b/index.shtml (17.11.2011 - graph 1)
[51] http://www.poverty.org.uk/e01b/index.shtml (17.11.2011 - graph 2)

employment rate for women was falling short in respect to the 60% target (by 2010) that had been set by the Lisbon European Council in 2000 (European Council 2000a). The financial crisis in Greece has gravely worsened the situation on the domestic labour market. It has made the Lisbon strategy's targets unrealistic to achieve. From 10.5% average unemployment in 2001 (El. Stat. 2001) and 14.8% in December 2010 (El. Stat. 2011c), the 2011 data issued by the El. Stat. showed that in August 2011 the total unemployment figure was 18.4% in Greece which amounted to a rise by 105,469 unemployed people only compared to the previous month (El. Stat. 2011a). In May 2011 the 16.6% unemployment figure was the highest percentage of unemployment that was recorded since 2004 when the El. Stat. started publishing monthly indices about the labour force (El Stat 2011b).

4.2.2 Evaluation of indices

When interpreting the unemployment figures in Greece, one should take into consideration in particular the following two factors. First, the definitions of 'employed', 'unemployed', and 'financially inactive population' by the El. Stat., which follows the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) and Eurostat's methodology, have been fiercely criticised by the Greek Ombudsman on the basis that they downplay the real level of unemployment (Greek Ombudsman 2007: 12-13). According to the Ombudsman's report, the definition 'financially inactive' can be considered as unclear since it excludes some categories of jobless people to be considered unemployed (*ibid.*). Thus, for a person to be considered unemployed s/he 'must not have worked at all during the reference week, must seek actively for a job and must be available to work at short notice' (*ibid*: 13; El. Stat. 2011a: 4). This

means, for example, that if one has worked for only one hour within the reference week then they are not considered to be employed according to the official definition. If they do not satisfy any of the other conditions then they also fall into the category of the 'financially inactive population'. Their inclusion in this category has implications for their social inclusion and protection since 'while they remain actually unemployed, they cannot enjoy benefits for long-term unemployment, they cannot receive healthcare services etc.' (Greek Ombudsman 2007: 14). Second, unemployment in Greece follows the increasing trends of unemployment in the EU and Eurozone as was explained in a 2011 Eurostat report (2011: 1) which stated:

> Eurostat estimates that 23.264 million men and women in the EU-27, of whom 16.198 million were in the euro area (EA-17), were unemployed in September 2011. Compared with August 2011, the number of persons unemployed increased by 174 000 in the EU-27 and by 188 000 in the euro area. Compared with September 2010, unemployment increased by 215 000 in the EU-27 and by 329 000 in the euro area.

In 2011, the number of unemployed reached a record high in Ireland too. For the first time since 1967, which is the year when official monitoring of such data began in Ireland, 14.4% of the labour force was unemployed (*Eleftherotypia*, 31.08.2011). The same trends were recorded in the third trimester of the year 2011 in Spain where 4,978,300 people were unemployed (21.52%) (*El Pais*, 28.10.2011) In November 2011 Reuters reported that '[u]nemployment in Britain hit its highest in 15 years' (*Reuters*, 16.11.2011).

The additional data from Ireland, Spain and the UK illustrates that the social situation in many EU member states has been aggravated by the financial crisis. In 2002 the Commission argued that the precise assessment of the impact of the OMC was not possible due to the improvement of the economic situation in the EU (Zeitlin 2005b; European Commission 2002). Since the financial crises begun in 2008, the economic situation has worsened in EU member states. This makes the assessment of the social inclusion OMC in Greece a complex analytical issue.

Similar to the UK, the numerical data highlights the existence of certain social problems in Greece. However, the data cannot offer a comparative analysis of the effects of the efforts that have been made since the application of the EU's OMC process. An assessment of the social inclusion OMC in Greece has to be undertaken with the help of a qualitative research approach. The next sections assess the impact of the social inclusion OMC by focusing primarily on the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders.

4.3 The need for an OMC assessment through participation

In Greece two competing evaluations of the impact of the OMC exist. First, there is the official evaluation which is reflected in the NAPs. Greek government officials appear satisfied with the application of the OMC and with its efficiency. One example of such a positive evaluation constitutes a speech which was made by Mr. Dimitris Kontos in 2009. In his speech, the then general secretary of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection stated:

> In our country, the impact of the European strategy on social inclusion is apparent as much on the content of the policy as on its tools. Greece's participation in this strategy contributed not only to the definition of targets and priorities, to the underlining of the needs of the vulnerable groups, but also to the institutionalisation of the targets. The mutual learning and the best practices of other countries were the added value, I would say, of the Open Method of Coordination in Greece (EPEKSA 2009)

According to Mr. Kontos' evaluation, Greece influenced the setting of the OMC's objectives for the European social inclusion strategy, and it learned from practices in other member states. Therefore, the social inclusion OMC has been perceived positively by the representative from the Ministry of Employment. However, the evaluation of the OMC by secondary stakeholders comes to a very different conclusion. In fact, stakeholders interviewed for this thesis were often critical of the Greek government's implementation of the OMC in social inclusion. For example, the Director of an organisation which focuses on social inclusion of children with mental illnesses, asked:

> Have you actually realised that the OMC is almost an unknown term in Greece? I hope our conversation will help me answer your questions and find some evidence which indicates the presence of the OMC [in Greece] (Interview in Athens, 20.12.2010).

Of course this was an exaggeration since the interviewee appeared well informed about the priorities of the OMC, the developments which resulted from the Lisbon strategy, and the reasons why the OMC was not working in Greece as well as in other member states (such as the UK). What the interviewee wanted to highlight were the obstacles that the implementation of the social inclusion OMC faced in Greece. The following case from the mental health reform illustrates well the existing obstacles.

In the context of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) and United Nations' (UN) mental health year (2001), the then Minister of Health, Alekos Papadopoulos, admitted that 'the EU almost forced Greece to accept 70-90 billion drachmas [approx. €205-265 million] from the third CSF [2000-2006] in order to reform the mental health and the asylum systems'.[52] The focus on mental health in Greece has been part of an EU level effort as described in a Commission Green Paper (European Commission 2005c). The Green Paper also highlighted the need for relevant actors' involvement (*ibid*: 13) and the need to target the most vulnerable, in terms of mental ill health (*ibid*: 9). Once the EU induced reform had been completed, Greece was expected to be able to offer high quality mental health services in line with the principles of the WHO. The successful reforms would be diffused as a good practice within the EU-27 (SOP 2007). The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri –FEANTSA), which is the EU level specialised network on homelessness, responded to the Commission's Green Paper by underlining the 'importance of targeting the most excluded and marginalised groups

[52] http://health.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngArticleID=31360, accessed on 13.04.2010

suffering from mental illness' (FEANTSA 2005: 9). It regarded these developments as an issue which would feed into the streamlined OMC (*ibid*: 8)

Subsequently, the budget for mental health and asylum reform became the highest inside the operational programme 'Health and Protection'. It therefore was one of the most important projects for the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity in the period 2000-2008 (MHSS 2005).[53] In spite of the developments at EU level and the importance of the mental health policy reform, the Panhellenic Socialist Party's (PaSoK) MP Skoulas criticised the Nea Democratia government in November 2008 by stating that 'the mental health reform in Greece is at a critical point. The asylum reform is ready to collapse and many patients are at risk to return to asylums' (MP Skoulas, official portal).[54] Three months earlier, the newspaper *Eleftherotypia* had revealed that the reform was failing since there was no strategy for the future and no sufficient funding from the Ministry. According to this report, most of the workers had not received any payment for eight months and they were complaining about continuously worsening quality of services for people with mental health problems (*Eleftherotypia*, 10.08.2008). The Ministry in turn was blaming the administrations of the organisations which had been established to improve the mental health system. Moreover, once the EU funding had expired, the situation became even worse (*ibid*.). Eventually, Vladimir Špidla, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, decided to put Greece under surveillance although a two years extension of EU funding was granted for the completion of the project

[53] It was approved from the EU in 2001: E(2001) 583/04.04.2001 and funded by the ERDF, the ESF and the responsible Greek Ministry. In fact the funding for the project was higher than that which was mentioned by the Minister . In detail, 25% (=€129 million) was coming from national funds, 57.22% (=€220 million) from the ESF, and 42.78% (=€165 million) from the ERDF (MHSS 2005: 3)
[54] MP's Gainnis Skoulas official portal http://www.jskoulas.gr/index.php?jsk=03&idas=1712, accessed on 13.04.2010

(MHSS 2009).[55] Commenting on the shortcomings, the Director of European Anti-Poverty Network in Greece (EAPN-Greece) stated:

> Greece is in danger today to be named and shamed by the EU Commission and will have to pay fines since a huge good practice reform ended up in failure. It risks the efforts for reforms of mental health systems all over the EU. Today, EU delegates are still coming to Greece asking what is happening with the reform (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009)

The representative of the EAPN-Greece complained also that the delays and extensions mentioned above discouraged the EU from supporting future reforms. This resulted in the postponement of policies for young persons' social inclusion which were expected to be launched after the mental health reform was completed. According to the interviewee, the EU, which had already allocated €22 million to Greece, was likely to refuse to support the mental health project and similar future programmes (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).[56]

However, it is not only the shortcomings at national level which prevented the social inclusion OMC from producing positive policy outcomes in Greece. The approach to the evaluation of the OMC's impact in Greece is even more perplexing when taking into account significant changes in the social inclusion policy-making process that take place every time one political party succeeds another in government office.

[55] Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity (official web-site http://www.yyka.gov.gr/health/domes-kai-draseis-gia-tin-ygeia/programma-psychargos/to-programma-psychargos/i-b-fasi-toy-programmatos-psychargos-2002-2009-1, visited on the 13.04.2010)

[56] For more information regarding the background of the mental health system in Greece, the reasons of failure and the mistakes the actors blame on the governments, the reader can check the official web-site of the Panhellenic Federation Of Families For Mental Health (http://www.posopsi.org/2009/11/h-e.html -the page is only available in Greek)

Since the abolition of the military regime and the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1974, there have been a series of parliamentary elections resulting only in the two major political parties replacing each other in the government.[57] As one interviewee put it:

> In the UK there is 'the state'. In Greece there is 'the government'. Whereas everyone else [in Europe] is interested in the state, we are interested in the government (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

Another interviewee complained that 'each political party, when in office, controls the whole process of the NAP' (Interview in Athens, 20.12.2010). Therefore, the domination of the two political parties has affected significantly the implementation of EU policies including the implementation of the social inclusion OMC:

> I think that this whole thing [i.e. the drafting of the NAPs] goes through political party processes. I mean that each political party that governs this country has its own bodies to decide on the NAPs. We do not have a state… we have a state made by political parties (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010).

The point here is that while Greece has agreed on the objectives set by the social inclusion OMC, the domestic partisan politics appears to prevent the development of a process of setting clear targets for social exclusion. Both political parties in Greece (PaSoK and Nea Democratia) have been unable to establish a sound (medium to long term) public policy on social inclusion. By maintaining a political culture of

[57] The June 2012 elections resulted in a three party (Nea Dimocratia, Pasok and the Democratic Left Party) coalition government.

‘bureaucratic clientelism’ (Featherstone 2005b: 228) where political parties promote the interests of those groups who vote for them, the succession of the two main political parties in office seems to fundamentally change the priorities of Greek public policy.

It is not only representatives from NGOs who have highlighted the impact of such culture of partisan politics in the social inclusion OMC in Greece. Various newspapers and academic articles have also highlighted the same issue as one of the main reasons why Greece is lagging behind in implementing the social inclusion OMC in general, and in adopting a sound policy to combat social exclusion in particular (e.g. *Economist* 08.03.2010; Sotiropoulos 2004; Guillén and Matsaganis 2000). For example, Guillén and Matsaganis (2000) have shown how social spending in Greece has inefficiently grown due to the ‘clientelistic mediation of access to resources’ which resulted from the dominance of the Greek political system by the earlier mentioned political parties (Guillén and Matsaganis 2000: 122). However, the above mentioned interviewee highlighted another aspect of partisan politics in Greece which is also responsible for the lack of positive developments. The example she drew was from the public health sector:

> In 2008 it became obvious that in the field of health and especially of sanity there were problems related to the funding of the project and problems related to the staffing of the organisations responsible for the project. At that time a network of all the relevant associations approached the Commissioner Vladimir Špidla. This indeed worked as a leverage resulting in Mr. Avramopoulos’s [who was the Minister of Health at the time] commitment to

> settle the issue by September 2009. Right after that a general election was declared and the issue was subsequently put aside. The EAPN–Greece could no longer blame the government for delays since the government had changed (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

As the case of the UK has shown, the transition period between administrations of successive political parties is characterised by constraints in the implementation of policies promoted in the context of the OMC. This shows that the OMC process is not perceived as a European process which should be implemented regardless of the priorities of the political parties in office. It is rather perceived as a domestic process which is changing according to the political parties' priorities. However, in the case of the social inclusion OMC, the blame for shortcomings in the method's impact on Greek public policy should not be exclusively based on domestic factors. It is worth recalling that disparities between member states in the area of social inclusion seem to create crucial problems for coordination efforts (Lopez-Santana 2006).

A paper presented in the ESPAnet conference in Oxford in 2004 argued that, from a Greek perspective, EU guidelines are often incompatible with Greek priorities (Mabbett 2004). According to Mabbett, many of the policies adopted in the Greek NAPs followed the Community Structural Funds' objectives. However, these objectives were related to general EU concerns and did not seem to take into consideration domestic particularities (*ibid.*). During the interviews in Greece a respondent from the Social Work Foundation (*Idrima Koinonikis Ergasias* –IKE) which is specialised in issues of mental health described a similar situation:

> The EU objectives identify policies that should be implemented. But when someone reads the context of these priorities, how one could draw up a programme to combat social exclusion according to these priorities, they discover how 'out of the blue' these priorities have arrived. They do not touch Greek reality. There is a massive gap between the [EU] decision-making centres and the necessities at the local level (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010).

Therefore, the impact of the OMC in terms of dealing with problems that are faced by those who are targeted by its policies is also hindered because of the lack of alignment between Greek necessities and general European concerns. On the one hand, this argument challenges Mr Kontos's optimism regarding the importance of the participation of Greece in the setting of the Lisbon strategy guidelines. Interviewees from the IKE foundation and the Klimaka organisation have argued that these objectives are irrelevant for the Greek case since they do not 'touch the Greek reality'. On the other hand, the presentation of issue of the EU objectives has three additional implications as far as the analytical framework put forward in the present thesis is concerned. First, incompatibility between EU objectives and Greek necessities questions Trubek and Mosher's (2003) argument according to which the OMC's objectives provide a framework for policy learning. As said in chapter 1 (section 1.2.5) Trubek and Mosher argue that objectives and other features of the OMC (i.e. benchmarking) challenge domestic actors' understandings. However, for the involved Greek secondary stakeholders, the objectives do not provide a framework for learning. The objectives promoted a political discourse which was inapplicable in Greece. Therefore, Greek stakeholders argued that there were no

lessons to be drawn from the objectives since the latter were designed to help solving problems of advanced member states.

The last remark leads to the second implication of the irrelevance between the domestic necessities and OMC objectives. The case of the environmental policy has shown that leader states (i.e. the Northern European states) set the priorities at EU level making it difficult for less advanced states to follow (Börzel 2002). The representative from Klimaka, a Greek organisation specialised in issues of homelessness, explained how difficult it was for Greece to follow priorities which have been set by other EU countries (i.e. Sweden and Portugal). According to this interview, Sweden proposed a platform for counting homeless in every member state at a time when Greece had not yet defined homelessness (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a). As will be shown later in this chapter, another interviewee compared Greece and Sweden in terms of involving primary stakeholders in the decision-making process to argue that meeting the OMC's objective for participation is a hard task for Greece. These cases indicate that the Europeanisation of the social inclusion policy is not facilitated by learning. Section 1.1.5 of chapter 1 has shown how learning can empower domestic actors and redefine their interests. In effect, through a process of learning, actors are expected to respond positively to the pressures for domestic adaptation to EU policies. However, in the case of Greece, neither a learning process was apparent nor did domestic actors' interests appear to be redefined. Additionally, according to the analytical framework (chapter 1 sections 1.1.5 and 1.2) learning has not only been expected to redefine interests and empower domestic actors but also to provide the framework for socialisation of participants under EU norms, objectives, ideas etc. In the context of the application of the social

inclusion OMC in Greece where no learning process emerged, the socialisation process of the domestic actors under common EU objectives did not emerge either.

Thirdly, a study on Greece regarding the impact of EU efforts for pension systems' coordination found that the European 'stimuli' for reform are 'too weak' (Featherstone 2005a: 734). Featherstone also argued in such cases where 'the EU stimuli are in fact limited in their nature … entrenched institutional obstacles in domestic systems can readily thwart their potency' (*ibid.*). In the case of the OMC, it has been argued that one of the method's weaknesses is the broadness of its guidelines (PPMI 2011). Broadness of guidelines is an implication of the fact that these guidelines resulted from different political discourses all over the EU (*ibid.*). As will be shown below, interviewees in Greece complained about the 'softness' of the social inclusion OMC due to which the method was unable to bring about the desired change.

In fact, the issue of the lack of alignment between Greek and European objectives does not concern only the official EU guidelines and the necessities of Greek public policy. But a similar lack of alignment also seems to exist between the EU level voluntary organisations and domestic Greek associations which belong to them. For example, the FEANTSA supported with seminars and conferences the Commission's efforts about '*How to improve the information base on homelessness on a regional, national and European level*' (European Commission 2008b). This support on behalf of the FEANTSA included the development of a method of numerical representation of the issue of homelessness (Interview in Athens, 07.12.2009a). Yet, as the representative of a Greek organisation, which is a member of the FEANTSA

admitted, that goal was too ambitious since 'Greece has not yet adopted a definition of homelessness' (*ibid.*).

These statements by stakeholders question the OMC's potential to have a positive impact on the Greek policy-making process. It is very difficult to decide whether even developments which have been made in the area of social inclusion and which are related to the social inclusion OMC should be ascribed to EU initiatives on tackling social exclusion. The example of the issue of homelessness illustrates the complexity of this issue. Before the year 2000, 'little systematic research' had been carried out in the field of homelessness in Greece (Sapounakis 2001: 12). Public opinion was not seeing homelessness as 'a serious cause for concern'; therefore, the problem was perceived as non-existing (*ibid*: 4). Officials were arguing that the percentage of house ownership was so high as to exclude phenomena of housing deprivation (*ibid*: 4, 16; Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). According to the Director of the EAPN-Greece, it was only in 2000 when the lack of numerical data on the homeless started being considered (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). In that year, a single researcher – Dr Sapounakis, who was supported by the FEANTSA and Greek NGOs – carried out quantitative research on homelessness (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Around the same period a shift in attitudes occurred amongst the public and government officials who started to acknowledge the existence of deprived social groups (Sapounakis 2001). However, it is unclear whether it was EU level developments that brought about the 'sensitisation of government officials and the general public' and triggered the Greek research on homelessness (*ibid*: 4). On the one hand, the research was part of an EU initiative which was undertaken by the European Observatory on Homelessness that is run by the FEANTSA with the

support of the European Commission (Eurostat 2004: 15). Eurostat used Sapounakis' survey in its report on homelessness in 2004. In this report Eurostat related the EU-wide research to the Lisbon strategy by stating:

> [S]ince 2000 the struggle to improve social cohesion has moved higher up the European political agenda, and homelessness is now recognised as a subject of specific interest (*ibid*: 4).

According to Eurostat, the EU Commission and the Lisbon strategy can be seen as the driving forces behind pushing the issue of homelessness onto the political agenda in Greece. However, Dr Sapounakis argued that the Greek government's focus on homelessness emerged when the 'influx of large numbers of immigrants' became more evident in Greece (Sapounakis 2001: 4). The director of EAPN-Greece who was interviewed for this thesis initially ignored the EU level developments and thought that the Greek government started to show an interest in the issue of homelessness because Greece was preparing for the Olympic Games in 2004. For her Greece had to satisfy certain Human Rights preconditions (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). In 1999-2000 Greece was also preparing to apply for the 3rd ERDF. It was therefore obliged to present certain targets for its social policy. Due to these conflicting arguments, it is still unclear whether it was the EU stimuli behind the official recognition of the 'ultimate level of social deprivation' (*ibid.*). What is more interesting though, is that the official recognition has not triggered any further action. In 2008, the *Kathimerini* (04.12.2008) newspaper reported that,

> homeless people have not yet been institutionally recognised as a group that needs social protection. Instead of the state, the charities, the NGOs, the city councils and the church are basically responsible for their relief.

Since the financial crisis started in 2008, the problem has become even worse. Especially since 2009, the number of homeless people in Greece has risen by 25% which amounts to an increase of more than 20,000 people (Klimaka 2011). This increase affects now 'populations which used to live with satisfactory standards of living, average to higher education, and were led to homelessness as a result of unemployment and/or low incomes' (*ibid*: 2). Despite the fact that a substantive impact on homelessness is a core priority of the social inclusion OMC (e.g. European Commission 2010), any official reaction to the problem appears to be inexistent.

Under these circumstances, the precise impact of the OMC on the Greek policy-making process appears difficult to evaluate. The structural impediments, together with the softness of the social inclusion OMC, and the lack of alignment between European concerns and Greek public policy needs make it difficult to assess whether it was the European framework, or other domestic factors which triggered the above mentioned changes in Greek efforts to tackle social exclusion.

The next section of chapter 4 intends to assess the OMC through a different analytical prism when focusing on its procedural impact in particular on the mobilisation of secondary and primary stakeholders. This will allow for the assessment of the impact of the social inclusion OMC on possible shifts in loyalties, expectations and political activities of the participants.

4.4 Participation of primary and secondary stakeholders

4.4.1 Participation in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process

In Greece, the EAPN-Greece is the main third sector network which is active in the field of social inclusion. The members of the EAPN-Greece are NGOs and associations which are primarily focused on issues of social exclusion. They represent various groups with disadvantages, including people with disabilities, lone parent families, the unemployed, abused people, young persons, the homeless, ethnic minorities, etc (EAPN-Greece web portal)[58]. In Greece there are also NGOs focused on social inclusion which are not members of the EAPN-Greece as, for example, Klimaka which is an organisation active in the field of mental health and homelessness. The Greek National Strategy Report (NSR)[59] for 2008-2010 mentioned that '24 civil society institutions participated in the ESDEN [NAP in social inclusion] preparation procedure' (NSR Greece 2008-2010: 48). However, among civil society institutions it included the social partners while it did not provide a list of the anti-poverty associations. The empirical fieldwork for this thesis and the Greek Programme on the 2010 *European year for combating poverty and social exclusion* offered more information about the involved stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC process (National Programme Greece 2010). Table 4 provides a full list of anti-poverty NGOs and networks which have been consulted by the government for the purposes of the social inclusion OMC.

[58] http://www.antipoverty.gr/members, accessed on 10.10.2010
[59] The documents which replaced the NAPs after the streamlining of the OMC in 2005 (see chapter 1)

Table 4: Greek anti-poverty NGOs and networks mobilised in the social inclusion OMC policy-making process.

Networks	• European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-Greece) • Hellenic Forum for Migrants • National Federation for People with Disabilities (ESAMEA) • Network for Social Support for Refugees and Migrants
Organisations	• 50 plus Hellas • Arsis • Centre of Care for the Family and the Child • Centre of Research and Action for Peace • Centre of Research and Support for Victims of Abuse and Social Exclusion • Church of Greece • Greek Institute for Growth and Cooperation • Greek Red Cross • Human Rights Defence Centre • IKE • Institute for Immigration Policy • International Organisation for Migration • Klimaka • National Council for Greek Women • PRAXIS • The Smile of the Child

Source: National Programme Greece 2010 and interviews with NGOs and networks in Greece

As table 4 shows, the organisation Klimaka is also mobilised in the OMC process in social inclusion. It is a member of the umbrella organisation FEANTSA which regards very positively the OMC on social inclusion as can be seen from the following statement:

> The Social Inclusion OMC is truly an *open* method of coordination since the European Commission and national ministries work with civil society organisations such as networks of service providers (like FEANTSA), service

> users, regional authorities, local authorities, and trade unions (FEANTSA 2005b: 1).

In contrast to the above cited assessment of FEANTSA, Klimaka does not hold the same optimistic view on the opportunities for participation in the domestic policy-making process through the OMC. In fact, representatives from Klimaka argued that the theoretical premises for participation (see chapter 1) had little impact on the Greek policy-making process in the first years after the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece. This happened mainly because although the OMC and its core objectives provided the framework for participation of primary and secondary stakeholders, Greek officials interpreted the provisions for participation of all relevant stakeholders restrictively. A representative from Klimaka argued that from 2001 to 2003 the Greek government misinterpreted the provisions for wide participation. As the interviewee put it:

> The Lisbon strategy's reference to relevant bodies such as civil society and NGOs [i.e. point 38 of the Presidency conclusions] can be considered as a provision with a broad meaning. The NGOs can potentially participate. However, when one refers to relevant social stakeholders, you know, it is such a wide term that the government can interpret it in many ways. The ministry can say: 'we include the social partners and they are the only relevant stakeholders on the issue since they are institutionalised' (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

In fact, in many cases social partners have indeed been the only stakeholders who participate in the social inclusion policy-making process. As the representative from the IKE foundation stated during an interview,

> In many cases it [consultation] takes place between the government and the social partners. If you have a right-wing government you have polarisation and if you have the socialists you have agreement and convergence. This, at the end of the day, is not beneficial for any citizen or organisation. It is a closed circuit which excludes anyone else (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010).

Various issues are mentioned in this statement. First, regardless of who is in power, both political parties appeared to downplay the importance of primary and secondary stakeholders' participation in the consultation process. Instead governments included primarily the social partners. The two dominant political parties (i.e. PaSok and Nea Democratia) have been accused of promoting corporatism. For example, according to Sotiropoulos (1995: 2), the Greek policy-making process is one in which 'the relations between the central Greek state and civil society are shaped by state corporatism'. Anti-poverty NGOs and networks criticised the fact that Greek governments often consulted only the social partners within the social inclusion OMC. The latter were pushing their own issues onto the NAPs while the issues which the secondary stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC process considered important were not part of the input of the civil society to the same NAPs.

However, even when the social partners were invited for consultation, the consensus was difficult 'to manage in a climate of antagonism and mistrust' (Featherstone

2008: 7). The consensus was also dependent on the political party in office. The PaSoK, which since the beginning of the 1980s developed a somewhat ambiguous relationship with the trade unions, appeared to have been more capable of reaching the desired consensus when in office. Second, the fact that the main political parties were able to downplay the importance of consultation with NGOs reflects the perceived weakness of the OMC's provisions for participation by secondary stakeholders. As shown above, secondary stakeholders perceived the OMC as too soft an instrument to provide the necessary procedural impact (Interview in Athens 20.01.2010).

Greek NGOs and networks (e.g. Klimaka, Arsis, EAPN-Greece) have also criticised the social dialogue between the government and social partners in the preparation of the NAPs on the grounds that social partners are less relevant to the field of social inclusion. Independent researchers have argued that social partners' stances towards social inclusion policies are inescapably related to the supply and demand of employment when engaged in the social dialogue (Arapoglou and Petalas 2004). According to Arapoglou and Petalas' (2004: 71) study on stakeholder participation in the Greek strategy against social exclusion, the General Confederation of Greek Workers (*Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Elladas* –GSEE) has in the past propagated the concept of 'employability' while emphasising 'the importance of knowledge as the leverage which leads to access in the labour market'. Simultaneously, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (*Sillogos Ellinon Viomihanon* –SEB) has for the same reason prioritised issues such as the need for flexibility and lifelong learning by the workforce (*ibid*: 71, 72). The GSEE has also been criticised of adopting a neo-liberal attitude which approaches poverty as an issue which entails

personal responsibility (*ibid.*). The SEB holds that deprivation should be tackled with cost-effective approaches. One of the core positions of the SEB is that 'social exclusion creates moral hazards and large cost for society' and that the combating of social exclusion must be achieved through strategic plans for growth, employment, employability, social protection and development of skills (SEB 2003: 1). As Arapoglou and Petalas (2004: 79) have concluded after interviews with SEB representatives, the consideration of the (financial and political) cost is directly influencing the planning of policies to support vulnerable groups who are socially excluded.

The focus on employment and cost-effectiveness to tackle poverty as well as the lack of representation of stakeholders in efforts to reduce social exclusion are considered as inefficient as chapter 2 has shown. However, it is worth mentioning that in the field of employment, where social partners' participation in the social dialogue is supported with treaty provisions (de la Porte and Pochet 2005), even the social partners appear unsatisfied with governments' attitudes towards their involvement. For example, commenting on the 2003 NAP on employment, which was the fifth in Greece since the European Employment Strategy (EES) was launched, a member of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofund) noted that

> [t]he process of designing the 2003 NAP is not seen by the social partners as satisfactory, due to a perceived lack of meaningful collaboration and

involvement of the partners at the national and particularly the regional level (Kretsos 2003: Eurofund official web portal[60])

In any case, the first NAP (2001-2003) was an amendment of the strategic plans which were compiled in order to justify the allocation of the ERDF without any participation of NGOs in its preparation (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). As in the case of the first NAP in the UK, the short time period and the lack of experience in drafting such documents made it easier to turn the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) documents into NAPs.

Thus, for reasons of limited participation of new stakeholders in the first NAP process in member states such as Greece, the objectives set by the Council of the EU for the second round of NAPs on social inclusion (i.e. 2003-2005 NAP) referred more explicitly to the need to include NGOs along with social partners (Council of the EU 2002: 13). Additionally, the Commission had already taken action in order to correct such shortcomings by naming and shaming Greece when it lagged behind in terms of participation (de la Porte and Nanz 2004). This pressure from the EU level seemed initially to change the Greek government's attitudes towards participation of stakeholders in the policy-making process. In the context of the preparations for the second round of NAPs across the EU, Greece officially established the National Committee for Social Protection (NCSP) in 2003 through a ministerial act (Act 3144/2003). The members of this Committee were senior government officials[61], the social partners, local and regional officials and representatives from NGOs. The

[60] EU Official Portal, Eurofund (2003), 'Thematic Feature: Social Partner Involvement in the 2003 NAP', EIROnline. http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2003/10/tfeature/gr0310103t.htm, accessed on 28.11.2011.
[61] The Minister for Employment and the General Secretaries from the Departments of Health, Economy and Financial Affairs, Home Affairs and Education, among others.

purpose behind the establishment of such a Committee was identical with the common objectives set by the Council of the EU for the second round of NAPs (Council of the EU 2002). According to the Greek government:

> The purpose of the Committee is the promotion of Social Dialogue in favour of the combating of poverty and social exclusion, the development of a Network for the Social Protection and Social Inclusion and the consultation for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (Hellenic Government Gazette 2003: 1696).

The Greek NAP 2003-2005 claimed that the Committee would be used as the main lever to mobilise the relevant actors which, according to the document, were the local actors and civil society (NAP Greece 2003-2005: 47). However, the next NAP admitted that the NCSP had not been adequately used by the state, sub-state and civil society actors (NAP Greece 2005-2006). Finally, the following NSR (2006-2008) argued that the government consulted the stakeholders (i.e. social partners and NGOs) before deciding on the social inclusion policies. However, while the government was referring to a process of consultation during the agenda-setting stage of the NSR, the NSR stressed again the need for better use of the Committee for an 'extensive dialogue' between the government and the stakeholders (NSR Greece 2006-2008: 43). According to the same document, problems in cooperation and coordination among actors were expected to be gradually solved with the better use of the NCSP.

However, both stakeholders and independent experts argued that even when organisations were invited to participate their participation was weaker than often claimed in official documents. Despite the increasingly positive official assessments (through the NAPs/NSRs) of the role of the NCSP in mobilising secondary stakeholders in the consultation process, an independent experts' evaluation of the social inclusion strategy noted that the process 'was hardly open to participation by NGOs, Local Authorities and social services providers, preventing, thus, a thorough discussion on the issues at stake (Ziomas *et al.* 2007: 13). In this independent assessment of the official Greek response to the challenges identified at the EU level (2007 Greek Implementation Report), Ziomas and colleagues (2007:13) argued that,

> bureaucracy and closed procedures remain still dominant in Greece, restricting, thus, any flexibility for adopting new ways of policy decision-making, which, among other things, would facilitate the participation of various stakeholders including, in particular civil society organisations. Thus, involvement of civil society organisations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the measures related to social inclusion remains very minimal, being mainly confined to the implementation phase… (Ziomas *et al.* 2007:13).

In other words, the independent experts noticed that the application of the EU-led process to combat social exclusion in Greece did not meet with a favourable environment. Thus, the framework that the OMC theoretically offered for policy change in terms of substantive participation did not function effectively in practice.

Contrary to independent experts' evaluations, the 2008-2010 Greek NSR mentioned that the NCSP had eventually been activated in involving stakeholders. The report stated:

> The Greek state encourages more active involvement of these NGOs in the implementation of social inclusion policies, recognizes their importance and contribution, and promotes the participation of NGO representatives in drawing up and *assessing* said policies (NSR Greece 2008-2010: 49 – emphasis added).

The official statement paints the picture of a process of participation which constituted of the consultation of stakeholders in the agenda-setting *and* monitoring of the social inclusion OMC policy-making process in Greece. However, interviews with NGOs' representatives reflected a much less optimistic stance towards the contribution which the OMC was able to make in Greece in terms of stakeholder participation. These interviews showed that participation in Greece did not sufficiently follow the social inclusion OMC's objectives for participation of relevant stakeholders. While referring to the period of the agenda-setting of the 2008-2010 Greek NAP on social inclusion, the Director of the EAPN-Greece criticised the Minister of Employment and Social Protection, Mrs Fani-Palli Petralia, who was also a member of the National Committee for Social Protection, for handing out for consultation 'unacceptable texts' (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). In the interviewee's own words,

> If you could see the texts you would not believe their poor quality. We complained that in addition to the lack of proposals and credentials for developments there was no reference to the participation of the various actors. Our complaints were recorded in the meeting's minutes. The Minister thanked us for our comments and the issue was put aside (*ibid.*).

The above statement shows that in Greece there was no compliance with the Lisbon Treaty's provisions for regular, open, and transparent dialogue. The same interviewee complained that the network was not aware of the final draft of the NSR 2008-2010 before it was published by the EU Commission (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). In fact, the EAPN-Greece felt that its views were not taken into consideration by the officials (e.g. the Minister for Employment) in the Committee. In another meeting, which took place around the same time, the same minister invited the social partners to discuss the actions that the government would take in the context of the financial crisis. The SEB ignored this invitation while the GSEE withdrew from the meeting stating that its members will not attend any future Committee meeting. Like the EAPN-Greece, the GSEE blamed the government for not using the Committee for consultation but only as a forum in which it could announce its decisions to the social actors (*Express* 13.05.2009).

In the same time period, the participation of NGOs in NAP consultation sessions on homelessness was limited to a one-off meeting between four NGOs and the government (Interview in Athens 17.12.2009a). A participant in this meeting acknowledged that this type of consultation took place due to the OMC and its requirements to draft NAPs with an input from stakeholders (*ibid.*). However, the

interviewee expressed the view that this was primarily an attempt to meet only formally the OMC's objectives for dialogue with NGOs. There was never an official evaluation of whether the proposals made during the consultation were taken into consideration by those who eventually drafted the NAPs (*ibid.*). Other secondary stakeholders argued that they had been mobilised in the context of the OMC's provisions for participation but only for 'irregular and sketchy consultation' (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Accordingly, in one case the Ministry for Employment only sent a questionnaire to every relevant NGO asking them to fill it with answers/proposals for a strategy towards the combating of homelessness (*ibid.*).

The lack of proper consultation and participation was reported in the relevant NSR (2008-2010) with the words '24 civil society institutions participated in the ESDEN [NAP in social inclusion] preparation procedure' (NSR Greece 2008-2010: 48). As the above cited interviewee pointed out, a response to a questionnaire did not amount to extensive in-depth deliberations as communicated by the government to the EU (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). As other participants argued 'a one-off meeting is far from being considered as working together with policy-makers' (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

As with the impact of the social inclusion OMC in Greece so with the Greek response to the method's provisions for participation, officials and secondary stakeholders hold different opinions. The official evaluations regarding participation of secondary stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC are rather positive. Contrary to these evaluations some secondary stakeholders appear less satisfied with the

domestic response to the OMC provisions for participation. As the representative from the IKE has argued –although initially with some exaggeration:

> I do not think that a window has opened for participation. While there are provisions for social dialogue in the OMC, the government has only borrowed the term 'consultation' and uses it in the official documents. This consultation is often a one or two days consultation and it can take place online (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010).

Consequently, despite the EU efforts for wide participation, NGOs in Greece stated that they encountered particular difficulties in their effort to participate satisfactorily in the policy-making process. It is not only that Greek governments often excluded secondary stakeholders even from participating in the stage of agenda-setting as has been seen above. It is also that secondary stakeholders' provision of services to socially excluded people did not seem to be properly acknowledged by Greek officials. The representative from IKE confirmed this in an interview when stating:

> Our organisation works for many years now on assisting technology. Through teleconferences [known as 'telecast programme'] the support for children with mental paralysis services that we provide in our offices in Athens can be provided by us also to children and their families in remote areas. Thus, the families do not need to migrate losing the social network that they belong to … In 2010 our NGO was unique in this area, officially certified for the usage of this technology. We are still waiting for the ministry

[of Health] to call us and ask: 'What are you guys doing there? Do you get results? Can I make this a national policy?' (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010)

Therefore, a form of partnership between the government and secondary stakeholders, which could have facilitated wider participation and which was missing before the OMC, was not developed during the application of the method either. In this case, wider participation refers not only to a higher number of secondary stakeholders but also to participation in more stages of the NAP process. NGOs like the IKE are service providers and the projects that they undertake to tackle social exclusion could contribute in the stage of implementation of the NAPs/NSRs. However, as the Director of the EAPN-Greece stated in an interview, anti-poverty NGOs were not participating in the implementation stage. Instead, she gave an example according to which the Church of Greece was granted €2million to promote the employability of the socially excluded which is one of the main objectives of the social inclusion OMC (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009; for the OMC objectives see chapter 1).

According to NGOs, the limited participation in the OMC process was also due to the lack of commitment by civil servants who had the duty to evaluate different stakeholder proposals for the social inclusion strategy. One team responsible for the evaluation of proposals has been the Central Register of Evaluators (CRE) which states on its web site[62]:

[62] http://www.esfhellas.gr/english/categoryDetails.aspx?iden=45, accessed on 29.01.2011

> Evaluators on the register are invited to evaluate projects by agencies to develop the country's human resources. Such projects include training programmes, employment actions, programmes for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and so on, submitted for approval and finance from the European Social Fund and the Greek state.

The same source also states that people who are eligible to work in the CRE hold an academic degree and have at least three years of professional experience in the private or public sector. However, the civil servants who evaluate NGOs' proposals through the CRE are criticised by the secondary stakeholders for their lack of knowledge and commitment in the field of social inclusion. According to this criticism, the eligibility criteria refer to 'anyone who has been awarded a PhD…' which means that these civil servants 'do not necessarily constitute front line staff; they are simple technocrats' (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010). As it will be further discussed in the comparative chapter (i.e. chapter 5), this is additional empirical evidence for the fact that the necessary commitment for participation of organisations and networks, which is evident in the UK, is missing in Greece.

Until now the failure of the governments to acknowledge the importance of NGOs, the input of social partners' opinions in the policy-making process, and the lack of commitment to social inclusion issues on behalf of the senior officers, have restricted the participation of the secondary stakeholders in the Greek policy-making process. At the same time, the lack of funding can be seen as an extra obstacle to the implementation of the participatory provisions of the social inclusion OMC. As the Director of the EAPN-Greece stated in an interview in Athens (08.12.2009):

> Before 2000, the EU level networks (e.g. EAPN-EU, FEANTSA) were receiving money from the EU Commission in order to support the central/umbrella organisations and their member organisations in the member states. We as EAPN-Greece were using this money to fund our fixed costs and out activities in the field of social inclusion. Our own work was volunteering. After 2000, this type of EU funding stopped and organisations started to receive money through the European Social Fund only if they were involved in projects.

The last remark implies that only those involved in the implementation of the NAPs NGOs are eligible to receive funding. However, as shown earlier, the same interviewee complained that the EAPN-Greece was not accredited by the government to participate in the implementation of the NAPs. Therefore it was not undertaking projects and, as a consequence, it was not receiving money. However, another problem in Greece has always been the 'absorption rate' for the EU funding (i.e. Greece's capability to use available EU funds), in this case, the ESF (*Kathimerini* 24.05.2011). The problem of the NGOs' funding has not been addressed satisfactorily at all despite the application of the OMC into Greek public policy. The adequate funding of anti-poverty NGOs and networks has been restricted by the inefficiency of domestic public policy. According to one stakeholder 'Greece has many laws, some of which are very good; yet, these laws are not applied. The Greek government has the responsibility to fund 33% of the annual cost of the certified organisations' (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010). This statement has been confirmed by the NAP 2005-2006, which expected that obstacles to the participation

of all relevant actors (among which the NGOs) would be gradually solved with the use of the National Committee for Social Protection (as shown above), and with actions such as the certification of the NGOs. This certification was expected to provide 'a platform for development of the third sector according to the successful paradigms of other European countries' (Greek NAP 2005-2006: 35). According to this NAP, the certification of the organisations would mean allocation of funding, which would help to improve the services that these organisations provide to socially excluded people. However, the certification of organisations was continuously postponed. Eventually some organisations were indeed certified in 2005. However, by the end of 2010, their funding had still not been granted (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010).

One positive impact of the implementation of the OMC within the British social inclusion process was the emerging cooperation between different government departments (Armstrong 2006). This cooperation emerged also in the Greek case. While the DESC had the responsibility for the issuing of the NAPs/NSRs on social inclusion, in practice there was a cross-departmental team of civil servants which was responsible for the drafting of those documents. Thus, Greek official documents have claimed that better ministerial coordination has taken place on issues of social inclusion. In the government's own words,

> In the framework of efforts for better coordination, there are now designated working parties in three of the main Ministries [Economy and Finance, Employment and Social Protection, Health and Social Welfare] involved in the implementation of actions for the National Strategy Report, while

> representatives from the competent Ministries participate in the coordination team for compilation of the report (NSR 2008-2010: 8).

However, instead of being seen as positive, this ministerial cooperation has often been regarded as an extra obstacle for NGOs' participation in the social inclusion policy-making process. As one NGO representative pointed out:

> Another thing in Greece is that you do not know to whom you should speak with. Social exclusion and poverty agendas are scattered among three or four departments: health, employment, economy, and education (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).

Independent experts who have evaluated the application of the OMC across the EU have appreciated the method 'puts on horizontal links' while they think that the OMC 'helped to initiate some interaction [among Departments] which was not present before' (e.g. PPMI 2011: 129). However, in Greece this development was seen by the NGOs as negative because it further complicated their efforts to lobby the administration for their inclusion in the consultation, monitoring and evaluation of the national action on social inclusion.

Considering the importance of the social inclusion OMC for the Greek government it is surprising that the Greek official Implementation Reports which report the Greek strategy towards the Lisbon objectives to the EU do not refer to the OMC. In their evaluation of the Implementation Report of 2007, independent experts concluded that 'no links are evident in the Implementation Report in relation to the E.U. Social

Protection and Social Inclusion Process, while no reference is made to the OMC process…' (Ziomas *et al.* 2007: 4). However, despite this criticism and despite the NGOs' complaints about the Greek government's unwillingness to promote their participation and to acknowledge their role, official documents appear satisfied with the participation of the secondary stakeholders (as, for example, the above cited words of the NSR Greece 2008-2010 showed). Nevertheless, even the NSR Greece 2008-2010 report did not make adequate references to the OMC according to stakeholders interviewed for this thesis (Interviews in Athens 07.12.2009a and 08.12.2009). In fact, the above cited NSR claimed that it was based on 'three strategic directions' (i.e. social inclusion, pensions, health and long term care) which were expected to 'decisively contribute to fulfilment of the three main goals set by OMC on social protection and social exclusion (sic)' (Greece NSR 2008-2010: 6). Throughout the second part, which was titled '*National Action Plan on Social Inclusion*', there was no reference to the OMC at all.

Despite serious shortcomings in the engagement of the Greek stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC, some secondary stakeholders compared positively the existing involvement with the situation in the early years of the application of the OMC or the pre-OMC years. Because of the NGOs' almost total absence from the Greek policy-making process before the Lisbon strategy, the years of the application of the OMC have been seen as an improvement in terms of the mobilisation of actors. Another interviewee from the EAPN-Greece argued that civil servants had shown signs of increasing engagement in consultation meetings with organisations and networks (Interview in Athens, 01.12.2011). The respondent referred to the call for proposals for projects which aimed at social inclusion in the context of the

PROGRESS programme. A limited participation of secondary stakeholders had been created which would not have happened without the OMC (*ibid.*). However, the participation never reached the point at which it was considered satisfactory by anti-poverty NGOs and networks. Even when the organisations had indeed been mobilised, the result was a consultation which failed to influence the policy agenda: 'NGOs will be invited to be heard but, in fact, they will not be heard. Policies will be planned independently of what the NGOs will say' (*ibid.*).

The previous interviewee who positively commented on the increasing engagement between senior officials and representatives from associations also acknowledged that there were additional obstacles which prevented this mobilisation of secondary stakeholders to be reflected in the policy output:

> These civil servants, who are on a daily basis dealing with issues of poverty and social exclusion, hold the same opinions as us; yet, the final decision regarding which policies will be implemented and how, is being taken at a higher level, remote from the civil servants and from us (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011).

There is clearly a difference between the views of the administration and the political leadership on issues such as stakeholder consultation. As was mentioned by a representative from the EAPN-Greece:

> The discussion on the EU objectives in Greece has been limited to a group of administrators. The whole work is being done at that level. Sometimes anti-

> poverty networks and organisations are consulted. The administrators can say 'Yes! What you are saying is nice but the decision will be taken by somebody else' (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).

Once again it was not only the secondary stakeholders who commented on such shortcomings but also academics and independent experts. Featherstone (2005b: 229) has noted that the political leadership in Greece is made up by Ministers and their personal advisers who are cut-off from the civil society and other groups input which could provide the necessary 'technocratic legitimation'. A study on stakeholder participation in the social OMC by Delistathis and colleagues (2009: 1) found:

> The administration is involved in the preparation of the National Strategy Report, takes part in committees and working groups and provides the necessary input, but it is not part of the decision making process and it is not clear if and how its views influence the final decisions.

These last citations, which refer to the gap between the administration and the political leadership do not only illustrate the shortcomings in the Greek policy-making process but also confirm that the involvement of secondary stakeholders in the agenda-setting stage is not eventually reflected in the NAPs/NSRs. Additionally, the lack of the NGOs' input into the NAPs was further aggravated by the absence of any process of monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs. In fact, the monitoring of the NAPs/NSRs has been seen as of secondary importance by the Greek government. The NSR 2008-2010 acknowledged 'the absence of a permanent, autonomous

monitoring agency that would ensure greater efficiency and continuation of applied policies' (NSR Greece 2008-2010: 47). According to interviewees, only a couple of civil servants monitor the process (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Overall, agenda-setting is the only stage of the policy-making process in which secondary stakeholders can potentially participate, since right after that 'the contact between the actors and the administration on issues regarding the NAP ends' (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a). However, even during the agenda-setting, the participation of secondary stakeholders hardly takes the form of a satisfactory consultation process. Instead, participants' views are welcomed but eventually not taken into consideration by the decision-makers. This situation prevents the incorporation of proposals by NGOs in the NAPs as well as the evaluation of the influence of these actors on Greek social policy (*ibid*.).

In the period 2001-2010, the level of participation by anti-poverty NGOs and networks was, overall, far from reaching a level which was required by the OMC. However, in a few cases the OMC was seen as the main reason behind stakeholder participation at the agenda-setting stage of the public policy-making process in Greece. Secondary stakeholders assigned these developments to the EU framework but considered the social inclusion OMC as too weak an instrument to be able to meet their expectations in terms of participation. These issues will be discussed in more detail in part 4.5 of this chapter. Prior to this, the following part intends to look into whether the OMC triggered participation of primary stakeholders in the social inclusion policy-making process.

4.4.2 Participation of primary stakeholders

In a country where even organisations with notable umbrella networks at EU level struggle to get heard by policy-makers, the mobilisation of primary stakeholders for the social inclusion OMC is even more difficult. As was shown in part 4.4.1, official documents (such as the NAPs/NSRs) appear satisfied with the participation of anti-poverty associations and optimistic about the envisaged further improvement of their participation in future. However, these documents never refer to the 'self-expression' of people who experience poverty and social exclusion, although this was one of the Council's main objectives for the social inclusion OMC (Council of the EU 2002: 12; see also chapter 1 section 1.1.1). While grassroots associations are part of the EAPN-Greece (see table 4), their views are incorporated in the views of the network which, however, struggle to feed them into the administration as was shown above. Apart from this, there are no direct talks between people in poverty and senior officers. The coordinator of the Greek delegation to the annual Brussels meeting of people experiencing poverty is, due to her role, in contact with people in poverty and social exclusion. In an interview in Athens she made the following statement about primary stakeholders' direct talks with government officials (01.12.2011):

> I do not think that there are any contacts [between officials and primary stakeholders]. Actually, I am sure about this. The officials hardly get into contact with the Greek network [EAPN-Greece] which represents these people and forms a part of the civil society. The MPs do not want to see them, and the Prefect never gets in touch with them. In Greece, the reasonable thinking 'I will sit and talk with people who actually live in this

> situation' does not exist. Therefore, we have to communicate their problems. But I think that even our voice is not getting heard.

This statement confirms that the participation of people in poverty in the policy-making process is *not* happening. Greek policy-makers do not appear engaged in participatory practices which have been asked for by the OMC that requests the highest possible involvement of primary stakeholders in the policy-making process. Another interviewee described in similar words the lack of participation of primary stakeholders in the policy-making process:

> In Greece, we have not learned to ask for the views of those who experience social inequalities. Even in conferences which are organised by us the so-called social actors. I stand up and speak; someone else may speak too. However, the homeless do not speak, nor do the abused women. It is the same with all socially deprived groups. The participation of these groups in the drafting of the policies has not yet been introduced in our political consciousness. It does simply not exist (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

The use of the term 'political consciousness' brings forward an issue raised in the analytical framework (chapter 1 section 1.1.5). According to it, one of the factors which potentially promote Europeanisation is the 'political and organisational cultures and collective understandings' (Cowles *et al.* 2001: 11). In Greece, such a factor was not in place. The absence of primary stakeholder participation does not only concern the official policy-making process but also anti-poverty associations. There is a notable difference between Greece and the UK in this sense. While both

member states were excluding primary stakeholders from the policy-making process prior to the OMC, antipoverty associations in Greece did not manage to promote the participation of the primary stakeholders in the policy-making process after the OMC. This happened not only because of the obstacles to their participation but also because Greek secondary stakeholders work *for* but not *with* primary stakeholders. Anti-poverty NGOs and networks in Greece do not appear to use the same participatory processes as organisations in member states such as the UK (see chapter 3). In an interview carried out in Athens (20.12.2010) with the Director of the IKE, the interviewee described as follows her experience when visiting Sweden[63]:

> At the end of the 1990s, I was working with an NGO in Sweden which was set up by parents of people with mental illnesses. There [in Sweden] they have set such high standards in terms of combating social exclusion and give a high level of access to people with mental illnesses. In every meeting the organisation's board comprises the outer circle while the inner circle in turn consisted of people with mental illnesses. The latter are sitting next to their personal assistant with whom they have worked on each of the issues which have been agreed on to be raised at the meeting. They all decide together on what they will do. When I saw this practice I experienced a professional and personal shock! I said to myself that this is not only approaching democratic processes but it is also a deeply ethical and humanistic issue. Because you

[63] The reason behind this visit was the Council's support to the promotion of cooperation across the EU around issues of disability (Geyer 2002). An action programme in the context of the Horizon programme, the Helios II (1993-1996), was seeking for the development and improvement of information among member-states and among NGOs, the coordination and betterment of existing, by that time, programmes, the promotion of a European level cooperation and best practice exchanges between member states and NGOs (ibid: 73).

> cannot decide for anyone –even for someone who is mentally ill– on their behalf.

The difference among the secondary stakeholders in Greece and in member states which apply well-developed participatory practices that are closer to the EU's objectives should have become clear by now. Greek secondary stakeholders did not introduce participatory practices in their own organisations. The absence of participation of primary stakeholders in the Greek policy-making process must be seen together with the lack of their participation in the anti-poverty NGOs and networks. Some representatives acknowledged their organisations' weaknesses by saying that they too see the socially excluded as 'victims of a situation' and 'recipients of policies' instead of persons who 'should obtain a beneficial presence in the planning [of the policies]' (Interview in Athens, 07.12.2009a). Others, such as the Director of IKE who visited Sweden in the 1990s, argued that they had actually tried to introduce participatory practices in Greece but the necessary funding was not provided by the government:

> Through the Horizon Programme for disabled people I tried to bring the Swedish practices for participation to Greece. I decided to draft an official proposal. It was turned down! (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010)

When the interviewee was asked why she thought that her proposal was not funded so as to become a practice in Greece, she argued that the Greek government in general is not giving any feedback on the reasons for the rejection of proposals. In her case, she blamed it on the way the government allocates funding received from

the EU. Like a previously cited interview with the Director of the EAPN-Greece who complained about the funding to the Church of Greece, the Director of IKE implied that only certain organisations receive funding. She wondered how it was possible to turn down an application that had been submitted by people who were funded by the EU for this reason. Eventually, she expressed her disappointment by giving her own (negative) opinion on the overall Greek response to Europeanisation pressures: 'I eventually gave up. I never believed that some European institution could rationalise this country' (*ibid.*).

While this interviewee implied the lack of primary stakeholder participation in the 1990s (i.e. before the adoption of the OMC), other interviewees referred to the lack of participation since the launch of the social inclusion OMC in 2001. The following cases of two socially excluded groups serve as examples.

The first example of an excluded group (the members of which can be regarded as primary stakeholder), concerns the Roma communities in Greece. As has been argued above, both the secondary stakeholders and decision-makers treat the socially excluded as victims of a situation and recipients of policies rather than people who should feed their views into the policy-making process. According to the interviewees this approach has inevitably led to a costly but inefficient practice:

> The Roma were only receiving money. The money was used by them inefficiently since they did not have the skills and the knowledge of how to invest on the community development … Because of the structure of the Roma communities in Greece –and in the Balkans– where there are many

> 'individual collectives'[64] and everyone is a chairperson, money from the EQUAL or the ESF were not allocated in larger parts of these communities. (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009a).

As a result, there have been no opportunities for the participation of this group of primary stakeholders in the policy-making process. Despite the generous funding, approximately 200,000-350,000 Roma people in Greece do not have any access to the local or national policy-making process (Divani 2001: 5). Often they do not even have access to activities organised by NGOs and other actors which have been mobilised on their behalf (*ibid.*)

Another example constitutes the case of immigrants. They are also excluded from the policy-making process and find it impossible to influence decisions regarding the right to asylum. According to a Presidential decree in 2009, the members of the Committee which was established to assess applications for asylum were two senior ranking police officers, one civil servant from the immigration office, and one representative from the UN Refugee Agency (Hellenic Government Gazette 2009). Secondary and primary stakeholders in the asylum policy field were not provided with opportunities to influence the decision-making process which instead was entirely dominated by the police. Thus, the representative from the Klimaka organisation complained:

> In the talks in the Committee for the Immigrants' Asylum, immigrants do not participate. Only the UN Refugee Agency, not even the Greek Council

[64] According to the interviewee, this refers to the organizations which have up to three members.

for Refugees which through its services is in daily contact with approximately six hundred refugees (Interview in Athens 07.12.2009b).

Less than a month after the above mentioned Presidential decree, the UN Refugee Agency withdrew its cooperation from the works of the Committee. It criticised the government that the provisions of the Decree 'do not ensure a just and efficient process of the recognition of the refugees' issue in Greece according to international and European law' (*Rizospastis* 22.07.2009). Fourteen NGOs and associations also fiercely criticised the government by arguing that the dialogue about immigration is actually 'a governmental monologue' and that 'the only actual agent which is officially assigned to the issue [were] the police' (Greek Council for Refugees 2009: official portal). Even the 2011 law, which replaced the 2009 Presidential decree and which was welcomed by the UN Refugee Agency, did not provide for the participation of the secondary stakeholders or primary stakeholders in the asylum committees. According to the decree, the chair of the Committee should be a person of 'prestige' with 'academic education' and 'managerial skills' (Hellenic Government Gazette 2011: 20). Similarly, the recruitment of its members should be carried out among academics, executives, translators, civil servants and so on (*ibid.*).[65]

This problematic situation regarding the involvement of primary stakeholders has been reflected in the activities of the grassroots communities and the networks that

[65] On 05.04.11 the Greek Ombudsman concluded in the *Autopsy in the Retention Centers for Immigrants in the Counties of Rodopi and Evros*: 'The situation in this area, especially in the last two years, has the dimensions of a humanitarian crisis, due to the increase of the number of immigrants … It must particularly be underlined that there are crucial questions about the violation of fundamental rights, for which are responsible the extremely bad conditions of retention, the important shortcomings in the recruitment of the relevant divisions of Greek police, and the non-adopting of necessary measures which have been approved and funded by the EU' (Greek Ombudsman 2011: 1).

they have created. For example, the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Societies of Parents and Guardians of People with Disabilities (POSGAMEA) holds annual conferences to which grassroots associations are invited to participate. The federation itself is made up of grassroots groups and it is a member of the National Confederation of People with Disabilities (ESAMEA) which was also established by grassroots associations (ESAMEA web-portal)[66]. The memorandum of the POSGAMEA regards the EU projects, funds and laws as means to achieve its aims for social inclusion of people with disabilities.[67] The ESAMEA acknowledges the importance of the decisions which are taken at EU level and their impact on the life of the people with disabilities in Greece (*ibid.*). For this reason, it is a member of the European Disability Forum (EDF) which represents the people with disabilities in the dialogue with the EU relevant institutions.

POSGAMEA's declaration of the annual conference in 2008 calls on the EP and the European Commission (together with the Greek parliament and government) to protect the human and social rights of people with disabilities (POSGAMEA 2008). Additionally it calls on the EP and Commission to guarantee equal opportunities and to accept, as official consultants in the national and European level policy-making process, the relevant organisations and associations (*ibid.*). However, despite all the references to the EU, none of these actors has been given the opportunity to influence the NAPs. One interviewee, who participates in domestic conferences of grassroots communities, explained that this participation was not even intended by the policy-makers. Instead, it is merely a process which concerns an internal

[66] http://www.esaea.gr/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=8&thms=1, accessed on 12.08.2011; ESAMEA is also a member of the Greek National Committee for Social Protection (NCSP). However it is represented by one person only.
[67] http://www.posgamea.gr/Uploads/katastatikoposgameanew.pdf, accessed on 24.09.2011

exchange of information among grassroots communities (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011).

Consequently, empirical evidence gathered for this thesis suggests that in Greece the OMC had no significant impact in terms of participation of primary stakeholders. Once more, fundamental OMC objectives (in this case, the participation of primary stakeholders) have been proven irrelevant to the policy-making process in Greece. Therefore, no domestic response to the theoretical provisions of the OMC emerged. The next part of the chapter analyses the changes in expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants who participate in the OMC-led Greek social inclusion strategy. It is primarily concerned with secondary stakeholders. However, due to the social inclusion OMC, primary stakeholders participate at the European level through the EU annual conferences of people experiencing poverty. Thus, the following part will also assess whether this participation did have an impact in the participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties.

4.5 Expectations, political activities and loyalties

4.5.1 The domestic level

In the decade 2001-2010 Greece failed to respond to the social inclusion OMC's provisions in terms of the mobilisation of people in poverty and social exclusion (i.e. primary stakeholders) within the Greek policy-making process. The absence of people in poverty in the Greek policy-making process has meant that their views

were not heard by the policy-makers (see in part 4.4.2 above). In fact, primary stakeholders' views were absent not only from the formal policy-making process but often also not taken into account by the anti-poverty associations. The OMC and its provisions for the self-expression of primary stakeholders did not help to change this situation.

However, the participation of secondary stakeholders in the Greek policy-making process has increased somewhat as a result of the OMC. This development initially seemed to redirect some secondary stakeholders' expectations and political activities from the domestic level towards the EU level. Stakeholders argued that compared with the pre-OMC years, the social inclusion OMC had an impact on the domestic policy-making process. This happened mainly through the NAPs which formed the basis for a sort of consultation process between the secondary stakeholders and the government in Greece (Interviews in Athens 01.12.2011 and 07.12.2009a). The setting up of this basis was seen by these stakeholders as a positive development especially when compared to the pre-OMC situation. In fact, secondary stakeholders observed an increasing engagement between the civil servants and the NGOs while arguing that this would not have happened without the OMC. As one interviewee stated:

> In any case, we have reached a level where we can say that people [governments and secondary stakeholders] discuss. And this [the OMC], for me, is an exceptional tool to work with. Its results in policy outcomes is another issue; but for me this [the discussions] is an exceptional tool' (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011)

While the interviewee appeared to doubt about the OMC's potential to treat issues of poverty, she expressed the view that the OMC's contribution was to provide a framework for participation of stakeholders within this EU-driven process. This created a positive evaluation of the EU and its role in the social inclusion field. Therefore, another interviewee characterised the EU structure as 'exceptional' and argued that:

> The participation of some people in EU initiatives, such as the OMC, is an opportunity for them to remember the self-evident or, in other words, to remember that things can steadily develop as long as there is a basis, a framework and the appropriate tools (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).

The disappointment with the domestic public policy process is evident from this statement. However, it also shows that the disappointment was mitigated by expectations that the EU provided a framework which has the potential of offering the 'appropriate tools' for developments in the domestic policy-making process. One of these tools was the provisions for stakeholder participation in the process. Due to the problems that the secondary stakeholders encountered in their efforts to make use of the provisions on the domestic level, they appeared to shift (at least some of) their political activities towards the EU level. The Director of the EAPN-Greece stated during an interview that the Greek network asked the Director of the umbrella network (i.e. EAPN-EU) to put pressure to the Greek government to allow for the participation of NGOs in the social inclusion policy-making process (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Between 2003 and 2006, the Director of the EAPN-EU was

Mrs Maria Marinakou from Greece. However, the EAPN-EU Director's commitment and her efforts to change the Greek government's attitudes came to no avail. To the disappointment of the Greek secondary stakeholders no improvements were achieved in terms of their participation (*ibid.*).

As was explained in section 4.3 above, the Director of IKE which is a member of the EAPN-Greece emphasised that she could hardly recognise any elements of a process called OMC in Greece (Interview in Athens 20.01.2011). This was rather an exaggeration because as the same interviewee and other key secondary stakeholders showed during interviews, they were all very well aware of the features of the OMC. Key secondary stakeholders in Greece appeared to have a sound knowledge of issues concerning the method at both EU and member state level. The Director of the EAPN-Greece argued that members of the network had closely followed the OMC-related developments at EU level and scrutinized whether these developments were applied in Greece (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Another interviewee emphasised that the OMC had managed to create opportunities for the self-expression of people in poverty in Germany and in Ireland (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011). Therefore, the OMC appeared to create an EU framework favourable to the dissemination of information from the EU to the domestic level and between member states. However, it would be overly ambitious to resemble this dissemination of information to policy learning. Greek secondary stakeholders realised that the OMC was indeed working in other member states but this is far from being regarded as learning of new ideas to solve policy problems. Additionally, contrary to the potential of the policy learning to promote socialisation (Jacobsson 2004; see also chapter 1 section 1.2.5), this dissemination of information did not

promote socialisation of stakeholders under common concerns and common solutions and objectives. As shown earlier, developments at EU level, such as the OMC's objectives and developments in other member states, have been seen as irrelevant to the particularities in Greece. Therefore, Greek secondary stakeholders were informed about OMC related developments but they were not seeing these developments happening in Greece. It can be argued that instead of Greek stakeholders feeling part of a new system of governance, they felt excluded from it. Ideas, norms, policy solutions, objectives and discourses were shared between stakeholders in other European member states but not with stakeholders in Greece.

The provisions for participation and the small improvements in the consultation of the NGOs in Greece as well as the much wider developments in the mobilisation of stakeholders in other member states revealed a rational assessment by stakeholders who participated in the social inclusion OMC. This positive rational assessment initially redirected the expectations and political activities of the stakeholders from the national to the EU level. At least in one case a respondent argued that 'Brussels, regardless whether they satisfy our proposals, at least takes them into consideration' (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Therefore, in comparison to the Greek policy-making process the EU policy-making process seemed to be capable of providing a framework which at least partly satisfied the expectations from secondary stakeholders for participation in the social inclusion policy-making process.

However, the redirections in expectations and political activities did not affect all stakeholders who participated in the OMC process. One stakeholder perceived the added value which the OMC offered in Greece in terms of participation, merely as a

response to the needs and priorities of European citizens. Thus, in an interview in Athens (07.12.2009b) conducted for the present thesis, the Director of Klimaka avoided crediting the OMC or EU for the (positive) developments in the social inclusion field. In his own words, 'states develop together with societies. States cannot move forward without correcting social disparities'. According to this argument, positive domestic developments in the field of social inclusion would have happened even without the EU. These positive domestic developments include the dialogue between stakeholders and the government during the planning of strategies (*ibid.*). However, the Director of Klimaka acknowledged that the EU has achieved in some issues, to have had an impact on the policy-making process in Greece.

Even the more satisfied stakeholders, after expressing expectations in the first years of the application of the OMC in Greece, appeared to change their stances after the continuous obstacles which they met with whilst trying to achieve better domestic participation. Their expectations (directed to the EU) turned eventually into disappointment. This disappointment seemed to refer in particular to the softness of the OMC which greatly restricted its effectiveness in terms of widening participation. The participation was only in times referring to proper consultation. In the majority of the cases, participation in practice meant an 'irregular and sketchy' consultation process (e.g. Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Chapter 1 (section 1.3.1) showed that the degree of involvement is necessary for the understanding of participation and therefore for the understanding of potential redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties. According to the Inbas and Engender (2010: 3), 'consultation' describes a participatory process in which policy-makers

‘inform and get feedback from stakeholders’. However, as shown above, the Director of the EAPN-Greece said that the network was not aware of the final draft of the NAP before this was published by the Commission. Therefore, the stakeholders were not always getting feedback by the policy-makers. Neither were they always requested to inform the policy-makers. Finally, as was shown that in section 4.4.1 above, the consultation process did not have any significant impact on the NAPs and the policy agenda since even when stakeholders were being heard, their views were not taken into consideration.

The redirection of stakeholders’ expectations and political activities from the national to the EU level did not occur in a sustained manner in Greece for the reasons which were explained above. The same actors who had initially been positive about the EU’s role in fighting poverty expressed their dissatisfaction also with the abandoning of the Lisbon targets after the review of the agenda in 2005. The reformed Lisbon strategy and the review of the anti-poverty objectives disappointed the anti-poverty associations. Greek stakeholders perceived this review as a retreat by the EU from its social inclusion OMC and its previous objectives as the following statement shows:

> The Lisbon agenda is now in general and tactical retreat. The objectives which should have been met by 2010 were abandoned. Among these objectives was the objective of participation through the OMC as a tool for social dialogue and reforms. Since the Lisbon objectives were abandoned with the review of the Lisbon strategy, I think that anti-poverty networks got involved more ‘loosely’ … The EU is a union of economies. In Lisbon, we

> [the anti-poverty associations] fought for a union of societies. This battle has been lost. For some reason, you can name it liberalism, the social agenda has lost ground (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).

This statement flags up the importance of the issue of a social Europe. The Lisbon strategy was intended to balance the free market with social (and environmental) concerns. It could have corrected some of the social inequalities in the EU (see also chapter 1, part 1.2.2.1). As was shown in chapter 1, there is indeed strong public support for the EU's role in social policy. This support contradicts the conventional wisdom which assumes that elites are much more pro-European than the citizens (Hooghe 2003). As was shown above, the reasons why the interviewees shifted their expectations and political activities some degree from the domestic to the European level was due to a rational assessment. Greek stakeholders seemed to believe that the EU had the potential to help them in their fight against poverty across member states. However, it seems that the shift in expectations and political activities (e.g. the battle to create a social EU) declined after the Greek stakeholder realised that participation in OMC activities on the domestic level remained weak while their views were not actually taken into consideration by the policy-makers, who later abandoned the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. The positive rational assessment that existed and positively affected their attitudes towards the EU started to be questioned.

Finally, the fierce financial crisis which has hit Greece has made some stakeholders even more disappointed about the EU. As was shown in chapter 1, the crisis-hit citizens in Greece have changed significantly their views about the EU. Eurobarometer surveys have clearly shown a decrease in support for the European

institutions (e.g. Eurobarometer 2011a). Amongst some (primary and secondary) stakeholders this declining support has turned into disappointment and fierce accusations of the EU political system, as can be seen from the following statement:

> I believe that the EU, its political system and structure reproduce poverty and social exclusion. Why are we now all wondering about this? The EU and Merkel and Sarkozy who dominate the EU, reproduce these inequalities. Are we trying to fool ourselves? Are we playing with words? Who is behind poverty and social exclusion in Greece in this period? (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010)

Apart from identifying the EU political system and structures with the negative images which Merkel and Sarkozy have in Greece, the interviewee confirmed the pessimistic attitude of the population towards the EU in a period of crisis. One has therefore to be cautious when proclaiming that participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties have shifted from the domestic level towards the EU level. The involvement of two EU institutions – the European Central Bank and EU Commission (in addition to the International Monetary Fund) - in the troika which, has been considered responsible for mishandling the Greek financial crisis, has had a negative impact on the EU's image in Greece.

As was explained in chapter 1, participants' shifts in loyalties from the domestic to the EU level occur only when expectations and political activities are redirected to the EU 'over long periods' (Haas 1958: 5). In the case of Greek participants in the social inclusion OMC, expectations and political activities were redirected to the EU

level for only a limited period of time. The difficulties that the stakeholders encountered in their efforts to be satisfactory involved in the policy-making process and the developments at the EU level turned the positive expectations into disappointment. Thus, in line with the analytical framework put forward in chapter 1, the loyalties of stakeholders in Greece did not shift mainly due to the disappointment about the limited participation which the OMC established in Greece. At the same time, the reform of the Lisbon agenda and the financial crisis and the involvement of the EU in the Greek rescue plan has also been perceived negatively by the interviewees who are specialised in issues of social inclusion.

Importantly, the above analysis refers exclusively to the participation of secondary stakeholders in the domestic consultation and participation process. Nevertheless, the implementation of the OMC has offered the opportunity for some primary stakeholders to be involved in a European level process, mainly through the annual European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP). Chapter 4 has discussed key issues which concern these meetings between 2001 and 2010. Since their first appearance in 2001 the meetings have been quasi-institutionalised. The following part intends to assess whether participants' loyalties, expectations and political activities have shifted as a result of participation in these EU-level conferences.

4.5.2 The EU level

The following statement by the Director of the EAPN-Greece, who admitted that she had changed her initial attitudes about participation in the EMPEP, could be

interpreted as providing empirical evidence for the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants:

> In the beginning I was doubtful about these meetings at EU level because people go there, show their agendas but changes in their lives never seem to occur. However, the European meetings have the excellent effect which makes participants feel that 'I am not standing alone'. There is an excellent experience at a personal and later at a team level. They are all links of the same chain. This observation has changed my opinion about the meetings. In the past we went with a Greek delegation to a conference in Brussels. It helped the Greek delegates to widen their horizons. It took them out of their 'micro-level' [i.e. the focus only on their personal problems] and showed them that similar issues concern people in Europe. Still, the impact of the policies in their daily life is negligible (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009)

Despite the lack of discernible influence on the policy outcomes, the interviewee thought that participation in these meetings has been beneficial for the stakeholders. In fact, the interviewee argued that loyalties to the EU emerged and were built on common concerns. In other words, the perceptions of socially excluded people seemed to change when they realised that there were other people across the EU who were coping with similar problems. This same situation has been described by the coordinator of the Greek delegation to the EU conferences of people in poverty as the 'enthusiasm of the identification'. As the coordinator stated:

> The participants may think 'what I am going through now –or we in Greece are going through– may occur to someone else in Portugal'. When people realise the similarity of the problems this creates perceptions that did not exist. Instead of thinking that this happens in Greece you start seeing that this is actually the result of processes across Europe. It takes you out of the national context and puts you in a European one (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011).

In fact, this was not just the opinion of the coordinator who participated in the OMC as a secondary stakeholder. It was also the experience of one interviewee who participated as a primary stakeholder in these EU level meetings, as can be seen by the following statement:

> When I spoke about daily life in Greece I discovered that participants from all member states were facing the same problems. For example, the agony of the parents concerning the entering of their children in the society is the same everywhere. For the children, the access [to society] is nowhere guaranteed (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011)

The 'discovery' of common concerns among the participants has been described as 'a process that makes you break out of the national context and puts you in a European context' by the Director of the EAPN-Greece (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). By definition, social exclusion refers to the exclusion of people from communities. Through the EMPEP participants are given the opportunity to get involved in a group of people across the EU who do not only express common

concerns but also put forward common proposals for political actions against these concerns. The coordinator of the Greek delegations to these Brussels conferences stated:

> A statement that will be issued and will have been agreed upon by all national delegations and that will be accepted by the Commission is something gained by all participants together (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011)

Another participant in the 2009 conference also commented positively on the proposals that Greek delegates made together with the delegates from other member states. According to the Greek participant, there were many proposals and the participants decided altogether which of them would be put forward to the Commission (Interview in Crete 20.01.2011)

The participation in a community, the realisation of common concerns, and the formulation of common proposals were followed by the acknowledgement that the EU was the institution which was offering the opportunities for participation. This acknowledgment appeared to indicate the redirection of expectations and political activities towards the EU level. As the above mentioned participant stated, 'I knew about the EU before the meeting; what I did not know was its sensitivity to listen to the problems of the people' (*ibid.*). Once again, the redirection of expectations and political activities from the national to the EU level took place after a comparison between the opportunities offered at the domestic and EU levels. As has been shown in part 4 of this chapter such opportunities for primary stakeholders' participation

were not offered (before or after the launch of the social inclusion OMC) in Greece. Another participant in the 2009 EMPEP expressed her disappointment that socially excluded people's views are not taken into consideration by Greek policy-makers. However, the fact that MEPs from member states across the EU were invited to attend the meetings created high expectations amongst the participants. The participants were aware of the fact that important EU decision-makers were invited to listen to their problems. They therefore decided to redirect their political activities to the EU level (Interview in Crete 20.01.2011). Consequently,

> I felt, I swear to god, that this is my big opportunity. I said: 'Here, we will have some positive results, it cannot go wrong!' I charged my batteries, I prepared myself; I had great hopes and high expectations, expecting many, many, many, many things… (Interview in Crete 20.01.2011)

As the study of the EAPN-EU on the impact of these meetings in Brussels has shown, the majority of policy-makers do acquire knowledge and change their perceptions about social exclusion when they listen to the views of the grassroots participants (Dierckx and Van Herck 2010). For the Greek participants in these meetings the EU has provided a space in which policy-makers would eventually listen to grassroots actors. Therefore, the opening of a forum for primary stakeholders to express their views and concerns by the EU created enthusiasm among the participants (Interviews in Athens 08.12.2009; 20.01.2011; 01.12.2011; 03.12.2011). Clearly participants created EU-wide community feelings if not an EU-wide community which, however, was only a temporary community. This created expectations and redirected political activities towards the EU level which were seen

as being capable of listening to people's views and concerns. According to a participant in the meetings:

> People who participate want to get heard by those who will understand us. And those who will understand us are the MEPs who have knowledge of the reality (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011).

In fact, the same interviewee participated in the following conference in Brussels in June 2010. The community feelings that were emerging amongst the participants in these meetings were once again confirmed. As the participant stated:

> The second time delegates from every member state showed a kind of familiarity. We all knew each other and it was much better to act inside a group of people that you know (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011)

According to the coordinator of the Greek delegations to Brussels, this sense of belonging to a wider EU community empowered the Greek delegates who, after the meetings, expressed intentions to start political activities in the domestic level. Thus following the participation in the EU conferences, Greek delegates started being politically active in their local communities (Interview in Athens 01.12.2011). Another interviewee highlighted the same issue by stating:

> [After the EU meetings] people returned to their local communities and established unions. They are not afraid anymore to travel in order to talk in a meeting, in a task force. Their words have changed as well; they are not

> anymore words which express personal concerns, but words with political meaning (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009)

However, a person argued that socially excluded people at the local level are concerned with their own problems and they do not care 'that much about the European framework' (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011).

Once again the redirection of the participants' expectations and political activities towards the EU did not seem to last for long. The initial enthusiasm amongst stakeholders for the EU was followed by disappointment. The disappointment had to do with both the lack of policy outcomes and the observation that the actual attendance by the MEPs was much lower than expected by the primary stakeholders. In one case, a participant argued that even the MEPs who attended the 2009 meeting did so for reasons of publicity as the following statement shows:

> The response from the [Greek] MEPs was really disappointing. No one showed up! Only some MEPs from Sweden, Finland, Portugal who, I have the feeling, came for their own reasons of publicity. No Greek MEPs. Entering the EU building there were some letter boxes one for each MEP. I said 'we are Greeks and our MEPs have given the worst impressions'. I wanted to write a reprimand letter and put it in the letter box of each Greek MEP. The other members of the group did not agree and I had to let that go… (Interview in Crete 20.01.2011)

Finally, despite the empowerment of the people who participated in the EU conferences, interviews with participants reflected once again a sense of disappointment with the EU. The main reason behind this disappointment was that their participation at the EU level had no impact at all on their daily lives. As the participant put it: 'I think that the EU is not helping us. I think that our whole effort is being lost' (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011)

Therefore, like in the case of the participation at the domestic level, participation at the EU level has the *potential* of redirecting expectations and political activities although in practice the shifts in expectations and political activities do not seem to have lasted for long. The main difference between the domestic and EU levels is that people who participate in the domestic level activities redirect their expectations and political activities towards the EU after a rational assessment of the EU decision-making framework. According to this assessment, the EU framework appears more capable than the domestic framework to satisfy the stakeholders' interests regarding participation in the policy-making process and to influence the policy agenda. In contrast, stakeholders who participate in the EU level become socialised into common EU concerns and adopt common objectives. They therefore redirect temporarily their expectations and political activities to the EU level. However, in both cases, Greek primary and secondary stakeholders appeared eventually disappointed by the fact that their participation did not meet their expectations and did not have any impact in the domestic or the European social inclusion policy-making process. Inevitably, the overall limited and short-term shifts in expectations and political activities did not trigger permanent shifts in the loyalties of the participants.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter provided a brief quantitative assessment of the social situation in Greece. The quantitative data were not able to show any significant impact of the OMC on the levels of poverty and social exclusion within the years 2001-2010. Chapter 4 therefore provided mainly a qualitative assessment of the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece. By drawing examples from the mental health sector and from the issue of homelessness, the present chapter showed that contrary to the official assessments of the OMC by Greek government actors and the NAPs, there was hardly any Greek response to the OMC pressures for reforms. A reason identified for this lack of response is the domination of the two most popular (until 2012) Greek political parties which were deciding and implementing public policy according to clientelistic criteria and according to their own interests. At the same time, the OMC with its lack of sanctions for non-compliance is too weak an instrument to change the partisan politics culture. As Featherstone (2005a) has shown, when EU stimuli for reforms are weak they are prevented by domestic obstacles. Featherstone has identified the lack of precision of EU stimuli as another reason for their weakness (*ibid.*). In the case of the social inclusion OMC the overarching objectives do lack precision since they are reported to be incompatible with the Greek necessities. Sections 4.3 and 4.5 above showed that this incompatibility prevented a process of policy learning which, according to the analytical framework in chapter 1, was expected to facilitate Europeanisation and to trigger shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants. Due to the lack of a policy learning process, domestic stakeholders did not come into contact with problem solving ideas; at least ideas compatible with the Greek policy

problems. The lack of the policy learning process meant simultaneously a lack of a process of participant stakeholders' socialisation under common, EU concerns, ideas and objectives. Secondary stakeholders did not appear to feel 'hedged in' (Jacobsson 2004: 359) an emerging system of governance or integrated in 'structures, norms and values of the EU' (Shore 2000: 149). Instead, they felt excluded because ideas, norms, policy solutions, objectives and discourses were shared between other European member states but not with Greece.

In this context of institutional obstacles and OMC weaknesses, another core objective of the social inclusion OMC, i.e. participation of primary and secondary stakeholders, was responded to by Greece only by the mobilisation of the latter. The views of the primary stakeholders were excluded from the policy-making process and in many cases also from the social NGOs. Therefore, due to the initial misinterpretation of the OMC provisions for participation, the Greek government involved mainly social partners in the policy-making process. However, more EU pressures (e.g. naming and shaming and Joint Reports) led to the establishment of the National Committee for Social Protection. This Committee far from facilitating a type of participation similar to the one required by the OMC, managed however to bring about a few developments in terms of participation. The participation which emerged through the NCSP, referred only to the agenda-setting stage of the NAPs. Evidence brought forward showed that there was no participation of secondary stakeholders in the stages of decision-making, implementation, and monitoring. During the stage of agenda-setting, secondary stakeholders were either only informed by the government about policies concerning social inclusion or, at best, consulted by the government. While this consultation was ranging from filling

questionnaires to direct talks, this was an input which was not being taken into consideration during the decision-making stage of the NAPs process. Therefore, secondary stakeholders' views did not have any significant impact on the NAPs/ NSRs.

With the launch of the OMC secondary stakeholders redirected their expectations to the EU because its participatory provisions appeared capable of satisfying their interests. In the context of the OMC they also redirected political activities. The initial redirection of expectations and political activities was triggered by a positive rational evaluation of the OMC, in particular, and the EU in general. While there were doubts about the OMC's potential to treat issues of poverty, stakeholders expressed the view that the OMC's contribution was that it provided a framework for participation. This positive evaluation emerged as the result of a comparison with the pre-OMC period during which no opportunities for participation had existed. The OMC framework appeared as more possible than the domestic framework if not to have an impact on poverty, at least to promote participation. However, secondary stakeholders' expectations and political activities in Greece soon turned into disappointment because of the domestic obstacles to participation. Stakeholders perceived the review of the Lisbon strategy in 2005 as a retreat from the participatory framework the OMC had intended to establish in Greece. Additionally, the severe financial crisis was an additional factor due to which the initially redirected expectations (from the national to the EU level) were turned into disappointment. According to Haas's (1958) definition, people are loyal to a supranational framework (i.e. the EU) when they redirect expectations and political

activities to that framework for long periods. This was not the case in Greece; therefore, secondary stakeholders did not appear to shift loyalties towards the EU.

The participation of primary stakeholders in EU level consultation projects seemed to follow the same route. Participants in the EU conferences of people who experience poverty initially redirected their expectations and political activities towards the EU. Once again this happened because, compared to the Greek framework, the EU was perceived as more capable of involving primary stakeholders and taking their views and concerns seriously. At the same time, a community feeling or, in the words of Haas (1958), a 'community sentiment' (see also chapter 1) emerged amongst the Greek delegates after their contact with participants across the EU in the annual EMPEP in Brussels. As Jacobsson (2004) has argued, the OMC has the potential to socialise participants in the context of EU common concerns and common objectives. Empirical evidence from the fieldwork in Greece presented in this chapter showed that such socialisation processes indeed took place during the conferences in Brussels. Participants realised that they belonged to a wider community with common concerns and articulated political actions that were based on common objectives. However, the effects of such socialisation should not be overestimated. Socialisation in the EU annual conferences was not a long lasting process. Similarly with secondary stakeholders who were participating at the domestic level, initial expectations and political activities were turned into disappointment. The reasons were the limited attendance of the MEPs, the lack of policy outcomes and the financial crisis. For these reasons, the expectations and political activities which had been redirected from the national to the EU level did not appear to remain there for long. Therefore, similar to

secondary stakeholders, primary stakeholders did not show signs of loyalties to the EU.

Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis

5.1 Introduction

Numerical data on poverty and social exclusion issues was presented at the beginning of chapters 3 and 4. The purpose was to provide the reader with an overview of the social situation in the UK and in Greece. It also aimed to show that a precise assessment of the social inclusion OMC's impact on member states cannot be based only on a quantitative analysis. As chapters 3 and 4 showed, the improvement of the economic situation in the EU during the first years of the implementation of the Lisbon strategy, the relatively stagnant indices of social exclusion in Greece and the UK in most of the period within the timeframe of the research (i.e. 2001-2010) and the serious economic crisis since 2008, have all made it very challenging for researchers to assess qualitatively the impact of the social inclusion OMC in different member states. Chapters 3 and 4 also showed that there are very different interpretations of the main quantitative social inclusion indices in the UK and Greece making necessary a qualitative approach for the assessment of the implementation of the OMC in these two countries.

In the UK the social inclusion OMC appeared to add value to domestic efforts to combat social exclusion which started under a newly elected New Labour government in 1997. Chapter 3 explained that the pre-Lisbon focus and efforts of the New Labour party on combating social exclusion (Levitas 1999; Levitas 1998) were later strengthened by the social OMC (Armstrong 2006, 2005). Importantly, chapter

1 explained –while using Börzel's (2002) variation of Europeanisation as a process of uploading and downloading policies and practices– that the UK was expected to respond positively to the social inclusion OMC because the Labour government had played an active role in the shaping of the Lisbon agenda (Bulmer 2008). At the same time Greece, which is often criticised for the obstacles its domestic political system poses to the Europeanisation of Greek public policies (e.g. Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008; Mossialos and Allin 2005), did not respond as positively to the social inclusion OMC. As was shown in chapter 1, Greece has been described as a 'foot-dragger' in terms of the uploading and downloading of policies within the context of the Europeanisation of member state public policies (e.g. Börzel 2002: 203). Within the context of the Lisbon reform agenda, some scholars have highlighted the poor 'reform capacity' of Greece (Featherstone 2008: 3; Tinios 2005; Mossialos and Allin 2005; Papadimitriou 2005). In contrast to the UK, none of the two political parties which have governed Greece between 2001-2010 focused strongly on social inclusion issues during their time in office.

As was shown in chapter 1, the launch of the social inclusion OMC was followed by explicit references to the need for participation of anti-poverty NGOs and networks and of people who experience poverty and social exclusion (i.e. secondary and primary stakeholders respectively) implicitly in the European, and explicitly in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process. The impact of participation on secondary and primary stakeholders has been the main focus of the analysis in this thesis. According to the first hypothesis, which was put forward in chapter 1, 'the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic social inclusion OMC process leads to shifts in their expectations, political activities and loyalties

from the national to the EU'. A key feature of the OMC is that the domestic social inclusion policy-making process must be reflected in National Action Plans (NAPs) (replaced after 2005 by the National Strategy Reports (NSRs)). For this reason, chapters 3 and 4 focused on whether the (primary and secondary) stakeholders participated in the *stages* of agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs/NSRs between 2001 and 2010. Considering different degrees of participation, chapters 3 and 4 assessed whether participants were *informed* or *consulted* by their domestic governments, whether they were *involved* in the policy-making process, *collaborated* with the government or whether they were even *empowered* (see also chapter 1 section 1.3.1). However, during the course of the fieldwork for this thesis it emerged that other factors are also important for the understanding of stakeholder views and their self-perceptions in addition to the actual participation in the social inclusion OMC process. The most important factors identified include the satisfaction of the participants regarding their own participation and the actual impact which the participation of stakeholders has on the NAPs.

The two country case studies showed that the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in social inclusion OMC-sponsored processes can lead to redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic level to the EU level. However, between 2001 and 2010, participation by primary and secondary stakeholders differed significantly in the UK and in Greece. Therefore, it had different impact on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. Borrowing from Haas (1958), redirection of expectations from the national to the EU level means that people think that the EU framework is more possible to satisfy their goals than the national framework. Accordingly, people shift their political activities

to the EU level in order to pursue their goals. Finally, people who redirect their expectations and political activities to the EU level for long periods are considered to be loyal to the EU (Haas 1958).

As a result of the OMC provisions for wide participation, primary stakeholders from every member state have participated in the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP) since 2001 (see chapter 2 section 2.5). The main purpose of these conferences is to allow the participants to feed their experiences and views into the EU policy-making process. The second hypothesis put forward in chapter 1 therefore proposed that such participation at the EU level will lead to the shift in expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic level towards the EU level. New empirical evidence put forward in chapters 3 and 4 showed that the validity of this hypothesis should be seen in context. The shifts in loyalties seem to have been only temporary rather than long lasting shifts. The new empirical evidence also showed that there were important differences between Greece and the UK.

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of the most important empirical findings presented in chapters 3 and 4. The following section (section 5.2) compares the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in Greece and the UK. Section 5.3 compares the impact of participation on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. Section 5.4 intends to compare the impact which participation in the annual EU conferences has on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. Finally, the last section discusses the conclusion of this chapter.

5.2 Participation in the British and Greek social inclusion processes

As was explained in chapters 3 and 4, the UK and Greece followed different routes regarding the participation of anti-poverty associations and people in poverty as required by the social inclusion OMC. Chapter 3 has shown that the British senior officers and members of anti-poverty networks responded positively to the OMC's pressures for stakeholder participation. Already in 2001, a Social Policy Task Force (SPTF) was set up by the UK Coalition Against Poverty (UKCAP) and the British Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-UK) with the support of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The SPTF's objective was to bring together primary and secondary stakeholders who wanted to have direct talks with the government about social inclusion policies (Interview in Liverpool 24.03.2010). This meant that through membership in the SPTF, members of anti-poverty NGOs and networks including people with direct experience in poverty would come into contact with senior officers from the DWP so as to influence the NAPs.

'Structural impediments' such as clientelism and corporatism (Featherstone 2005b: 223), and the absence of a 'political and organisational culture' (Cowles *et al*. 2001: 11) which would promote the participation of primary stakeholders in the policy-making process, plus the lack of a process of learning which would facilitate Europeanisation (de la Porte and Pochet 2012), prevented Greece from responding positively to the OMC pressures for participation. As was shown in chapter 4 (section 4.4), in the first two years after the launch of the OMC, the Greek government considered the social partners as the only relevant stakeholders who were invited to talks on issues of social inclusion. It was only in 2003 –two years

after the launch of the OMC– and after additional pressures from the EU, when the Greek government established a National Committee for Social Protection (NCSP) to open up forums for dialogue with a wider range of stakeholders. Like the British government had launched with anti-poverty associations the SPTF, the Greek government established the NCSP to promote dialogue with the relevant stakeholders about social inclusion policies. However, different issues emerged in the Greek NCSP and the British SPTF. Table 5.1 provides an overview of these differences.

5.2.1 Members of the Social Policy Task Force and the National Committee for Social Protection

The first British NAP on social inclusion stated the government's intention to mobilise primary and secondary stakeholders through the social inclusion strategy (NAP UK 2001-2003). This statement of intent was followed up by action in the form of the government's support for the establishment of the Social Policy Task Force. In Greece, the first NAP communicated the government's intensions to mobilise, relevant to the social inclusion strategy, stakeholders among which included the NGOs. However, representatives from relevant NGOs (i.e. EAPN-Greece, Arsis and Klimaka) stated in interviews which were conducted for this thesis that in the first years of the application of the OMC and before the establishment of the NCSP, the Greek government was only considering the social partners as relevant stakeholders in the fight against poverty.

Table 5.1: British and Greek responses to the OMC's provisions for participation

	SPTF (UK)	NCSP (Greece)
Year of establishment	2001	2003
Members	Primary and secondary stakeholders	Government actors, social partners, secondary stakeholders.
Stages of participation in the domestic strategy[68]	Agenda-setting, implementation, monitoring	Agenda-setting
Degrees of participation[69]	From involvement to collaboration	From information to consultation
Impact on NAPs	Participants were influencing the NAPs	No impact
Performance (according to the participants' perception)	Good	Poor
Status	Informal	Formal
Participatory projects undertaken	Get Heard, Bridging The Policy Gap (BTPG)	No projects

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of interview information

Additionally, the first Greek NAP did not make any reference to primary stakeholders. Although the establishment of the NCSP made some anti-poverty

[68] See chapter 1, part 3.1
[69] *Ibid*.

associations official members of the dialogue with the government[70], it did not offer people with direct experience in poverty the opportunity to participate in the dialogue. The only exception constituted the grassroots association the National Confederation of People with Disabilities (ESAEA) which had one member in the Committee.

The lack of mobilisation of primary stakeholders in Greece was not only the responsibility of the government or the NCSP. As the case of the UK showed, the secondary stakeholders, who participated in the SPTF, promoted the involvement of primary stakeholders in the social inclusion policy-making process. British anti-poverty associations have prioritised the participation of primary stakeholders in their own operations. For example, in the UKCAP, which was one of the two networks that established the SPTF together with the DWP, the board of directors comprised of equal numbers of secondary and primary stakeholders.[71] Additionally, membership to the board of the Anti-Poverty Network Cymru (APNC), which was itself a member of the SPTF, was concerning only primary stakeholders. In fact, although secondary stakeholders were members of the APNC they were excluded from its board (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010).

The attention that British anti-poverty NGOs and networks pay on the participation of primary stakeholders has been highlighted in chapter 3. British NGOs tend to look for socially excluded people and try to empower them to get involved in EU and domestic participatory projects and processes. Chapter 3 presented empirical

[70] Members of the Committee were also actors from the official sector (ministers and general secretaries), Greek social partners, the church and anti-poverty NGOs and networks (see section 4.4).
[71] The board of the UKCAP has five members who are paid workers and five members who are people with direct experience in poverty (Interview in Liverpool 20.03.2010).

evidence that certain NGOs and networks (e.g. ATD-Fourth World, Migrants Resource Centre –MRC) were actively seeking socially excluded people and motivating them to participate in the policy-making process. Other NGOs such as the Off the Streets into Work (OSW) provided opportunities for primary stakeholders to self-organise workshops and conferences about social inclusion (Interview in London 15.12.2009). Based on such a culture of anti-poverty organisations, the establishment of the SPTF as a forum for direct talks between the anti-poverty associations and the government resulted in the inclusion of primary stakeholders in the dialogue with the government.

In Greece the NGOs and networks which participated in the National Committee of Social Protection were not represented by primary stakeholders. As was shown in chapter 4, a culture to include socially excluded people in the policy-making process has been absent in Greece. This applied not only to government officials but also to the operations of the secondary stakeholders. Thus, in Greece the views of socially excluded people had not been taken into consideration by the government and by many anti-poverty associations. As the representatives from the NGOs and networks which participated in the NCSP admitted in interviews, their associations do not systematically ask primary stakeholders for their views (Interviews in Athens 07.12.2009a and 01.12.2011). Groups of socially excluded people in Greece (such as the Roma) were merely passive recipients of (EU and Greek) funding rather than active participants in social inclusion OMC activities. Since this funding was granted without further planning for social inclusion measures, it was often badly allocated and had no impact on the empowerment of the individuals and the communities in terms of participation.

Apart from showing a lack of 'organisational culture' (Cowles *et al* 2001: 11) which would otherwise facilitate Europeanisation (see also chapter 1 section 1.1.5), the findings from the interviews in Greece, which were presented in chapters 4, contradict de la Porte and Pochet's (2005) claim that secondary stakeholders' involvement in the domestic policy-making process triggers the involvement of primary stakeholders (see also chapter 1 section 1.3.1). De la Porte and Pochet (2005) found that in both Greece and the UK the participation of NGOs was *good*, while they classified the participation of people in poverty as *medium*. The term 'good' was used by de la Porte and Pochet to describe a process of 'genuine consultation' between the government and stakeholders, while the term 'medium' described a process where there was dissemination of information from the government to the participating stakeholders (de la Porte and Pochet 2005: 378). However, the new empirical research findings put forward in this thesis about the participation of stakeholders in Greece and the UK show that in the first ten years after the launch of the social inclusion OMC, a significant level of secondary and primary stakeholder participation could only be found in the British implementation of the social OMC. In Greece, neither the participation of the NGOs in social inclusion OMC activities was found to be satisfactory, nor was it followed by the participation of people in poverty.

5.2.2 Stages and degrees of participation

Chapter 1 has shown that the analysis of the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders would particularly focus on the different stages of the policy-making

process (i.e. agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring), as well as the different degrees of participation (i.e. information, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment). The fieldwork in the UK undertaken for this thesis showed that since its establishment in 2001 and until 2010 the SPTF was indeed participating in different stages of the policy-making process. One representative from the SPTF argued that during the agenda-setting stage of the NAPs the SPTF 'worked together with the government' (Interview in London 05.02.2010). A representative from another NGO, which was also a member of the SPTF, stated that the SPTF was 'fundamentally shaping the NAPs' (Interview in London 15.12.2009). The representative from the EAPN-England stated in an interview that the SPTF was meeting with civil servants from the DWP on a regular basis i.e. every six weeks (Interview in Nottingham, 24.01.2009) while the director of Poverty Alliance highlighted the emergence of an on-going dialogue due to the OMC (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010). Thus, the direct dialogue was not limited to agenda-setting periods of the NAPs, but was extending to the monitoring of the NAPs. All of the interviews carried out with primary and secondary stakeholders for the UK case study praised the UK government for supporting the dialogue with stakeholders (e.g. Interview in Nottingham 24.11.2009). Certain interviewees argued that in the period 2001-2010 this dialogue went well beyond simple consultation (i.e. to inform and get feedback from stakeholders –see chapter 1 section 1.3.1). Considering the degrees of participation (as shown in chapter 1 section 1.3.1) British primary and secondary stakeholders were *involved* in the NAPs process because the SPTF was able to ensure that the views and concerns of its members were taken seriously by the policy-makers (Interview in Glasgow, 02.12.2010). Thus, issues which were raised in the dialogue between the stakeholders and the government were

cited in the NAPs. For example, the British NAP 2008-2010 stated the main challenges (e.g. child poverty, income inequality etc) which, according to the document, had been identified by the SPTF and its members (UK NAP 2008-2010: 2-3). Kenneth Armstrong appears to doubt whether this involvement can be considered as generally satisfactory in terms of its impacts on the policy agenda (Armstrong 2010). However, as has been argued earlier in this chapter, from the fieldwork carried out for this thesis emerged that participants' views varied concerning their own participation. Participants in the SPTF considered the promotion of the above mentioned issues onto the political agenda as one of their 'main achievements' (SPTF 2008: 45). These points will be taken up in the conclusion chapter.

Other examples of policy influence include the incorporation of the key messages of the *Get Heard* and the *Bridging the Policy Gap* (BTPG) projects (see chapter 3 section 3.4.2) in the annexes of the NAP 2006-2008 and NAP 2008-2010 respectively. These projects were launched by the anti-poverty associations (e.g. UKCAP, EAPN-UK, Poverty Alliance) with the support of the DWP in an effort to meet the social inclusion OMC's objective for the self-expression of primary stakeholders. This means that the government worked together with stakeholders during the stage of implementation of the NAPs. According to the analysis put forward in chapter 1 (section 1.3.1) primary and secondary stakeholders *collaborated* with the government in this stage of the NAP process.

In Greece regular meetings between the government and anti-poverty associations did not take place. Interviews with representatives from these associations showed

that the OMC resulted only in limited participation. Interviewees referred to one-off meetings between the administration and anti-poverty associations which took place within the context of the social inclusion OMC. They also complained about the government merely sending out questionnaires instead of holding meetings with stakeholders. Chapter 4 argued that one of the core reasons why secondary stakeholders abandoned their efforts to participate in the NCSP was that they felt the government was using the Committee merely to inform them about decisions which had already been taken. In contrast to the UK where a direct and on-going dialogue emerged which included the agenda-setting and monitoring stages of the policy-making process, the Greek interviewees argued that consultation occurred largely on an ad hoc basis and was sometimes used by the government merely to inform secondary stakeholders (i.e. one way information from the government to the NGOs) during only the agenda-setting stage. In an extreme case, the director of the EAPN-Greece argued that the NAPs were submitted to the EU by the Greek government without stakeholders having been informed of the content of the final version (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). Shortcomings were not only reported by interviewees from anti-poverty associations. Even the official NAPs admitted that the government tended to consider the implementation and monitoring of social inclusion policies as of secondary importance (e.g. Greece NSR 2008-2010). The limited involvement of NGOs and networks in the social inclusion OMC process in Greece, and the lack of involvement of primary stakeholders, have also been highlighted in the academic literature (Delistathis *et al*. 2009; Ziomas *et al*. 2007).

Therefore, the lack of impact of the stakeholders' views on the NAPs comes as no surprise as only very limited participation of stakeholders took place in Greece which

could not have been expected to influence the government's policy agenda. Another explanation is that in Greece there is a gap between those who discuss with organisations (i.e. the administration) and those who take the decisions (i.e. the political leadership) (Delistathis *et al*. 2009). As key stakeholders have pointed out, even when civil servants understand the concerns of secondary stakeholders, the final decisions are taken by politicians who, in turn, decide according to the priorities of the political party in power. According to this argument, the priorities of the political decision-makers are often incongruent with those topics that have been discussed during the consultation process (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009; see also Featherstone 2005b). Moreover, corporatist structures have prevented stakeholders (other than the social partners) from being represented in the social dialogue (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). It is for these reasons that the opinions and concerns of the stakeholders, who are involved in the consultation phase only to a limited degree and on an ad hoc basis, are not been taken up by the political decision-makers.

While the UK seems to have found it much easier to implement the social inclusion OMC when compared to Greece, even in the UK things are not always ideal. In other words, progress in participation 'will never be uniformly positive' (Poverty Alliance 2005: 3). Anti-poverty associations (through the CEFET[72] network in East Midlands) have argued that the government did not really promote the mobilisation of all groups of socially excluded people. According to this criticism, quite often people who were facilitated by the government to participate, were people who were not

[72] 'As the East Midlands European Social Fund Third Sector Technical Assistance body, CEFET acts as a "bridge" between the administration of the Funds and Community, Voluntary and Social Economy Groups who are interested in contributing to the development of an effective ESF programme in the region.' From the official CEFET web portal: http://www.cefet.org.uk/eastmidsob3.asp, accessed on 12.02.2012.

facing social exclusion or poverty, but multiple disadvantages (CEFET 2007).[73] Similar concerns have been addressed by the ATD-Fourth World (and the Poverty Alliance), as chapter 3 has shown.

Two additional issues emerged from the fieldwork for this thesis. The first issue relates to the nature of participation, namely whether it amounts to formal or informal consultation. The second issue relates to the participation of primary stakeholders in two projects in the UK, namely *Get Heard* and *Bridging the Policy Gap*.

5.2.3 Formal vs. informal participation

In the UK the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders took place despite the fact that the SPTF was an informal forum for dialogue. In Greece the limited participation which took place happened within the NCSP which was an official Committee set up by ministerial act (Act 3144/2003). In the UK, the Labour government decided (shortly before the 2010 elections, which it lost) to formalise the emerged on-going dialogue by establishing a Social Inclusion Advisory Group (SIAG) in the place of the SPTF. The DWP favoured the establishment of the SIAG with delegates from the relevant departments, members from NGOs, academics and people with direct experience in poverty. The SPTF held its last meeting in January 2010 and the SIAG was set up before the general elections in May 2010 (Interview in Liverpool 20.03.2010). However, the SIAG met only twice. According to

[73] According to CEFET (2007: 4), multiple disadvantages 'do not in themselves constitute exclusion' (emphasis in the original).

Schönheinz (*forthcoming*) the SIAG's operations have been cut significantly due to the austerity budgets by the Conservative-Liberal coalition government.

Consequently in the UK an informal (i.e. SPTF) rather than a formal forum (i.e. SIAG) led to direct and on-going dialogue between (secondary and primary stakeholders) and the government (i.e. DWP). In Greece, an officially established committee triggered only a limited dialogue between the government and anti-poverty associations. There seems to be a paradox between the formalisation of the social inclusion OMC processes in Greece and the UK and the perceptions of the stakeholders about the nature of their participation in the OMC in these two member states. As was explained in chapter 4 the OMC was seen by most Greek stakeholders as a very soft method which failed to produce significant changes in the domestic social inclusion process in general, and in participation practices in particular. As was pointed out in chapter 3, British stakeholders perceived the social inclusion OMC as strong enough to raise issues of social inclusion onto the domestic political agenda. Greek stakeholders perceive the OMC as soft, despite the fact that the Greek government had set up an official Committee for dialogue. In contrast, British stakeholders perceived the OMC as a relatively hard tool although it promoted an informal dialogue (i.e. through the SPTF).

In addition to the softness or the hardness of the OMC, what matters is also the commitment of the officials to the OMC-led social inclusion strategy. This commitment influences the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders at the domestic level. As Vanhercke has argued 'it is not the "hardness" or the "softness" of the OMC that matters, but its capacity to stimulate creative

appropriation and action by European, national and sub-national actors' (Vanhercke 2010: 116; see also chapter 1 section 1.1.5). The creative implementation of the social inclusion OMC seemed to exist in the UK. Senior officers of the DWP appeared to use the OMC to promote the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders. The senior DWP officers were perceived by secondary and primary stakeholders to be committed and engaged with social inclusion issues (e.g. Interview in Liverpool 24.03.2010). They thus took advantage of the OMC provisions and promoted the participation of stakeholders who focused on issues of social inclusion.

5.2.4 Participatory projects undertaken in the context of the OMC

The OMC's provisions spurred on anti-poverty associations to focus on the participation of primary stakeholders in the UK social inclusion policy-making process. They triggered the setting up of the two major projects in terms of participation of primary stakeholders, namely the *Get Heard* and the *Bridging the Policy Gap* projects which both called for primary stakeholders' participation in the NAP with the support of the DWP. In the context of these projects, more than 150 workshops and peer reviews, with the participation of people in poverty, were organised across the UK. Participants in the workshops discussed what was working, what was not working and what should be done in terms of domestic social inclusion policies (UKCAP 2004b). Stakeholder participation in these projects can therefore be seen as an effort for feeding participants' views and concerns in the agenda-setting and monitoring stages of the British social inclusion policy-making process (see chapter 3.4.2). Full reports of the findings of *Get Heard* and BTPG were included in

the annexes of the NAP 2006-2008 and NAP 2008-2010, which shows that participants' views were taken seriously by the policy-makers.

Importantly, the ideas for the launch and structure of the projects were, according to key actors, downloaded from the EU level where they had been identified as good practices (Interviews in London 05.02.2010, 16.02.2010a). For example, representatives from ATD-Fourth World and MRC confirmed in interviews for this thesis, that their organisations downloaded the idea for the *Get Heard* directly from the EU which had organised quasi-institutionalised annual meetings for people in poverty in which the interviewees had participated (Interview in London 05.02.2010). One representative from the ATD-Fourth World argued that the EU's annual meetings were 'uploaded' by countries such as France and Belgium which have held similar events on the domestic level before the social inclusion OMC was adopted (Interview in London 16.02.2010a).

The Poverty Alliance, which is made up of anti-poverty associations and undertook the BTPG project, and the EAPN-EU as well as academic research, all have confirmed that the idea of organising workshops in the form of peer reviews was downloaded from the EU since 'peer review' itself is a 'European concept' (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010; see also Armstrong, 2010: 184; EAPN-EU, 2009: 65). The uploading and downloading of good practices plays an important role in Börzel's Europeanisation concept. The empirical evidence put forward in the case studies show that the British social inclusion strategy has been Europeanised in terms of the participation of primary stakeholders. This must be seen in contrast to the Greek social inclusion policy-making process As said earlier, the primary

stakeholders continued to be excluded from expressing their views and experiences within the Greek domestic social inclusion OMC activities.

While drawing on the findings of chapters 3 and 4, the next part of this chapter will show how differences in the nature of participation in Greece and the UK resulted in different impacts on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. Additionally, it will show how and in which cases the participation in the OMC triggered shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic level to the EU.

5.3 Domestic participation and the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties

Despite the social inclusion OMC's provisions for participation of primary and secondary stakeholders, the analytical framework in chapter 1 acknowledged that the limited visibility of the method was likely to be an obstacle for the participation of large numbers of stakeholders. Chapters 3 and 4 partly confirmed the argument in literature according to which the participation of stakeholders makes the OMC 'more visible' to them (PPMI 2011: 14). Interviewees from the NCSP in Greece and the SPTF in the UK were aware of the social inclusion OMC and the developments (or the obstacles to them) which the method had triggered domestically and at EU level. However, in the UK despite the mobilisation of primary stakeholders for the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects, evidence presented in chapter 3 and above showed that

those who participated in the two projects remained unaware of the EU framework which had triggered their participation.

Thus, the Europeanisation of the British social inclusion policy did not automatically lead to the redirection of the expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level of the participants in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects. The impact of the OMC on the launch of these participatory projects in the UK was highlighted in chapter 3 which also researched the 'stakeholder visibility' (de la Porte 2010: 10). In other words, it focused on whether participants in the projects were aware of the OMC. It is worth repeating that the projects were funded by the EU in order to meet the objective of:

> improving information and raising awareness among concerned stakeholders and the wider public about the relevance of the European Union's social inclusion and the social protection processes with regard to the efforts undertaken at the national level to prevent and reduce poverty and social exclusion (EC 2006c: 4 –see also chapter 3 section 3.5)

Empirical evidence gathered from interviews and documents produced by *Get Heard* and BTPG showed that despite the initial objectives of the projects to raise awareness about the EU's social inclusion strategy, participants focused exclusively on the domestic strategy. They discussed complex issues of social inclusion on the local, regional and national levels but they ignored the EU level. Participation in these projects empowered participants to start political activities and made them express loyalties to a community of common concerns. However, this phenomenon cannot be

regarded as a redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level. Because the participants in the projects focused on the local, regional and domestic levels their expectations, political activities and loyalties were also directed at the local, regional and domestic levels.

The reasons for the invisibility of the social inclusion OMC identified included the lack of dissemination of information about the EU by the organisations which organised the projects, and the fact that the former organisations eventually considered these projects as projects addressing domestic concerns and not EU concerns. In general, the field research in the UK showed that key members of the SPTF did not consider domestic participation as part of a European process which had been launched to address common European concerns and solutions. Instead the SPTF members perceived participation as a process which was promoted by the EU as solution for the domestic concerns of primary and secondary stakeholders. As a result, the common European concerns and objectives were not evident not only in either of the two projects but also in the overall application of the social inclusion OMC in the UK.

Despite the absence of a socialisation process under common concerns and objectives, all stakeholders in Greece and the UK (who were aware of the role of the social inclusion OMC) viewed participation as a benefit from the EU's initiatives. However, the above mentioned differences led to differences between British and Greek participants' redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties, as the following sections show.

5.3.1 Expectations towards the EU

Greek stakeholders involved in the social inclusion OMC process (e.g. members of the EAPN-Greece, Klimaka and Arsis) argued that the launch of the method created expectations towards the EU. This was largely due to the method's provisions for participation which were perceived by stakeholders as provisions that would give them the desired role in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process. Because the domestic framework did not provide stakeholders with opportunities to participate in the social inclusion process, they perceived the OMC provisions as a new European framework which would empower them to influence the policies of their concern. Greek stakeholders argued that the OMC provided the basis for discussions of the NAPs between the government and secondary stakeholders (Interviews in Athens 07.12.2009a, 01.12.2010). Interviewees argued that this dialogue would not have emerged without the OMC. The director of the EAPN-Greece stated that the OMC was seen as part of the European framework and perceived as the 'appropriate tool' to pursue participation and to influence domestic social inclusion policies (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009).

However, while the launch of the OMC seemed to provide the basis for participation, it raised stakeholder expectations towards the EU only temporarily. These stakeholder expectations were influenced negatively by the domestic social inclusion OMC activities, as these allowed for only a very limited participation of secondary stakeholders while excluding primary stakeholders. The establishment of the National Committee for Social Protection created a formal space for dialogue between the government and the anti-poverty associations. It provided the secondary

stakeholders with a formally recognised position. However, the participation activities did not meet stakeholders' expectations for the following three main reasons. First, because participants realised that the participation included only secondary stakeholders while excluding primary stakeholders. Second, the participation amounted only to irregular consultation at the agenda-setting stage of the NAPs, as most interviewees in Greece perceived it as a purely formal exercise (e.g. Interviews in Athens 07.12.2009a, 08.12.2009). And thirdly, the concerns of participants were not taken into consideration by the policy-makers. In the period 2001-2010, none of the NAPs referred to an input provided by stakeholders.

During the interviews carried out in Greece, it was emerged that after the review of the Lisbon strategy (March 2005), even fewer anti-poverty networks were participating in the domestic OMC-led process (e.g. Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). This happened because the review of the Lisbon strategy was perceived as leading to a significant reduction of the EU efforts to create participatory frameworks in the member states. According to the director of the EAPN-Greece, the EU's decisions to abandon the Lisbon's quantitative objectives were perceived by Greek secondary stakeholders as retreat from the strategy's overall objectives including participation (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). The review therefore created even more disappointment among the (secondary) stakeholders which were involved in limited participation at the agenda-setting stage of the social inclusion OMC in Greece. While the opportunities for participation and the early developments created expectations among the stakeholders towards the EU framework, developments related to the participation turned these expectations into disappointment.

In the UK too, the OMC and its provisions created expectations amongst (secondary and primary) stakeholders since the method was theoretically providing the necessary framework for them to participate in the social inclusion policy-making process and to influence the policies which concerned them. Similar to the case of Greece, British key stakeholders (e.g. ATD-Fourth World, MRC, EAPN-England, UKCAP) argued that people in poverty and anti-poverty associations were unable to participate in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process prior to the EU's involvement. The exception was Scotland where primary and secondary stakeholders were mobilised to be consulted by the devolved government. However, this was not an on-going dialogue similar to the one required by the OMC (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010). It was only after the establishment of the SPTF, that the level of actual participation exceeded their initial expectations and, as shown earlier in this chapter, in many cases the SPTF managed to influence the NAPs. Stakeholders who participated in the social inclusion policy-making process through the SPTF assigned these positive developments to the social inclusion OMC and the European framework. All interviewees from the SPTF argued that participation in the form of an on-going regular dialogue, which included different stages of the social inclusion policy-making process (see also section 5.2 above), would not have emerged without the OMC. They thought that through the OMC a strong framework had been created which gave them a *recognised position* (e.g. Interview in London 05.02.2010). One interviewee argued that before the OMC primary and secondary stakeholders were unable to speak to the government about poverty (Interview in London 16.02.2010a). Due to the OMC the government recognised that it should involve stakeholders in the policy-making process (*ibid.*). What is more, in the UK the review of the Lisbon

strategy did not affect the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders or their perceptions regarding the EU's role. The biggest participatory projects (i.e. *Get Heard* and BTPG) with primary stakeholders took place during and after that review. Thus, primary and secondary stakeholders who participated in the SPTF shifted their expectations from the domestic level to the EU level due to the benefits which the latter continuously provided in the period 2001-2010.

5.3.2 Political activities towards the EU

Following shifts in expectations, British secondary stakeholders also appeared to redirect their political activities towards the EU level. For example, one interviewee pointed out that while the UKCAP had been exclusively focused on the domestic social inclusion strategy, participation in the OMC context made them realise that a lot of the domestic strategy was actually influenced by the EU (*ibid.*). Thus, after the launch of the OMC and in order to meet their increasing expectations from the EU framework, they established partnerships with EU oriented associations (particularly the EAPN-UK). It seems that for stakeholders who participated in the application of the OMC in the UK, the importance of the EU in the domestic social inclusion policy process was apparent and perceived as positive. The representative from the EAPN-England stated that stakeholders perceived the EU's social inclusion OMC as strong enough to put pressure on the British government to provide the relevant non-traditional stakeholders with opportunities for participation (Interview in Nottingham 24.01.2009).

Interviews in Greece did not provide evidence that the participation through the OMC led to stakeholders' redirection of political activities towards the EU, at least not on a regular basis. Greek stakeholders redirected their political activities towards the EU framework only after the Greek government had been found out to be reluctant to adapt to the social inclusion OMC pressures in general, and the pressures for stakeholders' participation. As chapter 4 showed, in their efforts to overcome obstacles to widened participation in Greece, Greek secondary stakeholders became interested in developments that the OMC framework brought about at EU level and in other member states. The EAPN-Greece asked the director of the EAPN-EU –at a time when its director was Greek– to put pressure on the Greek government to enable the participation of anti-poverty associations. However, pressure from the EAPN-EU did not succeed in changing the governments' attitudes (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). As a result, the Greek stakeholders abandoned their redirection of political activities towards the EU because their expectations had turned into disappointment. According to interviewees from anti-poverty NGOs (i.e. Klimaka and IKE), the possibility that the EU would be able to put pressure on the Greek government to meet the OMC objectives was very limited (e.g. Interviews in Athens 07.12.2009a). Asked whether they felt that the EU could indeed put pressure on the government to promote participation, interviewees argued that the OMC was merely a soft instrument of coordination which had turned out to be too soft to be able to influence significantly the participation of stakeholders in the consultation stage, let alone in other stages of the social policy-making process (Interviews in Athens 20.12.2010, 08.12.2009). Therefore, in contrast to the UK, the importance of the EU in the field of social inclusion was not acknowledged or at least not valued positively

by Greek stakeholders, although there were some exceptions as were pointed out above.

5.3.3 Loyalties towards the EU

The above described differences in the expectations and political activities of the participating stakeholders in Greece and the UK have also had an impact on primary (in the UK) and secondary stakeholder loyalties towards the EU. As was argued earlier in this chapter, stakeholders who shift their expectations and political activities towards the EU level may also shift their loyalties if the shifts in expectations and political activities have occurred persistently over a significant period of time. According to Ernst Haas's (1958: 5) definition of loyalties,

> a population may be said to be loyal to a set of symbols and institutions when it habitually and predictably over long period obeys the injunctions of their authority and turns to them for the satisfaction of important expectations.

The empirical evidence provided in this thesis (see in particular chapters 3 and 4) showed that the persistence in the shift of stakeholder expectations and political activities from the domestic level towards the EU level did exist in the case of the UK. British stakeholders appeared to acknowledge the EU's authority as long as the EU's involvement in the field of social inclusion was beneficial to them. In Greece the initial moderate redirection of stakeholders' expectations and political activities towards the EU level was soon followed by disappointment and the EU's authority was not acknowledged due to its incapacity to bring about the expected benefits.

Additionally, since the financial crisis the Eurobarometer survey results have reflected a notable decrease in British and Greek citizens' trust of EU institutions (Eurobarometer 2011a). However, the decline in support for EU institutions in Greece was confirmed in interviews with stakeholders. The following statement illustrates this point well:

> I believe that as regards the EU, its political system and structure reproduce poverty and social exclusion. Why are we now wondering about all this? The EU reproduces them [i.e. poverty and social exclusion] - Merkel and Sarkozy … Who is behind poverty and social exclusion in Greece in this period of time? (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010)

As said above, the fieldwork carried out for this thesis in Greece showed that the emergence of expectations and political activities among the Greek participants in the social inclusion OMC process did not involve an acknowledgment of the authority and positive role of the EU in changing Greek public policy. According to Haas's (1958) predictions, the limited, ad hoc redirection of expectations and political activities does not trigger a shift in loyalties from the domestic level toward the EU level. Since the severe financial crisis became evident in Greece, it has become apparent that stakeholders' limited shift in expectations and political activities towards the EU have been met with disappointment.

In contrast to Greece, in the UK the stakeholders' shifts in expectations and political activities towards the EU level were stronger and more durable. British (primary and

secondary) stakeholders acknowledged the EU's authority and valued positively its contribution. This, in turn, facilitated a shift in loyalties from the domestic towards the EU level. Some interviewees in the UK explained how participation through the OMC made them shift their loyalties to the EU (e.g. Interview in Liverpool 24.03.2010). Other interviewees stated that participation is one of the political activities (together with street protests and lobbying) that have to be combined in a period of economic crisis in order to influence the EU's social inclusion strategy (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010). The value of the last statement is easier to understand when it is compared with the statements from Greek stakeholders. The Greek stakeholders did not show any durable shifts in loyalties towards the EU which they accused for the worsening of the economic situation since the onset of the financial crises. In Britain, members of the SPTF appeared to have shifted their loyalties to the EU level, despite the (when compared to Greece, less severe) financial crisis and several austerity budgets implemented by the Conservative-Liberal coalition government. For this reason British stakeholders appeared to consider the EU level as an important political level towards which their political activities should (continue to) be directed.

The comparison of the expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU concern primarily a rational assessment of the EU through participation in the OMC. As has been shown in chapter 1, participation in the OMC can advance 'domestic actors' pre-existing interests and goals' (Zeitlin 2005: 37). Accordingly, actors who could not pursue their interests domestically, prior to the OMC have used the OMC for the pursuit of their interests (de la Porte and Pochet 2005). As Haas (1958) argued with regard to the shift of expectations, political activities and loyalties,

groups and individuals can redirect these attitudes towards the supranational level if this is the level at which they expect to realise their interests. Participants in the UK shifted their expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU. These shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties were based on a rational assessment of the EU by the involved stakeholders. Due to the lack of OMC features which were expected to promote socialisation (e.g. indicators and objectives which promote policy learning –see chapter 3 section 3.3), these redirections were not the result of socialisation under EU norms and common concerns. The positive rational assessment, which triggered the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties in the UK, seemed to be much weaker in the case of Greece. This is the reason why Greek stakeholders experienced only limited shifts in expectations and political activities and no shifts in loyalties. Before entering in the issue of the possible shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties that participation through the OMC at EU level can trigger, table 5.2 provides an overview of the expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU among stakeholders who in the period 2001-2010 were involved in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process in Greece and the UK

Table 5.2: Domestic Participation of non-traditional stakeholders in Greece and the UK and the redirection of their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards the EU.

	UK	Greece
Expectations	Significant	Limited
Political Activities	Significant	Limited
Loyalties	Significant	No loyalties

Source: Based on the analysis of the interviews carried out for this thesis

5.4 Stakeholders' participation in EU projects and the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties

According to the OMC's participatory provisions (see chapter 1) primary stakeholders (i.e. people who experience poverty) were expected to be involved in the domestic social inclusion policies. However, the participatory provisions were not implemented by the Greek government. In the UK, where major projects took place, the participants were not aware of the EU's role in the field of social inclusion. However, as has been shown in chapters 1 and 2, the social inclusion OMC has been behind an important quasi-institutionalised EU participatory project, namely the

annual Brussels European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (EMPEP). While these annual conferences have been highly valued by the participants and anti-poverty NGOs and networks (see chapter 2), they have been largely neglected by the existing academic studies of the social inclusion OMC (see also chapter 1). This section intends to fill this gap in the academic literature by offering a comparative analysis of the impact which stakeholder participation in these conferences has had on their expectations, political activities and loyalties.

Like all member states, the UK and Greece participated every year in the Brussels conference with delegations that consisted of one coordinator and between five and six primary stakeholders. The national delegates were chosen by the EAPN-Greece and the EAPN-UK respectively. The only difference between the two member states is that in the UK there is an effort to represent primary stakeholders from one of the four nations' networks (EAPN-England, APNC, Poverty Alliance and Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network) each year.

According to the new empirical findings put forward in chapters 3 and 4, participation in these conferences in the period within the timeframe of this thesis (i.e. 2001-2010) had a moderate impact on the expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants. However, while the expectations, political activities and loyalties of the participants at the domestic level were influenced solely by rationalism, the participants in the annual conference in Brussels were also affected by a socialisation process under common EU concerns and objectives amongst the involved stakeholders. Table 5.3 provides an overview of the redirections (or the lack

of redirections) in British and Greek participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU.

Table 5.3: Participation of British and Greek primary stakeholders at the EU level and the redirection of their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards the EU.

	UK	Greece
Expectations	No expectations	Limited
Political Activities	Limited	Limited
Loyalties	Limited	Limited

Source: Compiled on the basis of findings derived from interviews which were undertaken for this thesis.

5.4.1 Expectations towards the EU

As has been shown in chapter 4, and above in this chapter, the voices of the people who experience poverty in Greece were not being heard by Greek policy-makers (prior *or* during the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece). These people's views were largely neglected even by the anti-poverty NGOs and networks. As a result, delegates from Greece were initially enthusiastic about the EU as they were given, for the first time, the opportunity to express their experiences and views about the policies which affect them (Interview in Crete 20.01.2011). For this reason

they appeared to raise expectations towards the EU. Expectations towards the EU were particularly strong in the case of Greece as can be seen, for example, from the statement of one participant who argued that the possible failure of a positive policy outcome should be blamed on the Greek social inclusion strategy and not on the European (*ibid.*).

The British delegates appeared more experienced in terms of participation in the social inclusion strategy. Due to the domestic implementation of the social inclusion OMC, the primary stakeholders in the UK started being involved and collaborated with officials in the domestic policy-making process. This happened either through participation in the SPTF or through participation in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects. In the period 2001-2010, primary stakeholders were also consulted by the anti-poverty associations (i.e. NGOs and networks) of the boards of which they were members. Therefore, these primary stakeholders had strong expectations from the domestic policy framework. At the same time, representatives from anti-poverty associations (such as the ATD-Fourth World and the Poverty Alliance) admitted that they were intentionally playing down expectations towards the EU before the participation of primary stakeholders in the Brussels meetings. Overall, for the British delegates, the conferences in Brussels were neither seen as unique spaces for self-expression and participation in the consultation of the social inclusion strategy, nor as opportunities for the change of the policies which affect the participants (Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010).

From this comparison it seems that the Greek delegates' expectations were initially based on a rational assessment of the EU, this was similar to the one which was

found among the stakeholders who participate in domestic level social inclusion OMC activities in the UK and Greece. According to this assessment, the EU offered benefits which were not available in the domestic framework. However, comparable to the participation on the domestic level, the expectations from the EU level turned into disappointment. Participants soon realised that participation in the annual Brussels meetings did not result in changes in their daily life. Additionally, the Greek interviewees stated their belief that the EU was not actually considering these meetings as important; the absence of the invited MEPs from almost all the member states was interpreted as lack of interest on behalf of the EU for the primary stakeholders' voices (Interview in Athens 03.12.2011).

5.4.2 Political activities towards the EU

For British and Greek delegates political activities were limited to the days that the conferences were taking place. Some participants argued that people were going to these conferences with the intention to promote their own interests rather than those of other participants or common interests. However, during the conferences these attitudes were changing and participants were starting to articulate common (European) problems, priorities and solutions. Yet, the empirical evidence provided in chapters 3 and 4 shows that after the conferences the participants did not continue to plan further political activities towards the EU. They appeared to believe that all policies were coming from the EU, but that the EU level was too remote to be affected by their political activities. According to this line of thinking, political activism at local, regional and national level was more likely to produce policy outcomes than political activities directed to the EU level (Interview in Crete

20.02.2011; Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2011). Additionally, activism towards the EU was presupposing that other members from the local community would also shift their political activities towards the EU. However, as a Greek delegate to the EU conferences said in an interview for this thesis, people locally were unaware of the EU's role in the field of social inclusion (Interview in Crete 03.12.2012). According to the same interviewee, people from the local community were not at all interested in actions which would be oriented towards the EU level.

In both Greece and the UK, interviewees highlighted that Greek and British participants in the European meetings of people experiencing poverty became active after their participation primarily at the local level. According to the director of the EAPN-Greece, one Greek participant decided to set up a women's union in the Northern Greece in order to promote socially excluded women's interests (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). In the UK, interviewees from the ATD-Fourth World and the MRC, which participated together in the Sixth EMPEP in 2007, argued that British delegates to the EMPEP expressed solidarity between each other on return from Brussels. They participated in common local projects trying to respond to different challenges that different forms of social exclusion posed (see also Dierckx and Van Herck 2010: 20).

5.4.3 Loyalties towards the EU

As has been shown above, the impact of participation at the EU level on the expectations and political activities of the participants was limited. In the case of the UK, expectations towards the EU did not emerge after participation. In the case of Greece, initial (positive) expectations were soon turned into disappointment. Concerning political activities, delegates from both countries focused on common priorities and demands from the EU which, however, was limited to the duration of the conferences. After the conferences participants launched political activities which, however, were focused at the local level.

The primary stakeholders' limited presence of the EU in their daily life seems to have been crucial for the (potential) emergence of loyalties. According to Herrmann and Brewer (2004: 14; see also chapter 1) people's loyalties are expected to be redirected towards the EU level only if the supranational institutions are 'salient' to the people's personal lives. In fact participants acknowledged that the EU institutions were increasingly affecting their lives. Nevertheless, they felt that their own input into the EU policy-making process through the participation in the annual conferences in Brussels did not have an impact on policy decisions. This is the main reason why expectations and political activities turned into disappointment. However, the EU annual conferences provided for 'shared experiences' and 'shared social norms' which was one of the prerequisites for the shift in loyalties stipulated by Hermann and Brewer (*ibid.*). A process of socialisation with people from other member states with similar concerns and similar objectives seemed to redirect the loyalties of the participants towards the EU level.

The evidence put forward in chapters 3 and 4 showed that the shift in loyalties towards the EU followed a different route from the shift in expectations and political activities. From the comparison of Greek and British participation of stakeholders at the domestic level, it emerged that the more expectations and political activities are directed towards the EU, the more loyalties are likely to shift from the domestic towards the EU level. However, after participation in the Brussels conferences, the shift of loyalties did not appear to depend on the expectations and political activities which primary stakeholders had had before the conference. The fieldwork for this thesis showed that participants redirected their loyalties towards the EU level, but these redirections were based on the socialisation process with delegates from other member states (rather than the result of expectations towards the EU level) (e.g. Interview in Athens 20.01.2011; Interview in Rhyl 24.02.2010). In the absence of a possibility of influencing changes in EU policies through participating in the Brussels conferences, the sharing of experiences was underlined by the participants as of major importance (see also Hermann and Brewer 2004). Based on this sharing of experiences, participants from both Greece and the UK developed a sense of belonging to a European community. This community seems to include all those who face similar problems and challenges regardless of their country of origin. Coordinators from delegations from both Greece and the UK argued in interviews for this thesis that the people who participated started to realise that there are different levels of social inclusion in different member states. However, these differences did not seem to prevent the emergence of community feelings and affinities among the participants (e.g. Interview in Athens 08.12.2009; Interview in London 16.02.2010a). Participants did not redirect their loyalties towards the EU because of the benefits

which they expected from the EU level. They appeared to view the EU as a community of destiny (see chapter 1 section 1.2.5).

Conclusion

This chapter offered a comparative analysis between Greece and the UK in the context of the research question upon whether participation in the social inclusion OMC leads to a shift in the participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties. The first concern of this chapter was to compare the different patterns of participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece and the UK. Chapter 1, differentiated between the *degrees* of stakeholder participation (e.g. information, consultation, involvement, collaboration etc) in the different *stages* of the policy-making process (i.e. agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring). However, the empirical research carried out for this thesis found that other factors are equally important for the assessment of the impact which participation in the social inclusion OMC has on stakeholders. Therefore, this chapter focused also on participants' satisfaction of participation and the impact of participation on the NAPs.

In line with the OMC's provisions for participation (e.g. European Commission 2005b), British primary and secondary stakeholders were participating, in the period 2001-2010, in different stages of the policy-making process, namely agenda-setting, implementation and monitoring. Their views were indeed taken into consideration by the policy-makers: issues raised by them during the agenda-setting stage were

included in the NAPs. Additionally, primary and secondary stakeholders worked with the government during the stage of the implementation of the NAPs (e.g. by organising the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects). All stakeholders interviewed for this thesis expressed their satisfaction with the government's response to the OMC pressures for participation and praised the OMC for triggering these developments.

Greece did not respond positively to the OMC's pressures for participation. Only secondary stakeholders were mobilised in the period 2001-2010 and only during the agenda-setting stage. Their participation amounted in times to the degree of consultation which meant that the government was informing and getting feedback from these stakeholders about the NAPs/NSRs. However, some interviewees (e.g. from the EAPN-Greece and the IKE) argued that this was an irregular and sketchy consultation and that they were actually only informed by the government about already taken decisions. Regardless of the degree of participation (i.e. involvement or consultation) in both cases, secondary stakeholders' views and concerns were not taken into consideration by the decision-makers, and they had no impact on the NAPs. Greek stakeholders appeared in general disappointed and they criticised both the Greek governments and the OMC's potential for change.

Therefore, the OMC's pressures led to the Europeanisation of British social inclusion policy in terms of participation of (secondary and primary) stakeholders. At the same time the Greek response to the OMC's pressures for participation of primary and secondary stakeholders was limited. The different responses can be explained by the mediating factors which define the Europeanisation of domestic public policy. In Greece, 'structural impediments' (Featherstone 2005b: 223) such as corporatism,

clientelism, the lack of a culture (both from the official policy-making process and the secondary stakeholders) which would facilitate the participation of primary stakeholders, and the lack of a learning process under the OMC objectives, prevented the domestic adaptation to the OMC provisions for participation. In the UK, the pre-OMC political environment which was favourable to social inclusion policies (i.e. the New Labour party's focus on combating social exclusion), and the positive response of official actors (i.e. DWP senior officers) and secondary stakeholders (e.g. members from anti-poverty NGOs) explain the positive response to the OMC pressures for participation.

In both countries the participation of stakeholders has brought about shifts in participants' expectations and political activities, yet loyalties were redirected to the EU only in the case of the British stakeholders. The differences in participation constitute an important explanatory factor for the differences in the shifts of expectations, political activities and loyalties by Greek and British stakeholders. The main reason behind these shifts was that stakeholders considered the EU framework as more likely to satisfy their interests which had not been satisfied on the domestic level. However, in Greece these shifts did not last long enough to comply with Haas's (1958) definition of loyalties as long lasting expectations and political activities (see chapter 1 section 1.2). In fact, the shifts in Greek participants' expectations and political activities to the EU level were soon followed by disappointment. This disappointment seems to highlight the importance of the rational assessment which was arguably the driving factor behind the initial redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties. Greek actors eventually considered that the EU framework could not satisfy their interests and they stopped

shifting their expectations and political activities to the EU level. In contrast, the application of the social inclusion OMC in the UK was followed by British participants' redirections of expectations and political activities to the EU level. In this case, expectations and political activities were shifted towards the EU level for the whole period of the application of the Lisbon strategy. Empirical evidence gathered for this thesis seems to confirm Haas's (1958) definition of loyalties as long term shifts in expectations and political activities. Importantly, these redirections were only referring to primary and secondary participating stakeholders who were aware of the application of the OMC in the UK. Primary stakeholders who participated in the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects were not aware of the EU framework and therefore, they did not redirect expectations, political activities and loyalties to the EU level.

Concerning the second hypothesis, participation at EU level through the OMC has influenced redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties unequally in both countries. The comparison between Greek and British participation in the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty showed that Greek stakeholders redirected their expectations towards the EU level for rational reasons. Because the domestic framework was not providing opportunities for participation, Greek stakeholders expected that they would influence positively the political agenda through participation at EU level. It was the opportunities that the EU offered for participation which made these stakeholders redirect their expectations from the national to the EU level. At the same time, participation opportunities at domestic level (i.e. SPTF, *Get Heard* and BTPG) made British stakeholders not to consider the EU level as the primary framework for participation. Instead they viewed the

domestic level as the only level at which they could influence social inclusion policy outcomes that affect them. However, the reason behind the emergence of loyalties towards the EU between participants of the Brussels conferences were based not on rational evaluations –the meetings did not satisfy the participants' expectations– but were the result of a socialisation process under common concerns and solutions amongst the primary stakeholders who participated. Evidence taken from primary documents and interviewees from Greece and the UK showed that the participants realised that people from across the EU face similar problems leading them not to focus on differences between them but on similarities. The participants all valued the sharing of the common experiences as the most significant outcome of the Brussels conferences. Yet, while the salience of the EU in their daily life was acknowledged by the participants who were interviewed for this thesis, the lack of their input into the EU decision-making moderated the emergence of the shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties from the domestic level towards the EU level.

The next chapter will discuss the conclusion of this thesis. Its first concern is to analyse the domestic responses to the EU pressures for participation of primary and secondary stakeholders and the mediating factors which define the degree of Europeanisation. Following this analysis, it will consider the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties in both the domestic level and the European. As said in chapter 1 (see section 1.1.5), two mediating factors have been expected to redirect participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties: rationalism and socialisation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The timeframe of this thesis was the period 2001-2010. This is the period when the social inclusion Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was intended to coordinate policies across member states within the context of the Lisbon strategy. Since the Nice European Council in 2000, one of the core provisions/objectives of the OMC has been the participation of people in poverty and social exclusion (i.e. primary stakeholders) and anti-poverty NGOs and networks (i.e. secondary stakeholders) in the social inclusion OMC process. The present thesis analysed the application of these provisions in the UK and Greece in order to assess whether the participation of (primary and secondary) stakeholders in domestic level and EU-level social inclusion OMC activities triggers the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level.

Some studies, and in particular neofunctionalist studies, have argued that participation in EU institutions and processes leads to a redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level (e.g. Shore 2000; Haas 1958). After the launch of the Lisbon strategy, researchers have argued that participation in the OMC also leads to redirections of expectations, political activities and loyalties (e.g. Vifell 2009, 2004; Jacobsson 2004; Haahr 2004). However, these studies focused mainly on elite and state actors. This thesis has provided strong empirical evidence that participation in the social inclusion OMC has the potential to

redirect expectations, political activities and loyalties of other groups of actors, namely primary and secondary stakeholders (rather than merely elite and state actors). The UK and Greece case studies (chapters 3 and 4) and the comparative chapter 5 have shown that differences in the types of participation in the OMC help to explain differences in the redirection of expectations, political activities and loyalties.

The present thesis adopted Haas's (1958) definitions of expectations, political activities and loyalties, and gave in chapter 1 (p. 50) the following example: stakeholders aiming at combating of poverty may redirect their expectations to the EU when they believe that they are more easily able to satisfy their goals at the EU level than the national level. Following their emerging expectations, these stakeholders redirect their political activities to the EU level when they try to combat poverty (e.g. through lobbying, campaigns or street protests in front of the EU buildings). They can be said to be loyal to the EU when their expectations and political activities are directed towards the EU for long periods of time.

This thesis has drawn on theories of European identity while combining them with Europeanisation theories. This was done in order to analyse the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders and to understand the impact which the participation of British and Greek (primary and secondary) stakeholders in the social inclusion OMC has on the expectations, political activities and loyalties of these actors.

The first important contribution of this thesis to the OMC literature is the analysis of the mediating factors which promote the Europeanisation of the domestic public policy through the OMC. The OMC literature which is based on theories of Europeanisation does not appear to take full advantage of this analytical framework. It rather analyses whether the OMC creates strong or weak adaptational pressures to the member states. In this manner, scholars have largely based their theories on the Europeanisation through the OMC on two levels of the process. The first refers to the adaptational pressures which emanate from the OMC (e.g. Armstrong 2010, 2006; Caviedes 2004). The second refers to the output of these pressures on the public policy as an indication of the domestic response (e.g. Sotiropoulos 2011). In this manner, they have neglected the analysis of the mediating factors[74] which determine the relation between pressures for domestic adaptation and effectiveness or efficiency (PPMI 2011). Additionally, the above mentioned studies have not contributed to the study of the degrees of the Europeanisation of the domestic policy (as described by Börzel and Risse 2003; Radaelli 2003). Unlike the OMC literature, the present thesis has largely focused on the mediating factors and the degrees of Europeanisation through the social inclusion OMC. One of its best findings is that the balance of power between veto points and the other mediating factors (see section 1.1.5) is the core determinant of the degree of Europeanisation through the social inclusion OMC.

This thesis also adds to the OMC literature by taking into serious consideration an often overlooked part of Börzel's theory (2002). Börzel (2002) stresses out the importance of keeping into consideration that, apart from the different responses to

[74] As these are described in the Europeanisation literature (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles *et al*. 2001; for a detailed analysis see section 1.1.5)

pressures for Europeanisation between countries, there are also important differences not only within countries but between different policies and even between policy issues (ibid.). Generally, OMC scholars appear to neglect this point; they tend to use their findings on one or a few policy issues and then to draw general conclusions on the Europeanisation of the whole domestic public policy through the OMC. The present thesis focused explicitly on the Europeanisation of participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the social inclusion policy-making process. Even in this policy issue however, different degrees of Europeanisation were found not only between Greece and the UK but also between the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders within each of the studied countries.

On the issue of participation of the above mentioned stakeholders, the present thesis has taken advantage of the momentum of the more detailed research on participation –through the OMC– in the social inclusion policy-making process. A gap in the OMC literature which existed even ten years after the launch of the method has started being filled in. An EU-wide study was conducted in 2010 on the degrees of participation in the different stages of the policy-making process (Inbas and Engender 2010). The present thesis built on this methodology and also contributed to it. It combined the above mentioned analysis on stages and degrees with the levels of participation (i.e. national and EU level). By building on such methodology this thesis did not only contribute to the literature by studying in detail the application of the social inclusion OMC's participatory provisions. The latter had not sufficiently being studied, not least with relation to the degrees of Europeanisation. The present thesis was also led to its major contribution to the OMC literature: the impact that participation of non-traditional stakeholders in the OMC social inclusion process has

had on their expectations, political activities and loyalties. Thus, the central finding of the thesis is that the OMC, apart from state actors (Zeitlin 2005b; Jacobsson 2004; Haahr 2004) and sub-state actors (Vifell 2009; Zeitlin 2005b), can trigger cognitive changes also among secondary and primary stakeholders.

But the present thesis did not conclude with this central finding. On the contrary, this finding was the beginning of an even deeper analysis which had two additional interrelated important findings which contrasted central arguments of the OMC literature: First, the potential of the OMC to trigger cognitive changes was found less strong than it has been argued by the previously mentioned scholars. Second, contrary to previous research on cognitive changes, the latter rarely appeared to be triggered by a framework of socialisation (for the OMC literature on socialisation, see section 1.2.5). Shifts in expectations, political activities and loyalties were rather found to depend upon the benefits (i.e. access to participation in the policy-making process and its potential and success to affect the policy outcomes) which were provided by the OMC to the examined stakeholders.

Another important contribution to the OMC literature is that the assessment of the participation through the OMC in particular and the assessment of the method in general was heavily based on the views of the relevant primary and secondary stakeholders (participating or not). Most studies on the OMC focus largely on official documents and interviews with officials which are only supplemented by interviews with representatives from major NGOs (e.g. Schönheinz forthcoming). The present thesis, focused on the views of representatives from major and local NGOs and of primary stakeholders. The research planning outlined in the first chapter (section 1.3)

has been proven successful in spotting the shifts of expectations, political activities and loyalties. With only a few exemptions (e.g. Dierckx and Van Herck 2010), the views of primary stakeholders were ironically ignored by previous OMC literature particularly concerning participation in the domestic level. This thesis has found – especially in Greece– that the official stance on the social inclusion OMC is in sharp contrast with the stance of the secondary and the primary stakeholders. The latter appeared, in the end of the studied period, to be disappointed by the OMC and the EU.

The decision in the first chapter of this thesis to further analyse the concept of the European identity with Haas's expectations, political activities and loyalties helped analyse the cognitive changes which were found to be created by participation in the OMC process. When the OMC literature refers to cognitive changes it does not appear to specify whether these changes refer to expectations, political activities and loyalties. It rather focuses on the potential of learning (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008; Zeitlin 2005b, Trubek and Mosher 2003), and of a framework for socialisation (Jacobsson 2004; Haahr 2004) on people's stances towards the EU. This thesis found that both learning and the framework of socialisation triggered indeed cognitive changes. But this was not the conclusion of the thesis which was designed to analyse what it is meant by cognitive changes and which are the variables which influence them. Socialisation among primary stakeholders under an EU framework was only found to exist at EU level and only for a limited period of time (usually during the EMPEP) redirecting some of the participants' expectations and political activities but not loyalties. Thus, a central finding of this thesis which has helped explain the limits of the shifts of expectations, political activities and loyalties concerns the limited

potential of the OMC to create a framework for socialisation. Contrary to its design which was expected to make member states to approach poverty and social exclusion as common European problems and to seek common European solutions, the studied participants perceived the OMC as a contribution of the EU to help solve domestic problems.

At domestic and EU level, the determinant for long(er) term changes in expectations, political activities which lead to loyalties was the rational assessment of the benefits of the OMC; its ability to help participants pursue their interests, namely participation in and impact on the policy outcomes. Participation without impact has only been found to temporarily redirect expectations and political activities and therefore, following the analytical framework of chapter 1, it has not been proven to lead to loyalties. The more these interests were satisfied through the application of the social inclusion OMC the more expectations, political activities and loyalties were found to shift from the national to the EU level.

However, another variable upon which the shifts in expectations were depended is the invisibility of the OMC. This thesis has not only found that the invisibility of the method has prevented it from redirecting expectations, political activities and loyalties among the participants. It has also contributed to the OMC/invisibility literature (see section 1.1.3) by researching the invisibility of the OMC among two ironically neglected groups, i. e. primary and secondary stakeholders.

Furthermore, this thesis has contradicted scholars' explanations why the elites are more loyal to the EU than the public. Thus, scholars agree that this happens because

the EU is more salient to the elites than the public (e.g. Herman and Brewer 2004; Castano 2004; Shore 2000). In contrast, this thesis has found that the reason why elites are more loyal to the EU that the rest of the population is not because of the salience of the EU in their daily lives but rather because the former are far more probable to participate and influence the EU policy outputs than the latter.

Last but not least, this thesis made another important contribution to the EU governance literature. It questioned both output and input democratic legitimacy and found mixed results. These results show that contrary to academics' conclusions, the OMC cannot be classified either as a democratic or a technocratic method, as a ten year debate on this issue shows (for this debate, see for example PPMI 2011; Kröger 2009, Büchs 2008, Borrás and Jacobsson 2004). Thus, this thesis has found that there are major differences between countries in terms of input and output democracy as the comparison between Greece and the UK shows. But, more impressively, there are differences between what academics mean when they say democratic method and how participants themselves perceive the democratic contribution of the OMC.

The following sections analyse the above mentioned best findings of the present thesis in detail.

6.2 Research hypotheses reassessed

6.2.1 Domestic participation and expectations, political activities and loyalties

The first hypothesis put forward in chapter 1 stated that 'the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic social inclusion OMC process leads to shifts in their expectations, political activities and loyalties from the national to the EU level'. The OMC itself is an effort to help solve domestic problems with EU level contributions. This remark fits nicely with Börzel's (1999: 574) definition of Europeanisation 'as a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making'. According to theories of Europeanisation (e.g. Börzel and Risse 2003; Radaelli 2003; Risse *et al*. 2000; see also chapter 1 section 1.1.5), the adaptation pressures on member states emerge due to the authoritative power of the EU. In the case of the OMC, which is a soft law instrument that entails no sanctions in cases of non-compliance (e.g. Trubek and Trubek 2005), the authoritative power of the EU is low. Nevertheless, for reasons explained in the analytical framework of this thesis (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5), the social inclusion OMC was expected to put pressure on member states to adapt their public policy to EU pressures. Scholars have also shown that the OMC can indeed promote the Europeanisation of domestic public policy (e.g. Armstrong 2006; Radaelli 2003b). This thesis studied the Europeanisation of domestic social inclusion public policy with regard to the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders.

The analysis of the domestic response to Europeanisation pressures does not mean that the present thesis has not acknowledged the fact that Europeanisation is generally a two-way process. Europeanisation is concerned with both the domestic adaptation to EU pressures and with the EU's adaptation (e.g. the deepening of

integration and emergence of new institutional actors) to member states' pressures (Armstrong 2010; Olsen 2002). However, this thesis belongs to the group of studies which focus primarily on the domestic adaptation by member states to the EU pressures (e.g. Olsen 2002; Cowles *et al*. 2001; Börzel and Risse 2003; Radaelli 2003b; Armstrong 2010, 2006, 2005)

6.2.1.1 Europeanisation of participation

As was argued in chapter 1 (section 1.1.5), the first condition for Europeanisation is a misfit between EU and domestic public policies (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles *et al*. 2001). This condition was fulfilled both in Greece and the UK for the OMC case studies. Chapter 4 has shown that in Greece the social inclusion policy-making process did not involve primary and/or secondary stakeholders prior to the launch of the OMC. As was argued in chapter 3, in the UK a process of consulting primary and secondary stakeholders had started prior to the OMC although this happened mainly in Scotland. English primary and secondary stakeholders stated that prior to the OMC they were not participating in the social inclusion policy-making process (e.g. Interviews in London 05.02.2010 and 16.02.2010a). Additionally, one interview in Scotland showed that even Scottish primary and secondary stakeholders were being consulted only irregularly and only by the Scottish devolved government and not the British government (Interview in Glasgow 02.12.2010).

Owing to this misfit, the OMC's provisions for participation created 'adaptational pressures' (Börzel and Risse 2003: 58) in the two member states. Chapter 1 (section 1.1.2) explained how the pressures for participation emerged from the European

Council and the European Commission. The pressures have also been identified in both academic studies of the OMC's participatory provisions (e.g. Telò 2002; Rodrigues 2001) and Europeanisation studies which have focused on the OMC (e.g. Armstrong 2006, 2005; Radaelli 2003a). The existence of the misfit and the emanating pressures for domestic adaptation to the EU public policy is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for Europeanisation (Börzel and Risse 2003). For Europeanisation to occur another condition must be in place. This is the domestic response to adaptational pressures. It depends upon different mediating factors such as multiple veto points, mediating formal institutions, political and organisational cultures and collective understandings, differential empowerment of domestic actors, and learning (Cowles *et al*. 2001 –for an analysis of these factors see chapter 1 section 1.1.5).

In the UK the social inclusion OMC's pressures for participation were responded to immediately by official actors and secondary stakeholders. Concerning the first group of actors, the fieldwork carried out for this thesis in the UK - see chapter 3 for a detailed assessment of the findings - provided strong evidence that the positive response by senior officials in the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) to the OMC's pressures for participation was due to their experience in, and commitment to, tackling poverty and social exclusion. Because they were committed to promote social inclusion, DWP senior officials used the OMC and its provisions for participation as a lever to pursue their goals. This finding bears similarities with the concept of 'differential empowerment of domestic actors' according to which actors are expected to 'use Europeanisation as an opportunity to further their goals' (Cowles *et al.* 2001: 11; see also chapter 1 section 1.1.5). However, because these

actors are members of the administration and therefore have a strong institutional role, their response is even better explained with Vanhercke's (2010: 116) concept of 'creative appropriation'.

The analytical framework put forward in chapter 1 made use of the concept of 'creative appropriation' to show that Europeanisation through the OMC does not rely on the method's hardness or softness (i.e. its authority to impose change or the lack of it). It rather relies on whether domestic actors use the OMC's toolkit (i.e. objectives, concepts, indicators etc) 'for their own purposes and independent policy initiatives' (*ibid*: 133). As Armstrong (2006: 91) has found, DWP civil servants have, due to the OMC, more 'autonomy' to prepare the NAPs than they had in the pre-OMC preparation of the social inclusion strategy. Taking advantage of this autonomy, senior officers from the DWP have been able to promote a participatory social inclusion policy-making process which is, at the same time, the social inclusion OMC's fourth objective.

Cowles and colleagues' (2001: 11) concept of 'differential empowerment of actors' explains the case of the British secondary stakeholders who perceived the EU's involvement in the field of social inclusion as an opportunity to pursue their interests. Thus, chapter 3 has shown that secondary stakeholders such as the members of the European Anti-Poverty Network UK (EAPN-UK) and the UK Coalition Against Poverty (UKCAP) perceived the OMC as an opportunity to get involved in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process. They thus took advantage of the OMC's provisions for participation to set up a Social Policy Task Force (SPTF) and involved themselves and primary stakeholders in the policy-making process.

Concerning participation, another mediating factor has been in place in the UK. As Cowles and colleagues (2001: 11) have shown, 'political and organisational cultures and collective understandings' can influence domestic actors to respond positively to EU pressures for adaptation. As was argued in chapter 3, the organisational culture of the anti-poverty associations was entailing the involvement of primary stakeholders in these organisations' operations. Anti-poverty associations were not only working with primary stakeholders but in some cases (i.e. UKCAP and Anti Poverty Network Cymru – APNC) they were directed by them. Due to this organisational culture secondary stakeholders facilitated the domestic adaptation to the OMC's pressures for participation of primary stakeholders. The strong involvement of primary stakeholders in the operations of the secondary stakeholders was the main reason why the participation of the latter group in the policy-making process meant simultaneously the participation of the former group.

Learning has also been an important factor which facilitated the Europeanisation of the domestic public policy, particularly in terms of participation of primary stakeholders. As chapter 1 (section 1.1.5) has shown, through the OMC, stakeholders have been expected to get engaged in a wider forum of ideas for problem-solving (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008). Interviews in the UK (e.g. London 05.02.2010 and 16.02.2010a) have shown that the launch of the *Get Heard* and *Bridging The Policy Gap* (BTPG) projects, as an effort to respond to the need for wide participation of primary stakeholders, was due to British actors' exposure to ideas of participatory projects in other member states (e.g. Belgium and France) and at the EU level (peer reviews and European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty – EMPEP).

The role of the two groups (i.e. DWP senior officials and secondary stakeholders) which facilitated the Europeanisation of British public policy in terms of participation, cannot be assessed independently of the fact that the domestic political system did not pose significant veto points apart from those emerging from the British governments' reluctance to formalise an informal process, as will be shown below. As has been argued in chapter 1 (see section 1.3.5.1), the UK was expected to respond positively to the Lisbon strategy since it had been an influential actor in shaping the Lisbon agenda and, in particular, its economic reform and competitiveness issues (Bulmer 2008). According to Börzel (2002), member states which upload practices and policies to the EU level generally find it much easier to adapt to the Europeanisation pressures than member states which are policy-takers. Concerning Britain, a central priority of the social inclusion OMC (i.e. the combating of child poverty) has been uploaded to the EU from the UK (Schönheinz *forthcoming*). In fact, consecutive Labour governments from 1997 to 2010 did not only prioritise social inclusion as part of their commitment to the Third Way politics (Atkins 2008), but they were also eager to promote participation of stakeholders as can be seen, for example, from Labour Party manifestos (1997 and 2001).

In Greece such mediating factors as the ones found in the UK did not manage to promote the requested Europeanisation of social inclusion public policy in terms of participation. Both concepts of 'differential empowerment of actors' (Cowles *et al*. 2001: 11) and 'creative appropriation' (Vanhercke 2010: 116) do not appear to explain cases where the veto points were proven too strong to be circumvented. Interviews with secondary stakeholders in Greece showed that the administration

was eager to consult them and was often persuaded by their views (e.g. Interview in Athens 08.12.2009). However, the decisions about the stakeholders' participation, and the input of such participation in the drafting of the NAPs were taken by the political leaders (e.g. ministers and their personal advisers). Confirming Featherstone (2005b), during the decision-making stage of the NAP process, the political leadership in Greece was cut-off from civil society. Additionally, decision-makers were acting in accordance with the governing political parties' priorities which were not necessarily similar to the need for social inclusion (Interviews in Athens 08.12.2009; 20.12.2010). Additional obstacles to Europeanisation emerged from issues related to partisan politics culture in Greece such as corporatism and clientelism. Chapter 4 showed that these 'structural impediments' (Featherstone 2005b: 223) limited the participation of secondary stakeholders in the social dialogue and prevented them from having an impact on the NAPs.

Consequently, Greece did not manage to respond positively to the pressures for participation of primary stakeholders. The reason identified for this shortcoming was that, contrary to the UK, the participation of primary stakeholders has not been part of the political and organisational culture in Greece. Thus, another mediating factor which could facilitate Europeanisation in terms of involvement of primary stakeholders in the policy-making process, has been absent in Greece. Prior to the OMC Greek (and British) public policy did not involve primary stakeholders. However, due to the fact that many anti-poverty associations in the UK were directed by primary stakeholders, the inclusion of anti-poverty associations in the SPTF as secondary stakeholders meant automatically that primary stakeholders were also included. In Greece neither the official process of policy-making nor operations in

the anti-poverty associations involved primary stakeholders. The non-response to Europeanisation pressures therefore comes as no surprise.

Finally, as was mentioned above, learning, as a potential mediating factor has been expected to empower actors with new ideas of problem solving (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5). The actors would redefine their interests and facilitate Europeanisation (de la Porte and Pochet 2012; Jacobsson 2004; Trubek and Mosher 2003). However, the OMC objectives and guidelines were proven inapplicable to the Greek public policy and they did not stimulate a process of policy learning in Greece. In fact, Greek stakeholders felt excluded from the forum of ideas of problem solving. Instead of feeling 'hedged in' (Jacobsson 2004: 359) the OMC, they perceived it as referring mainly to actors from more advanced, in terms of social policy, member states. Overall, faced with the obstacles posed by the Greek public policy process the OMC has been proven too soft to overcome veto points and to promote Europeanisation. As Featherstone (2005a: 734) has argued, when 'the EU stimuli are in fact limited in their nature' then '…entrenched institutional obstacles in domestic systems can readily thwart their potency'.

Greece has been described as a 'foot-dragger' in uploading and downloading policies in the context of Europeanisation (Börzel 2002: 203). Europeanisation pressures for reform have been proven largely unsuccessful as the cases of pensions, health system and the labour market have shown (Tinios 2005; Mossialos and Allin 2005; Papadimitriou 2005). From the beginning of the Lisbon strategy Greece was expected to be the '"least likely" case in relation to structural reform' (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008: 5). Additionally, Greece did not appear to upload its

rudimentary social inclusion policy practices to the EU. Thus, it had to download through the social inclusion OMC practices which had a 'poor fit' on the domestic level. Greece became a foot-dragger in terms of the implementation of the social inclusion OMC.

Concerning the different participation patterns in Greece and the UK, chapter 1 (section 1.3) took into consideration previous studies of stakeholders' participation in member states (e.g. INBAS and Engender 2010; de la Porte and Pochet 2005). While drawing on these studies, this thesis has analysed the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the different *stages* of the social inclusion policy-making process (i.e. agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring). Member states' responses to the OMC's overarching objectives are outlined and reflected in the NAPs. Various scholars have indicated that primary and secondary stakeholders' participation refers to participation in the NAP process (e.g. Armstrong 2006; de la Porte and Pochet 2005). Therefore, the focus of the present thesis has been on the different stages of the NAP process, i.e. agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring. The analysis of primary and secondary stakeholders' participation was also designed to capture the different *degrees* of participation. These include according to INBAS and Engender (2010: 3 –emphasis added; see also chapter 1 section 1.3.1):

> to *inform*: one-way dissemination of information [by the government] to stakeholders on a specific issue; to *consult*: to inform and get feedback from stakeholders, a two-way information channel; to *involve*: gathering stakeholders' views and ensuring that their concerns and views are

understood and considered; to *collaborate*: to work with stakeholders as partners throughout a process, including in analyses, development and decision-making; to *empower*: to place final decision-making in the hands of stakeholders.

Shortcomings in participation of stakeholders, which have occurred not only in Greece, generated extra pressures from the EU. As could be seen in chapter 4, a Joint Report in 2002 urged the need for participation through its recommendations for the next rounds of the NAPs (European Commission 2002). Additionally the Commission had already particularly named and shamed Greece for its shortcomings in participation (de la Porte and Nanz 2004). Greece responded to these pressures with the official establishment of a space for dialogue with relevant stakeholders (i.e. the National Committee of Social Protection – NCSP). However, this space for dialogue only brought limited changes to the domestic policy-making process in terms of participation. While even the government acknowledged the limited contribution of the NCSP towards a more participatory policy-making process (e.g. NAP Greece 2005-2006), both secondary stakeholders and social partners abandoned their efforts to get involved in 2009. In Greece only secondary stakeholders were mobilised to participate in *consultation* and *information* (i.e. low degrees of involvement) and only in the agenda-setting stage. As mentioned above, the decision-making stage was dominated by political leaders (see also Delistathis *et al*. 2009). Chapter 4 has shown that monitoring and evaluation was an issue of only secondary importance even for the government. However, even the stakeholder consultation at the agenda-setting stage was reported to be 'irregular and sketchy' (Interview in Athens 08.12.2009) while secondary stakeholders often complained

that the government used the NCSP only to inform them about decisions that had already been taken (*ibid*.). This remark seems to confirm Beresford and Hoban (2005: 1) who maintain that the participation of stakeholders in early stages of the policy-making process (i.e. agenda-setting) is often used by the decision-makers in order to achieve 'outcomes which had largely been decided already' (see also chapter 2 section 2.4.4)

Regarding participation in the UK, chapter 3 has shown that the SPTF British primary and secondary stakeholders were in direct talks with the administration every six weeks. Members of the SPTF were *involved* in the agenda-setting and monitoring stages of the NAP process. This means that their views, articulated during the on-going direct dialogue, were understood and taken into consideration by the British government. According to one interviewee, who was participating in the SPTF as a secondary stakeholder, the SPTF was 'fundamentally shaping the NAPs' (Interview in London 15.12.2009). In fact, many issues which were raised by the participants in the SPTF at the agenda-setting stage were incorporated in the NAPs. For example, the NAP 2008-2010 started with the challenges (e.g. child poverty, income inequality etc) which were identified by the SPTF and its members (UK NAP 2008-2010: 2-3). Importantly, a document published by the SPTF in 2008 reflected its members' satisfaction with the fact that certain challenges (such as debt and in-work poverty), which had been identified by the SPTF, appeared subsequently on the domestic political agenda (SPTF 2008). However, members of the SPTF have also *collaborated* with the policy-makers in the stage of the implementation of the NAPs. Thus, in an effort to meet the fourth objective of the social inclusion OMC, which also refers to the mobilisation of primary stakeholders, the government assigned to

anti-poverty associations and networks the running of the two biggest in terms of participation projects, namely *Get Heard* and *Bridging the Policy Gap* (BTPG). The cases of the *Get Heard* and BTPG can be seen as a result of the Europeanisation of the British social inclusion policy-making process, at least in regards to the participation of the relevant stakeholders. Members of NGOs and networks who organised workshops for these two projects confirmed that these new practices had been 'downloaded' from the EU level. The *Get Heard* project was modelled on the Brussels Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (Interviews in London 05.12.2010 and 16.02.2010a). The BTPG was organised according to the European concept 'peer review' (Interview in Glasgow, 02.12.2010). *Get Heard* and BTPG's findings were annexed in the British 2006-2008 NSR and 2008-2010 NSR respectively.

Following Börzel and Risse (2003) and Radaelli's (2003b) taxonomies of domestic change (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5), the UK *accommodated* the pressures of Europeanisation emanating by the social inclusion OMC. Developments in the period 2001-2010 show that the UK accommodated Europeanisation pressures by involving two groups of stakeholders (i.e. primary and secondary stakeholders) which had not participated in the domestic social policy-making process prior to the OMC. However, Johnson (2009) has argued that one of the veto actors in the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders has been the government itself. According to Johnson (*ibid*: 3), the government was reluctant to formalise an informal participatory process fearing that this would 'override representative democracy'. Therefore, despite the notable developments in terms of the participation of British primary and secondary stakeholders, the social inclusion policy-making process in

the UK was not *transformed* in terms of participation. From 2001 to 2010 the UK added new processes into existing ones without changing the latter; therefore, without altering its 'fundamental logic' (Radaelli 2003: 38). However, as Featherstone (2003) has argued, the Europeanisation of the member states is not permanent and member states can retrench. From 2010 onwards when the process of participation in the NSRs was formalised by the government, the UK seems to have retrenched from the Europeanisation of its social inclusion public policy since the formalisation of the process did not succeed in promoting participation. As chapter 3 has shown, the formally established Social Inclusion Advisory Group failed to involve stakeholders since its operations were cut down due to the budget cuts (see also Schönheinz *forthcoming*).

In the case of Greece it seems that the extreme misfit between the EU pressures for participation has led to *inertia* in the case of primary stakeholders and *absorption* in the case of secondary stakeholders. As Radaelli (2003b: 37) has argued, inertia 'may simply happen when a country finds that EU political architectures, choices, models, or policy are too dissimilar to domestic practice'. Chapter 4 has shown that in general, core OMC objectives and guidelines have been proven largely incompatible with Greek necessities. Whereas one of the core priorities of the EU's social inclusion OMC has been participation of primary stakeholders in the domestic policy-making process, primary stakeholders in Greece have not even participated in the operations of the anti-poverty associations.

Regarding absorption, this amounts to a low degree of domestic change as shown in chapter 1. According to Radaelli (*ibid.*) this change takes place 'without real

modification of the essential structures and changes in the "logic" of political behaviour'. Therefore, in the case of secondary stakeholders, the above analysis has shown that only an irregular and sketchy process of consultation has started without changing the structure of the Greek public policy and, more importantly, without changing the behaviour of actors such as the decision-makers.

A main contribution of the present thesis is that it has largely focused on the views of the participants of their own participation. It has argued that expectations, political activities and loyalties of (primary and secondary) stakeholders depend also on how they regard their own participation in the social OMC on the domestic and/or EU level. This means that an accurate assessment of the impact of participation on participants' loyalties cannot be made without taking into account the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) of the participants about the OMC. The importance of this statement becomes evident if one compares participants' assessment of the participation promoted by the OMC with official assessments. Thus, having as point of reference participants' views of their own participation, in Greece official assessments (such as those seen in the NAPs or in the General Secretary's speech (EPEKSA 2009, see chapter 4 section 4.3)) tend to exaggerate the developments in terms of stakeholder participation. In line with the methodological framework set out in chapter 1 (section 1.3.3), the views of the stakeholders were gathered through qualitative research (i.e. interviews) conducted for this thesis. The following sections will therefore take into account participants' stances regarding the OMC and the EU.

6.2.1.2 Participation at domestic level and expectations, political activities and loyalties

This thesis found evidence that domestic participation through the social inclusion OMC had differentiated impacts on Greek and British participants' expectations and political activities, while it triggered the redirection of loyalties towards the EU only in the UK. According to several studies (e.g. Jiménez 2005; Citrin and Sides 2004; Risse and Maier 2003) citizens from Greece and the UK have in the past shown the highest percentages among EU citizens of exclusively national identities. A Europeanisation of expectations, political activities and loyalties does not entail EU authoritative adaptation pressures. As Risse (2001) has noted there are no EU treaties which demand the harmonisation of EU citizens' loyalties. However, Risse has argued that the EU's continuous involvement in the daily life of its citizens is expected to have an impact on peoples' collective identities (Risse 2001). Regarding the OMC, the method has developed 'beyond the intentions surrounding its original design' (Tholoniat 2010: 93). Thus, the OMC has not been designed to bring about a shift in the expectations, political activities and loyalties. Yet as part of the EU integration process the OMC is affecting the daily life of EU citizens. This thesis therefore expected the OMC to have an impact in (primary and secondary) stakeholders' expectations, political activities and loyalties. Building on this argument the present thesis found that participation in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process has indeed triggered such redirections although in different degrees in Greece and the UK as well as between primary and secondary stakeholders. Borrowing from the theories of Europeanisation and EU identity the main explanatory factor for such changes is rationalism.

Before analysing the impact of domestic participation on expectations, political activities and loyalties through a process of rationalism, an issue which has emerged during the field research must be assessed. As stated above, Risse has argued that involvement of the EU in the daily life of its citizens is expected to trigger the above mentioned redirections. Castano (2004) has claimed that the EU has also to be salient in people's daily life. Regarding the awareness of the OMC, chapter 1 (section 1.1.3) used a proposition put forward by independent experts (PPMI 2011) who argued that the more people participate in the social inclusion OMC process, the more they would become aware of the method (*ibid*: 14). However, this hypothesis was shown to be valid only in the cases of the Social Policy Task Force in the UK and the National Committee for Social Protection in Greece. The analysis of the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects was based on the projects' documentation (workshops reports and final reports) and interviews with participants and key organisers. It found that despite the fact that the two projects would not have taken place without the OMC, participants were unaware of the method and the role of the EU behind their mobilisation. Therefore, despite the fact that the European level offered opportunities for stakeholders to pursue their interests, it remained invisible to the participants. As a result the opportunities for participation were not identified as emanating from the EU's involvement in the field of social inclusion. While participation had an impact on participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties, these were not redirected to the EU but remained at the local and domestic level (see chapters 3 and 5).

The above remarks concerning the invisibility of the EU dimension seems to reflect a general attitude of stakeholders towards the OMC. As this thesis has shown, the participation of primary and secondary stakeholders in the domestic social inclusion OMC process did not lead to a socialisation process which would also have triggered a shift in expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU level. This happened because Greek and British secondary stakeholders who participated in the OMC process did not see domestic actions to tackle poverty as common European actions. Therefore, they failed to disseminate information about the EU's involvement in the field of social inclusion to the primary stakeholders. As with the secondary stakeholders, so the primary stakeholders appeared to perceive poverty less like a European problem than a national one. This stands in marked contrast to one of the core reasons why the OMC was set up in the first place as a response to the 'need to view national policies as a "common concern" and the need to achieve a certain policy convergence' (Jacobsson 2004: 357). As a result, the EU norms, concerns, and objectives have often not been present in the domestic application of the OMC in Greece and the UK. Earlier in this chapter, it was argued that the higher involvement of NGOs and networks in the process can contribute to the learning of ideas for problem-solving across the member states as the British case has shown. For example, the EAPN-EU in Brussels intends to communicate best practices to its different delegations in the member states (e.g. EAPN-Greece and EAPN-UK). However, receivers of these practices at domestic level are a few members of the delegations. The information that they receive is not disseminated to other members of the NGOs not to mention primary stakeholders. As a result, the vast majority of participants in the OMC process in both countries focused exclusively on domestic concerns and solutions without been exposed to and socialised under European

common concerns and objectives which, according to Jacobsson (2004), lead to redirection of loyalties.

However, expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU may emerge even when a process of socialisation is not at work. Haas had already argued in 1958 in his *Uniting of Europe*, that participants in the EU integration process were likely to redirect their expectations and political activities to the EU level if the latter was perceived as possible to offer more opportunities to them to pursue their interests. Therefore, Greek and British participants' expectations, political activities and loyalties were redirected to the EU following their satisfaction from the EU which in turn depended on the patterns of domestic participation that it promoted. The different patterns of participation of stakeholders in Greece and the UK influenced differently their expectations, political activities and loyalties. The shifts affected both primary and secondary stakeholders in the UK, and only secondary stakeholders in Greece. Obviously, the reason behind this difference is that Greek primary stakeholders were not mobilised in the context of the OMC.

The more satisfied people were with their participation in the domestic policy-making process (in terms of degrees of participation, of participation in different stages of the policy-making process, and of impact of participation on the NAPs), the more the people redirected their expectations and political activities. In Greece, participation varied between information which involved primarily the dissemination of information by government officials, and formal consultation at the stage of the agenda-setting of the NAPs. In both cases, there was limited impact on the domestic social inclusion policy-making process. With the launch of the OMC Greek

participants (i.e. secondary stakeholders) initially redirected their expectations and political activities to the EU level. They perceived the OMC as a benefit from the EU which would help them pursue their interests i.e. to participate in, and influence the domestic decision-making process. Due to the OMC provisions for participation, secondary stakeholders started participating in discussions with the administration. In fact, during the period 2001-2010 some stakeholders noticed an increase in participation in discussions with the government. This refers especially to the period after the second round of the NAPs and the establishment of the NCSP in 2003. Even though participation somewhat increased over time, the participating secondary stakeholders did not see this as a significant development. Other stakeholders argued that participation did not increase at all after the launch of the OMC. In any case, the overall outcome was that the OMC eventually disappointed secondary stakeholders. They lowered their expectations and did not redirect their political activities to the EU level any longer. According to Haas's (1958: 5) definition of loyalties, only when expectations and political activities of individuals are redirected towards the EU for long periods of time will their loyalties shift to the EU level.

In the UK, the SPTF was a group of primary and secondary stakeholders who participated in the domestic social inclusion policy-making process due to the OMC. They were involved in the agenda-setting and monitoring stages of the NAP process and they collaborated with the government in the stage of implementation. Evidence provided in this thesis showed that participation had an impact on the NAPs and the political agenda. As chapter 3 has shown, participation did not develop as a building-on process, but it was fluctuating, reaching its highest levels in the period 2004-2007 (i.e. when the *Get Heard* and the BTPG projects were launched). All interviews

conducted for this thesis in the UK, showed that the members of the SPTF were satisfied with their participation in the social inclusion OMC. As a result, they redirected their expectations and political activities to the EU which they perceived as the appropriate framework for pursuing their interests. These shifts in loyalties lasted throughout the first ten years of the application of the social inclusion OMC in the UK. Even since the economic crisis, which has resulted in austerity measures in the UK that have hit the poorest hardest, primary and secondary stakeholders considered the EU framework as the framework that has the potential to satisfy their interests. If one uses Haas's definition of loyalties (1958: 5 – see also above), then British stakeholders who participated in the SPTF have redirected their loyalties from the domestic to the EU level.

6.2.2 Participation at EU level and expectations, political activities and loyalties

The second hypothesis (see chapter 1) postulated that 'the participation of stakeholders in OMC-sponsored EU conferences of people who experience poverty will lead to shifts of their expectations, political activities and loyalties to the EU level'. The empirical evidence gathered for this thesis has shown that the validity of this hypothesis should be seen in context. Expectations shifted from the national to the EU level only in the case of the Greek delegates to the conferences and merely for a short period of time. In the absence of a participatory process at the domestic level, Greek delegates appeared to have strong expectations for influencing the EU policy-making process. Based on a rational assessment of the EU framework, Greek interviewees stated that once they were offered the opportunity to participate in the EMPEP they expected the EU to listen and take into consideration their concerns

when formulating social inclusion policies (e.g. Interview in Crete 20.01.2011). However, Greek delegates eventually became disappointed by the fact that contrary to their expectations, their views and concerns were either not even listened to by decision-makers (e.g. MEPs), or not turned into policies which have an impact on their daily life. Therefore, the field research showed that the delegates stopped redirecting their expectations to the EU level.

For British delegates these conferences did not represent the only forum for participation as was explained earlier in this chapter and in chapter 3. Due to domestic actors' positive response to OMC pressures for participation, they had started to become involved or even collaborate with the DWP in the social inclusion policy-making process. Thus, the participatory process which started in the UK in 2001 and reached its highest levels in the period 2004-2007 (i.e. when the *Get Heard* and the BTPG projects were launched) prevented British delegates to Brussels from shifting expectations towards the EU level. Moreover, British anti-poverty NGOs and networks who were preparing primary stakeholders for participation in these conferences were intentionally playing down participants' expectations to protect them from disappointment similar to the one experienced by the Greek delegates.

Evidence put forward in chapters 3 and 4 showed that political activities and loyalties of both British and Greek delegates to the Brussels annual conferences shifted partly from the domestic level to the EU level. These political activities and loyalties did not emerge after a positive rational assessment of the EU framework. In other words, these redirections of political activities and loyalties did not follow a redirection of expectations as Haas (1958) had predicted. Instead, the EMPEP provided a

framework for socialisation under common concerns and common objectives. Within this framework, political activities were directed to the EU level only while the conferences were taking place and were referring to common demands from the EU (see chapters 3 and 4). After the conferences, the people shifted their political activities towards the domestic level. This last remark relates to an issue raised in chapter 2 (section 2.4.3) according to which participation in the policy-making process can empower primary stakeholders. Indeed, people who were politically inactive before they participated at EU level got empowered once they participated in the Brussels conferences and started political activities at domestic level as chapters 3 and 4 have shown.

A study by Dierckx and Van Herck (2010: 20) showed that participation of primary stakeholders in the annual Brussels conferences of people who experience poverty triggered a 'kind of European identity' among the participants. Dierckx and Van Herck's study appeared to understand European identity as 'a sense of affiliation or membership of a broader community facing shared problems' (*ibid*: 20). The empirical findings from the fieldwork for this thesis confirm Dierckx and Van Herck's study. Participants in the EMPEP appeared to be socialised under common concerns and towards common objectives. Interviewees showed that British and Greek delegates focused on the common concerns rather than differences in the type and gravity of social exclusion. They therefore felt included in this community. However, while this is the type of 'community sentiments' that Haas (1958: 9) had envisaged, these loyalties did not follow the long-term redirection of expectations and political activities. These loyalties were not loyalties to the EU as a framework which satisfies personal interests. Instead they were loyalties to an inclusive

community of people that was formed in socialisation during the Brussels conferences which identified common European concerns and solutions. However, these redirections were only temporal and lasted no more than the (two) days of the Brussels conferences.

6.3 Rationalism, socialisation and the OMC's contribution towards democratic governance

6.3.1 Mediating factors: rationalism, socialisation and the input in the EU.

Concerning whether rationalism is a stronger facilitating factor than socialisation for the Europeanisation of loyalties (see chapter 1 section 1.1.5), Risse (2005) has criticised Haas's rationalism (i.e. benefits from the EU → redirection of interests and political activities towards the EU → EU loyalties) by bringing forward a vivid example: farmers are protesting in Brussels throwing their products at EU bureaucrats. The interpretation that Risse has given is that if farmers (who are allegedly one of the groups who have benefited most from the EU) turn against the EU, then Haas's assumption that benefits from the supranational level lead to loyalties towards that level is not valid. On the one hand, treating farmers' protests as a proof against the existence of loyalties is rather strict. An EU institution's decisions against citizens' interests and their subsequent protests do not necessarily rule out the existence of loyalties to the EU. Similar protests often take place against national level political decisions; yet loyalties to the nation-state are very rarely questioned.

On the other hand, arguments and findings of the present thesis can strengthen Risse's argument by linking the farmers' example with the case of Greece. As chapter 1 has shown, Greeks (who benefited most among EU citizens from EU funding) have changed their attitudes to the EU for the worse after the outbreak of the financial crisis. Similar was the case with the Greek secondary stakeholders participating in the domestic application of the OMC. As this thesis has shown, they redirected expectations and political activities to the EU for short periods of time only to abandon them after they realised that the OMC could not provide the expected benefits (for reasons explained in section 6.2.1 above).

Risse (*ibid*: 305) concludes that there 'seems to be little spill-over from the material into the ideational realms.' Although Risse does not reject rationalism, he argues that the transfer of loyalties to the EU also assumes a socialisation process. Loyalties mean that actors have internalised European values and norms (*ibid*.). In other words, material benefits alone cannot redirect loyalties. A process of socialisation must also be in place.

By studying the case of the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty, this thesis has shown that socialisation is not a sufficient condition for long term loyalties either. In fact, such a socialisation process can only temporarily redirect loyalties to the EU. In the absence of a positive rational assessment (lack of expectations that the EU can provide benefits), the redirection of loyalties ceased when the process of socialisation ended. In the above cases it seems that in the context of the Europeanisation of member states, which is an outcome that can be reversed

(Featherstone 2003), expectations, political activities and loyalties towards the EU level can be abandoned.

However, the analysis of empirical data gathered from the UK has shown that the benefits that the OMC provided to participating in the domestic application of the OMC stakeholders have indeed redirected expectations, political activities and, in the long run, loyalties to the EU. Even during the financial crisis when these stakeholders' interests have been difficult to be pursued, they appear to redirect expectations and political activities to the EU (i.e. lobbying, street protests and participation in EU-sponsored processes) in order to pursue their interests. The case of the British domestic stakeholders shows that loyalties shift ideally to the EU after the long-term provision of benefits. However, the absence of benefits does not necessarily mean the lack of loyalties, at least in Haas's thinking. An often overlooked point in Haas's theory on the shifting of loyalties (perhaps overlooked by Risse too) is that he clarified at the outset of his study that expectations, political activities and loyalties to the EU can emerge even when people are not 'attracted by "Europeanism" as such' (Haas 1958: 14). People may not envisage a fully integrated EU; in fact, they can block steps to integration as chapter 1 has shown. Yet this does not mean that they do not pursue their interests at the EU level. As mentioned above, this can happen due to the benefits, but also due to the fact that the EU is becoming increasingly involved in people's lives. Farmers' disposition to protest against the EU strengthens the rational interpretation of loyalties and, therefore, confirms Haas' theory. Such demonstrations can be seen as political activities which seek to influence EU decisions. They are signs of the acknowledgement by the protesters that a supranational community has been emerging. EU citizens may not always be

loyal to the EU; however, they acknowledge the existence and power of the EU and its relevance for their daily lives. Thus, they turn expectations and political activities to the EU level. Actually, farmers have often attacked EU buildings to demonstrate against unfavourable decisions.[75] These demonstrations can only be seen as long term political activities which are carried out for the pursuit of specific interests/expectations. This interpretation of loyalties is compatible with rationalism, since the latter does not always build on actual benefits, but on expectations for benefits. To borrow from the June 2012 elections in Greece, the majority of Greeks voted for the allegedly pro-Euro and pro-EU parties while 85% of the population demanded Greece remain in the Eurozone.[76] This is in sharp contrast to Greek attitudes towards the EU (see chapter 1 section 1.3.5.2) which, after the financial crisis, appeared to change for the worse. Interview findings presented in chapter 4 have confirmed that the EU lacks a positive image in Greece. After 2008, the EU started being perceived negatively either due to it being viewed as an agent which produced the crisis or as an agent which mishandles the crisis (Interview in Athens 20.12.2010). However, the electorate's attitudes in June 2012 elections show that the majority of Greeks may not be any more attracted by Europeanism, yet they remain loyal to the EU due to another rational reason: compared with solutions proposed within the national framework the EU appears to be a safer way out of the crisis. For this reason the majority of Greeks voted in favour of parties whose pre-election campaigns were based on a rather crude promise: *to keep the country in the EU at any cost*.

[75] With the completion of this thesis, the most updated incident of a farmers' protest in Brussels involved the pouring of litres of milk in the streets in front of the EP (*Reuters* 10.07.2012).

[76] Even Syriza, which was the party accused of planning Greece's exit from the Eurozone (and the EU) emphasised strongly its pro-EU stances and denied allegations for planning Greece's return to the pre-Euro currency.

The increasing role of the EU in the daily life of its citizens has been acknowledged by all interviewees for this thesis in Greece and the UK. From this perspective the assumption that national elites are more loyal to the EU than the rest of the citizens due to the entitativity of the EU is questioned. Scholars have explained the fact that elites are more loyal to the EU than the general public by pointing out that the EU is salient for the former and distant for the latter (Herman and Brewer 2004; Castano 2004). However, the increasing role of the EU in citizens' lives and the opportunities for participation offered to wider numbers of stakeholders have made the EU salient for a wider number of citizens than only the elites. Therefore, the problem seems not to be the salience of the EU but the fact that elites are more likely to influence EU policy outcomes than ordinary citizens even when the latter participate in EU processes. In other words, while the increasing presence of the EU in the daily life of its citizens is acknowledged, the citizens' lack of input in the process of integration seems to be an important factor which prevents wider shifts in their loyalties.

6.3.2 The OMC and democratic governance

This thesis's primary concern was an evaluation of the OMC's contribution to participation of stakeholders and to loyalties towards the EU. However, an important issue put forward in chapter 1 was the potential contribution of the OMC to the EU's efforts for improved governance (chapter 1 sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.4). One central reason why the EU launched this new mode of governance was to promote democratic legitimacy. In this context, the widened participation through the OMC has been seen as an example of input legitimacy, while the effectiveness of such participation (in terms of policy outcomes) has been seen as an example of output

legitimacy (Scott and Trubek 2002). Various scholars have argued that despite these intentions, which were reflected in the design of the OMC (i.e. its theoretical provisions for mobilisation of relevant stakeholders), the application of the method in the member states has brought about only limited participation of new stakeholders. For this reason the OMC has not offered input legitimacy (Vanhercke 2011; Armstrong 2010; Büchs 2008; de la Porte and Nanz 2004). In fact, the case of Greece (chapter 4) confirms these scholars' argument and questions arguments about the potential to achieve democratic legitimacy through the OMC (Scott and Trubek 2002). Participation in the policy-making process did not increase substantially in Greece after the launch of the OMC. At the same time, the impact of the limited participation on the NAPs has been insignificant. Therefore, the application of the social inclusion OMC in Greece has not offered input or output legitimacy.

Yet, the application of the social inclusion OMC in the UK has offered another perspective in the theorising of the OMC as a mode of democratic governance. In the UK - as the SPTF and the *Get Heard* and BTPG projects showed - primary and secondary stakeholders participated in large numbers despite shortcomings in representativeness (see chapter 3 section 3.5.2). The quantitative overview at the beginning of chapter 3 and the interviews conducted for this thesis with key-stakeholders illustrated rather a lack of policy outcomes which would otherwise reduce significantly poverty and social exclusion levels. However, a number of issues put forward by the (primary and secondary) stakeholders' were incorporated in the NAPs (see, for example, chapter 5 section 5.2.2). Therefore, the majority of the interviewees in the UK argued that governance through the social inclusion OMC was indeed democratic. In fact, the SPTF's published evaluations of the OMC (e.g.

SPTF 2008: 45) have seen the developments in participation brought about due to the OMC as forms of 'participatory democracy'. Therefore, for the interviewees and the SPTF (2008) the OMC has provided both input legitimacy (wide participation of primary and secondary stakeholders) and output legitimacy (input in the political agenda).

However, particularly concerning output legitimacy, Armstrong (2010) does not regard the SPTF's input in the NAPs as significant in terms of influence of the political agenda. The difference between academics and participants' evaluations of the OMC regarding the method's contribution towards democratic governance can be explained by the fact that academics often assess the application of the OMC through a normative perspective. In contrast, primary and secondary stakeholders, who have been mobilised in the context of the OMC, view the method as a democratic process because prior to the OMC they did not participate in the policy-making process.

Future research should concentrate more strongly on the net impact of the primary and secondary stakeholders' participation in the social inclusion policy in terms of policy outcomes. Scholars appear to have the difficulty of accessing the impact of participation in the policy-making process on the levels of poverty and social exclusion. This difficulty arises from the fact that studies of the OMC suffer from the lack of empirical evidence (de la Porte 2010; Zeitlin 2005a). In addressing this lack of evidence, de la Porte (2010: 7) has suggested the use of data triangulation to assess the OMC which is a method with 'multiple possible impacts'.

By focusing mainly on certain potential impacts of the OMC (e.g. policy learning, horizontal and vertical coordination etc), academics tend to see each of these impacts as an end in itself. Therefore, they appear to moderate their expectations regarding the primary concern of the OMC which is nothing more than the decisive impact on poverty.

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Appendix I List of interview questions to secondary stakeholders

1. How many years have you been involved in anti-poverty NGOs/ networks?

2. Do you know whether the Open Method of Coordination is behind your involvement in the policy-making process?

3. Why do certain NGOs/networks participate while others do not?

4. In what form does your involvement occur (dialogue, meetings with high-ranking officials, written proposals, questionnaires)?

5. In which stages of the policy-making process do you (or the NGO/ network which you represent) participate?

6. After you (or the NGO/ network which you represent) are involved in EU sponsored actions, do you think that the EU will satisfy your expectations?

7. Is the EU framework more possible to satisfy your goals, or is it the domestic framework which you are still focused on? Have you changed your attitudes towards the EU?

8. Do you think that your involvement (or the NGO/ organisation's involvement) has positive policy outcomes?

9. Do you facilitate people to participate in the Brussels Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty or at domestic participatory projects?

10. After participation in the EU framework, do people who experience poverty expect from the EU a positive impact on their daily lives?

11. After their participation, have primary stakeholders changed the way they see the EU (awareness of EU actions, awareness of the OMC, community of people with shared concerns, institution which can satisfy interests)?

Appendix II List of interview questions to primary stakeholders

1. Do you participate as a member of an NGO or as an independent individual?

2. Do you participate at domestic level and/or the Brussels Meetings of People who Experience Poverty?

3. Why do some people participate while others do not? Which criteria are used?

4. Were you informed/prepared before you participated? By whom?

5. Is the EU framework apparent while you are participating?

6. Did you have expectations from the EU once you were given the opportunity to participate?

7. Was participation different to what you expected? Did you express your concerns? Do you think the policy-makers have listened to your views? Have these views been taken into consideration?

8. Do you think your views will have an impact in the policy-making process? What kind of impact do you expect?

9. After your participation, have you changed the way you see the EU (awareness of EU actions, awareness of the OMC, community of people with shared concerns, institution which can satisfy interests)?

10. Is the EU framework more able to satisfy your goals or is it still the domestic framework which you are still focused on?

Appendix III List of interviewees

Member of the European Anti-Poverty Network England; interview in Nottingham, 24.11.2009.

Communications manager of the KLIMAKA; interview in Athens, 07.12.2009a.

Director of the KLIMAKA; interview in Athens, 07.12.2009b.

Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network Greece; interview in Athens, 08.12.2009.

Director of the Off the Streets into Work; interview in London, 15.12.2009.

Director of the Migrant Resource Centre/Coordinator of the British delegation to the 2007 (and 2011) European meeting of people experiencing poverty; interview in London, 05.02.2010.

Member of the ATD-Fourth World's national coordination team; interview in London, 16.02.2010a.

Policy and participation officer of the ATD-Fourth World; interview in London, 16.02.2010b.

British delegate to the 2009 European meeting of people experiencing poverty; interview in Rhyl, 24.02.2010.

Coordinator of the UK Coalition Against Poverty; interview in Liverpool, 24.03.2010.

Director of the Poverty Alliance; interview in Glasgow, 02.12.2010.

Director of the IKE; interview in Athens, 20.12.2010.

Coordinator of the Greek delegation to the 2010 European meeting of people experiencing poverty; interview in Athens, 01.12.2011.

Greek delegate to the 2009 European meeting of people experiencing poverty; interview in Athens, 20.01.2011.

Greek delegate to the 2010 European meeting of people experiencing poverty; interview in Crete, 03.12.2011.

Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network, Brussels; telephone interview, 09.01.2012.