

University of Essex
Department of Government
Doctoral Thesis

**Collective Action and the Production of Alternatives in the Crisis-ridden
European South: Understanding the Politics of Commoning and Solidarity
through the Greek Experience**

Konstantinos Roussos
Supervisor: David Howarth

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the
Department of Government
University of Essex
September 21, 2020

Abstract

The global financial crisis of 2008 and the neoliberal austere governance that accompanied it hit hard the countries of the European South and resulted in tremendous sociopolitical changes in these countries. In this context, Greece was framed as the greatest threat to the stability of the European Economic and Monetary Union, the three bailout agreements implemented during this period, from 2010 to 2018, had a devastating impact on the day-to-day life of the population. However, the crisis' austere politics were contested by large protest events and polymorphous social movements. These expressions of collective action, most notably the so-called movements of the squares (Indignants), have played a crucial role in challenging the prevailing neoliberal crisis' politics and opened up the way for the emergence of new grassroots collective projects. Social clinics and pharmacies, workers' cooperatives, collective kitchens and mutual-aid groups are only some of the most palpable grassroots responses.

Responding to the calls for more attention to be paid to the political and productive dimensions of collective action, this thesis investigates the creation of grassroots alternatives in times of crisis. Drawing from Political Discourse Theory and engaging with Social Movement Studies and the theory of the Commons, it develops a perspective that seeks to account for the articulation of antagonisms that challenge neoliberal hegemony and pursue social change from the bottom-up. Through close attention to the characteristics of collective action in the crisis-ridden European South and with a specific - fieldwork informed - focus on the Greek experience, the three papers that compose this thesis explore how commoning and solidarity practices shape novel logics of socioeconomic life and enquire into their implications for radical democratic political action and thought. Overall, the thesis argues for an approach to

the research of grassroots politics that remains attentive to their contingent character and embraces the opening of spaces for the political as a process which unfolds in, against and beyond institutional politics and state solutions.

Acknowledgements

There is a widespread perception in modern academia that intellectual work is mostly an individual adventure. Indeed, in the highly competitive, exclusionary and hierarchical environment of contemporary academia this is a common practice. However, for me, this PhD experience would not be the same had I chosen that path. I had the luck to be accompanied by great people, friends and intellectual mentors on every step of my journey. Some of those companions may have not even realized the support they have offered me. Here, I would like to acknowledge some of the many people that have inspired me and made it easier for me to attain every day of this journey with more confidence and hope.

First, I wish to thank my supervisor, David Howarth. Since our first meeting, David has been a great source of motivation and support, always keen to discuss every aspect of my work and restless in pushing me to further engage with my research *puzzles*! David's overall guidance has been decisive in shaping this research. I would also like to thank Jason Glynos, acting for me as a second (unofficial) supervisor rather than just a member of my supervisory panel. Jason has been an important mentor by showing genuine interest in my work, providing detailed comments and engaging in inspiring discussions. Beyond the narrow PhD research, I am grateful to both for their trust in my ideas on various projects, and their encouragement and contributions in the latter's actualization. Thank you, David and Jason, for your support in every step and venture of my PhD journey.

Several other members of faculty at the Department of Government have been engaged with my work. In particular, I would like to thank Laura Montanaro and Tom Parr for their insightful comments, encouragement and advice in my first-year

supervisory panels. Thank you to Rob Johns and Dominik Duell for reading the first drafts of my research during our professional development seminars and for their comments to sharpen my planned work at this early stage. I thank Tobias Bohmelt for his immediate responses and support with my fieldwork's ethical approval. I am grateful to all the members of the professional services staff at the Department of Government for their dedicated support around research, teaching and wellbeing issues. I would like to acknowledge the Contentious Politics Lab at Panteion University in Athens for inviting me on numerous occasions to present my research.

I acknowledge the financial support of the UK Economic and Social Research Council. Accordingly, I would like to thank Laura Ruddick and Felicity Kingsgate from PGRE team for all their help and guidance on various occasions.

I have been incredibly lucky to be a member of a wonderful cohort of researchers and friends in the Ideology and Discourse Analysis program in the Department of Government. My ideas have been strongly shaped by our encounters in the stimulating environment of the Centre for Ideology and Discourse Analysis; the series of cIDA seminars, the Essex Transform project, the International Logics conference, the IDA summer school courses as well as the various and rich informal debates and talks that made a strong imprint on my research.

Carrying out part of this research far away from the sites and practices with which it engages could have been an alienating process. I am deeply thankful to Haris, Elena, Vaggelis V., Eirini and Vaggelis G., friends and co-researchers in our Prefigurativa research collective for being a constant source of inspiration and my compass in keeping my touch with the field. But, of course, this research would not have been even started without all these people that have devoted their everyday life in

building a constellation of alternative infrastructures to support the most vulnerable members of the Greek society during the crisis. I am indebted to the collectivities that have opened their doors to my research and to my interviewees for their time and trust in sharing their experiences with me.

The deepest gratitude and debt are credited to my family and friends. Craig, Ryan, and Joash have been my fellow travellers since early on in this PhD. I am grateful to all the three of them for reading different parts of my research and being supportive and enthusiastic in their comments. I am even more thankful for their friendship and the numerous pool games we shared together. I have also been lucky enough to have the support and enthusiasm of Effrosini. I am grateful for sharing her passion for life with me and for making many of my Colchester winters bearable. I thank my wonderful housemates, Laura and Adam, for making me feel at home away from home. A special thank you to Giorgos, his heavy Greek accent, which I first heard when I was coming out of the department during my first days at Essex, has been since then a source of constant support, encouragement, joy and kindhearted friendship. I cannot imagine my days at the office, breaks, early morning or late-night walks at the lakes without my partner-in-nonsense and dear friend Marco. Thanks to my friends in Greece, especially to Lazaros who hosted me in his house during my fieldwork research in Thessaloniki, and Spyros and Antonis during my fieldwork in Athens. Their hospitality and their jokes about my research, but most importantly their interest and care about me were invaluable. I am thankful to my beloved cousin and friend Giorgos for his crucial role in shaping my initial idea for the proposal of this PhD, but most importantly for his trust in me. And finally, I want to thank Jimena. Thank you for your ideas and input in many different parts of my work, the restless reading and honest critique. Thank you for having my back in these last unprecedented - in many ways - months.

I dedicate this PhD thesis to my mother and sister, Anastasia and Lina, for their unconditional love and support that have been the cornerstones of my lifeworld from which the energy, confidence and inspiration for every step I have taken in this journey have sprung.

Preface

The point of departure for this research does not attest to a scientific rationale that seeks to prove a theory, nor does it seek to explain a particular phenomenon on the basis of causal laws. Rather, this thesis has been the outcome of my observations as a student and novice researcher in the fields of collective action and radical democratic politics. Starting my bachelor degree in a year that the Greek universities have been the site of student mobilizations and nation-wide occupations against planned reforms that, in the spirit of the ‘Bologna Process’, were promoting the neoliberal restructuring of higher education, sharpened my interest in the politicizing effects of social struggles.

Two years later, in 2008, Greek society witnessed on video coverage the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos, a 15 years old high-school student shot in cold blood by a police officer in the center of Athens. The events that followed the initial attempts of government officials and mainstream media to cover up the story and frame the student as the aggressor have been globally known as the December riots. The murder of Alexis brought to the streets broader parts of the population that have started to sensitize the effects of the global financial crisis that had started to spread from the U.S to the rest of the world. For almost a month people took to the streets on a daily basis, squatting in buildings and occupying public spaces that over a night were being transformed to social centers housing mass open assemblies, public talks and cultural events. My participation in this movement triggered a need for me to better understand how the neoliberal restructuring of our societies affects different aspects of everyday life. Even more vividly, the occupations of public spaces and the creation of grassroots infrastructures to support the life of the movement made me start thinking such grassroots responses to be ‘an image coming from the future’, as a slogan on a December’s wall put it.

In early 2009, the global financial crisis had reached the countries of the European South, and its effects in the Greek economy were becoming all the more visible. In 2010, on the verge of a sovereign default, Greece signed the first bailout agreement with its international creditors as the only remedy to the crisis. The social unrest and struggles against austerity, as well as the new forms of collective action seeking to deal with the effects of the neoliberal structural adjustment programs are part of the story that this thesis seeks to tell. Only two years later, what in 2008 I saw being an image of the future, was part of the Greek - and to a certain extent South European - reality.

As I have stressed in the beginning of this preface, the idea for this research did not emerge on a set of clear questions. My motivation for this research began by encountering the above phenomena, calling for further thought and theoretical work. To illustrate, the crisis's austere governance was for me a wondrous phenomenon. I was puzzled by the TINA (*there is no alternative*) dogma around the implementation of severe austerity despite its devastating effects. My intuition was that this one and only solution was not inevitable but rather was framed as such by a certain understanding of socio-economic development. Even more importantly, another wondrous phenomenon for me was the intensity and richness of grassroots responses in the same context. After the Greek Indignant squares in 2011 and some big protest events the following year, which were addressed by the government and the police forces with great violence, one could progressively observe that the number of protests and the participation in them was decreasing. At that time there were many researchers, analysts but also activists and political forces of the left that started to speak about the fatigue or the loss of the movements' momentum. This for me was a puzzle; instead of taking for granted that the decrease in the numbers of protest events and participation

in them necessarily equals loss of momentum, and by observing the emergence and spread of solidarity networks and commoning projects of self-provisioning across Greece, my hunch was that there was a gradual shift in the repertoires of collective action; a shift from street politics towards more hands-on repertoires in the self-organization of everyday life. This uneasiness with dominant perceptions around the implementation of austerity and the context of collective action responses was the springboard on a journey to interrogate the practices and discourses surrounding and constituting these phenomena.

This thesis consists of one introductory chapter, three stand-alone papers, and a concluding chapter that comprises a section that outlines the key findings of the three papers and a reflective essay on grassroots alternatives and radical democratic politics. Granted the opportunity given when doing a PhD by papers, after having already published my first single-authored paper (that is Paper 2 in the sequence followed in the thesis) and in agreement with my supervisory board, I have decided that further developing the analysis in the other two papers in a collaborative fashion would be a beneficial and formative experience. I want to thank Dr. Haris Malamidis, researcher of contentious politics and author of one of the most meticulous empirical analyses of solidarity structures in Greece, for his contribution in Paper 1 (in the order of the thesis). I want to thank Prof. David Howarth, acclaimed scholar of the Essex School of Discourse Analysis and my supervisor, for his contribution in Paper 3.

CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Preface.....	vii
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	x
1. Introduction and Scope of the Thesis.....	1
1.1 Context and State of the Art.....	3
Crisis and Neoliberalism	3
Theorizing Alternatives: Social Movements, Commons and Solidarity	7
1.2 Aim and objectives	11
1.3 Contribution	14
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	16
2. The post-Marxist trait of Political Discourse Theory: Defining Central Concepts for the Study of Collective Action.....	19
Defining Central Concepts in PDT: Hegemony, Antagonism, Politics and the Political ...	22
3. Research Approach	25
Ontology and epistemology.....	25
The retroductive cycle as a post-positivist research strategy	27
Case Selection.....	30
3.1 Methods of data generation.....	33
Document analysis.....	34
Interviewing.....	35
Participant Observation	39
3.2 On the researcher's social positioning and reflexivity.....	40
3.3 Limitations	42
Paper 1: Social movements and the commons: A framework for understanding collective action in crisis-ridden Southern Europe.....	46
Abstract.....	46
Introduction.....	47
Empirical Context: Problematizing Crisis and Collective Action in the European South	50

Social Movement Studies and the Commons: Towards a Synthesis	58
Reactivation stage	60
Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons	60
Activists and Commoners.....	62
Mobilization and Commoning.....	64
Deconstruction stage.....	66
Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons	66
Activists and Commoners.....	69
Mobilization and Commoning.....	71
Abstraction stage.....	73
Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons	74
Activists and Commoners.....	75
Mobilization and Commoning.....	76
Commensuration	79
Conclusions.....	82
Paper 2: Grassroots collective action within and beyond institutional and state solutions: The (re-)politicization of everyday life in crisis-ridden Greece.....	84
Abstract.....	84
Introduction.....	85
Theory, Methods, and Sources.....	87
Framing Grassroots Collective Action.....	89
(Un)Making Everyday Politics	96
(Re)Inventing Democracy.....	99
Institutional Responses	105
Conclusion	109
Paper 3: Counter-Logics of Radical Democracy and the Commons: An Ethico-Political Interpretation of Everyday Struggles during the Greek Crisis.....	113
Abstract.....	113
Introduction: Grassroots Politics, the Commons and Radical Democracy	114
The Method of Ethico-Political Interpretation: Theory, Data and Research Strategies	118
Discourse and Politics	118
Social Logics	119
Ethico-Political Interpretation: Counter-Logics, Normative Evaluation and Critique.....	119
Fieldwork and the Collection of Empirical Data.....	120

Problematizing Austerity Governance and Radical Alternatives in Greek Politics.....	121
Intensifying Neoliberal Practices in Labour Market and Healthcare in Greece.....	122
The Greek Context Revisited: Grassroots Practices.....	124
Two Exemplary Cases: MCCH and Vio.Me	127
Logics and Practices of Social Co-Production	127
Organizing and Decision-Making Practices	131
Practices of (Mutual) Association and Collective Political Solidarity	133
An Ethico-Political Interpretation: Rethinking and Enriching Radical Democracy.....	136
Radical Democracy l’avenir	137
The Logic of Commoning: A Productive Supplement.....	138
Limits and Challenges	140
Conclusion	141
4. Thesis Conclusions.....	144
4.1 Papers and Findings	145
Paper 1.....	145
Paper 2.....	149
Paper 3.....	151
4.2 Re-Thinking Grassroots Alternatives and Radical Democratic Politics: A Reflective Essay	155
Towards a Radical Democratic Synthesis	156
The road ahead: future research.....	169
References.....	172
Appendix.....	186
Interview Guide- Grassroots Alternatives	186
Interview Guide-Aganaktismenoi.....	189
Questionnaire: Mobilization for Democracy and Against Austerity.....	191

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CPRs	Common Pool Resources
EU	European Union
EYATH	Etairia Ydrefsis Apohetefsis Thessalonikis
GA	General Assembly
HRADF	Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
K136	Kinisi 136
MCCH	Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PAH	Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca
PASOK	Panellinio Socialistiko Kinima
PDT	Political Discourse Theory
SE	South Europe/South European
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SSCPs	Social Solidarity Clinics and Pharmacies
SYRIZA	Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras
TINA	There Is No Alternative
VIOME	Viomixaniki Metaleftiki

1. Introduction and Scope of the Thesis

The global financial crisis of 2008, starting from the US and exacerbated with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers, has been quickly spread to Europe. In this context, the crisis hard devastated the weak economies of the South European region. Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy witnessed tremendous changes in their national economies, political systems and societies due to the crisis' effects and implementation of severe austerity measures. Promoted by the European Union and adopted by national governments, austerity has been transformed into a general principle of governance for the countries of the European South. The implementation of this norm led to unprecedented cuts in public services, social protection and labor rights with an immediate impact in the day-to-day life of millions of citizens. At the same time however, the impact of crisis and austerity governance effectuated changes in the field of collective action; beyond the traditional protest repertoires, the occupied squares (Indignants or Occupy movements) of the Spring and Summer of 2011 played a crucial role in the politicization and transformation of the upcoming collective responses of citizens seeking to address their everyday needs. The most palpable responses have involved grassroots projects for basic services provision (e.g. social clinics and pharmacies, citizens self-help groups), work-related and local market cooperative structures (e.g. markets without middlemen, recuperated factories), alternative finance initiatives (e.g. time banks, barter clubs), networks for direct support (e.g. collective kitchens, social food-banks), housing occupations, free tutoring, and so on.

The three papers and the concluding reflective essay that compose this thesis assess the contemporary development of grassroots collective action and its innovative practices and logics within the sociopolitical context of the crisis-ridden European

South, with a specific focus on the Greek experience. To put it more fully, as the title of this research signifies, I am not simply interested to follow and note the development of grassroots collective action; rather, in relating this collective action to the production of alternative discourses and practices I seek to account for ruptures and the articulation of antagonisms and demands that challenge the dominant order and pursue social change from a bottom-up perspective, that is without being necessarily part of formally organized structures (e.g. parties, social movement organizations, institutions, etc.). Plumbing resources in social movement studies and the theory of the commons, the focus of this approach is directed towards the often-underappreciated unfolding of the *political*¹ at a distance from governance arrangements and institutional left-wing actors (populist or not). In doing so, I attempt to consider the implications of these alternative grassroots responses for Political Discourse Theory and its emphasis on emancipatory and radical democratic theory and practice.

Thus, this research critically engages with some of the dominant ‘voices’ that have shaped the intellectual agenda in the study of social struggles and change, to explore the potential of what I will call *commoning* and *solidarity* politics - that is, grassroots projects that emerged within the crisis and focusing on the provision of collective infrastructures and services from the bottom-up - to politicize aspects of everyday life and issues of social reproduction. In locating the Greek experience within the broader South European crisis setting and political context, I shall argue that such

¹ The notion of the political will be better exemplified in the second section of the introductory chapter, as well as in the papers and concluding reflective essay that constitute this thesis. For now, it is enough to mention that from a post-structuralist perspective, the primacy of politics or of the political signifies an attention on the (re-)production and transformation of hegemonic orders and practices through antagonism and difference, that constitute a unified social whole (i.e. the society). Thus, the insistence in the primacy of the political seeks to account for the contestation of dominant orders by counter-hegemonic projects which involve the construction of new identities, discourses and social practices (via the creation of antagonistic frontiers)

grassroots responses have reactivated the political character of social practices and relations (tied to neoliberal capitalism) and transformed them into sites of antagonism. The upshot of this argument is that by engaging with the production of alternatives, whereby participants and other citizens meet the needs of their everyday life, these grassroots formations have significantly contributed to the radicalization and extension of democratic values (e.g. equality, autonomy, solidarity) into different sites of economy and civil society. Particular attention is paid to the transformative dynamics that unfolded during and in the aftermath of the *Aganaktismenoi* square movement (Greek for Indignants), covering a time period between the summer of 2011 and the summer of 2018 when Alexis Tsipras, the then Greek prime-minister, announced the so called ‘exit’ of Greece from the austerity programs and the subsequent monitoring of policy commitments included in the Memoranda of Understanding signed with the country’s creditors.

1.1 Context and State of the Art

Crisis and Neoliberalism

As it will be shown below, there is a considerable variety of conceptualizations seeking to deal with the institution of collectively self-organized networks, their structure, aims and range of types in the European South during the global financial crisis of 2008. Yet, despite their differences, the characterization of such ventures as a response to neoliberal austerity seems to emerge as a common denominator in contemporary scholarly accounts. Therefore, it is important to start with a brief discussion on the expansion of academic interest on neoliberalism over the last twenty years, and even more rapidly after the eruption of the crisis. Accordingly, one can argue that there are many different accounts of neoliberalism and just as many actually existing

neoliberalisms. In this regard, Stuart Hall contends that neoliberalism is not a satisfactory term, however, he continues: ‘there are enough common features to warrant giving it a provisional conceptual identity’ (Hall, 2011, p. 3). The theoretical origins of neoliberalism are addressed in the 1930s in the work of economists such as Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, however the political moment of neoliberalism comes forty years later (Dardot and Laval, 2014).

It was during the 1970s, as it is often stressed, that neoliberal ideals gained prominence as a strategic response to the crisis of the Keynesian welfarism and Fordist regulation politics and since then they have been established as the hegemonic political and ideological articulation of modern capitalism (Brown, 2015). Expressed in general political economy terms the neoliberal doctrine is predicated on the idea that markets should remain unregulated, intact from state or other collective agents’ pressures (Theodore et al., 2011, p. 15). In this context, neoliberalism as a market-liberalizing regime is grounded on a rationality that promotes individual private property rights and state-withdrawal from market regulation, thus emphasizing a market-friendly organization of economic, political and social configurations to guarantee individual and private enterprise freedoms (Gamble, 1979, pp. 4-10; Harvey, 2007, pp. 67-86). With regards to the institutional landscape and policy environment, several analyses indicate that processes of neoliberalization present a set of principal characteristics such as: fiscal restraint, privatization of public services and state-owned assets, generalized competition, commodification of labor, deregulation of economic sectors, tax aversion etc. (Aalbers, 2013; Fraser et al., 2013; Peck and Theodore, 2012). Since the 1970s, these neoliberal restructuring practices seem to be intensified and fast prevailing during periods of austerity (Peck, 2012).

Almost 50 years after its political moment, the crisis of 2008 and the age of rampant austerity have brought neoliberalism back to the epicenter of political and academic debates. In Europe, a major part of this discussion centers on the European South (Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy). For in Europe and Eurozone the crisis has been thought and constructed by European political and economic elites, national governments and media as a problem of the ‘deficit countries’ of its southern region, blaming the latter’s irresponsible borrowing, backwardness and laziness (Bickes et al., 2014; Pop, 2011; Warner, 2010). Focusing on Greece, several analysts and technocrats framed the country as the greatest threat for the stability of Eurozone (Jones, 2012). Thus the implementation of an unprecedented austerity agenda has been adopted as the only solution to deal with the Greek *problem*, part of the greater South European *problem* (Rossi and Aguilera, 2010).

From 2010 to 2015, Greece has signed (with European Commission, European Central Bank and Internationally Monetary Fund) and implemented three bailout agreements receiving a total of €326 billions. At the epicenter of the European crisis, the country experienced a wave of popular mobilizations and social struggles against austerity governance and the weakening of the institutional stature of representative democracy (Christopoulos, 2013). More than 20 thousand protest events took place between 2010 and 2014 (Diani and Kousis, 2014), with 20 of them bringing from 25 to 500 thousand participants to the streets (Kousis and Kanellopoulos, 2013). One third of the population took part in at least one protest event, with almost 20% of the participants engaging for the first time in protests and strikes (Rüdig and Karyotis, 2013). Thus, within the crisis conjuncture, the Greek socio-political context has served as a site from which to explore global dilemmas in modern democratic politics.

On the one hand, scholarly interest has focused on institutional responses to the European crisis through an emphasis on the electoral rise of Syriza, a left-wing coalition against austerity, in the double elections of 2012 (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014). On the other, academic research on the early mobilizations and protest repertoires of the period between 2010 and 2012 saw the onset of an integrated anti-austerity campaign with democracy, rather than economy, at its center and the proliferation of a common South-European master-frame inspired by the Indignant movements of the squares (Diani and Kousis, 2014). Accordingly, others drew their inspiration from the emergence of the Indignants' squares to reflect on the limitations and possibilities of such spectacular uprisings for democratic politics (Kaika and Karaliotas, 2014).

However, the effervescence of democratic and social struggles has not been exhausted at this early stage. Rather, by catalyzing changes in the traditional protest politics, it soon gave rise to an expanding network (more than 400 groups in 2016) of grassroots initiatives in various areas of everyday socioeconomic conduct (Arampatzi, 2018; Kousis, Kalogeraki, Papadaki, et al., 2018; Rakopoulos, 2015b). Grassroots collective action responses that provide alternatives for people to address life strategy concerns and cope with the anticipated changes in times of crisis is not something new as such. In Europe, solidarity practices and grassroots repertoires of mutual aid have been emerged in different historical periods; from the nineteenth century peasant communes through the experiences of the Italian *Autonomia* in the 1970s to the more recent solidarity networks to migrants and refugees across Europe in the 1990s and 2000s. Nonetheless, the crisis of neoliberal capitalism, the intensity of the austerity measures, the simultaneous profusion of grassroots experiments in the South European

countries and their dispersion in a variety of sectors of social and economic life, called for further theoretical reflection and conceptual renewal.

Theorizing Alternatives: Social Movements, Commons and Solidarity

On the one hand, the literature of social movement studies has been engaged in an insightful and rigorous investigation of the different repertoires, structures and aims of these emerging forms of action, as part of the “‘South European’ trend’ that is characterized by the domination of informal and protest groups (LIVEWHAT, 2016, p. 11). Thus, for example, Forno and Graziano (2014) by emphasizing the use of alternative forms of consumption and the emergence of a notion of political consumerism within and through such networks, suggested the term ‘Sustainable Community Movement Organizations’. From a similar starting point, that is the provision of alternative ways for citizens to endure the impact of hard economic times, Kousis and Paschou (2017) deployed the concept of ‘Alternative Forms of Resilience’, which has been complemented with the framework of ‘Alternative Action Organizations’ to include third sector organizations such as NGOs, municipal organizations and the church (Kousis, Kalogeraki, and Cristancho, 2018; LIVEWHAT, 2016). From a different angle, Bosi and Zamponi (2015) suggested that the broad and established term of ‘Direct Social Action’ can be adopted in explaining such alternative practices that do not primarily focus upon claiming something from power holders. In short, such approaches have dealt with the organizational structures, institutional forms, mechanisms and resources that allow social movement organizations and citizens’ groups to respond to the dismantling of the welfare state and labor precariousness provoked by the austerity regime by providing alternatives that enabled people to meet their daily needs.

On the other hand, and with an emphasis on Greece, the shift in the empirical field of collective action has led to a renewed scholarly interest on post-capitalist alternatives, prefigurative politics and neoliberal critique in a wide variety of approaches. Focusing on ‘urban solidarity spaces’ in Athenian neighborhoods, Arampatzi’s (2017b, 2018) activist ethnographic research foregrounds the empowering counter austerity potential of such bottom-up politics and their prefigurative dimension to anticipate post-capitalist social change. From an anthropological perspective, Rakopoulos addresses the crisis as organic to the capitalist debt management and contends that solidarity practices in Greece, informed by movementality as a form of activists’ political education, create new ideas of belonging and everyday relatedness, thus counterposing to the neoliberal ethics ‘an egalitarian idiom where a community of equals is imagined and wherein mutual aid emerges as at once a material concern and a cosmological bond’ (Rakopoulos, 2016, p. 143). In a similar vein, several scholars have emphasized the emerging grassroots practices in Greece through the lenses of Social and Solidarity Economy, claiming that they provide a sustainable economic alternative to capitalism and a form of resistance against the dominance of neoliberal ideals in the organization of social and economic life (Papadaki and Kalogeraki, 2018; Zaimakis, 2018). Underpinning the fact that the contemporary self-organized collectives can be associated with forms of commoning, Kioupkiolis and Karyotis (2015) investigate the historical trajectories of the cooperativist movement in Greece since the 18th century to address a qualitative shift in the former’s emergence, within a crisis context, towards the formation of social and solidarity economic alternatives as part of a broader resistance movement against neoliberal biopolitics. In sum, within the crisis conjuncture the terms commoning and solidarity have been used by a number of scholars in various disciplines to highlight new opportunities for cooperation and

reciprocal exchange within emergent networks that seek to communally manage and distribute resources at a distance from state and market solutions.

These ('Greek') accounts should be seen as part of a growing movement of thought among various theorists of radical politics and activists that has led to the production of several debates and projects around the concept of the commons the last three decades. However, this is not to suggest that the invention of the idea of the commons constitutes a novelty as such, considering also that its origins could be traced many centuries ago (for an approach of the words Communism, Community and the Common as historical agents see also Dardot and Laval, 2019; Nancy, 2010). Rather, the concept draws its importance for contemporary radical politics from the very actuality of the forms of modern politics today. Hence, following Federici's argument, two important reasons seems to underlie the centrality of the commons for such accounts: the abandonment of a statist revolutionary strategy from the majority of contemporary left-wing agents and social movements to bring a change, and the hegemony of a neoliberal rationality that has effectively subordinated meaning and peoples livelihood to the logic of the market and private property (Federici, 2011).

In an attempt to rethink the commons within the particularities unfolding from the latter perspective, several projects emphasize on the transformations of labor and capital within contemporary neoliberalism (see for example Blomley, 2008; Ferguson, 2006; Vasudevan et al., 2008). As a result, for a wide range of scholarship, the notion of enclosures emerges as a key process in order to understand the forms and the means through which neoliberal globalization imposes the privatization and commodification of 'common goods'. Capitalist accumulation, or what Harvey calls accumulation by disposition, is structurally dependent on the free appropriation of common wealth (labor and resources) by division, exploitation and exclusion (Harvey, 2003). In other

words, enclosures are the attempt of neoliberal capitalism to seize what is produced in common, operating within and through different modes and practices, scales and sites of public life (Jeffrey et al., 2012). To refer only to some of its practical implementations, enclosures may take the form of gentrification, walled urbanism, internet management, privatization of health care and social housing, financialization of public services and social protections, as well as destruction of global environmental lands and resources. In such a framework, the discussion around the commons is primarily focused on practices and mobilizations for the conservation of common goods against marketization and commercialization.

Despite the profound contribution of such approaches on the contemporary debates around the commons, this thesis seeks to deepen this perspective by reworking and piecing together several strands of radical scholarship on this particular field, which do not only emphasize the field of economy, but move beyond the dichotomy between public and private property. Accordingly, the meaning of the public as something that is produced by all of us but does not belong to any of us, as it belongs to the state through which the citizens could have access to the common wealth, does not seem to provide a useful horizon for modern commoning projects (Roggero, 2010). Thus, there is a need to think beyond the state and corporative interests or even more emphatically to foresee how social struggles can re-appropriate or transform their institutions (Vercellone, 2010: pp. 116-8). The guiding aim here is to rethink the practices of commoning and solidarity in the European South, and particularly Greece, as a political process that does not merely preserve or demand access to common goods, but as one which constructs novel schemes of everyday life through collective production and sharing (De Angelis and Stavrides, 2010; Roggero, 2010).

Jointly reviewed, the aforementioned bodies of literature point towards and allow us to articulate together everyday struggles and sets of emergent practices and institutions all involved in a process of realizing a post-capitalist horizon. The purpose of this thesis then is to contribute to this intellectual agenda by bridging these two dimensions in a more rigorous and inclusive fashion. This synthetic re-articulation proceeds both by designating the socio-political conditions, and a series of collective mobilizations and struggles that made possible the emergence of these new forms of collective action, as well as through the investigation of their social practices, rules and institutions that can furnish us with an alternative vision of organizing the *social*. Seen this ways, the task of this research is to show how the principles of commoning and solidarity have been put to work across a range of movements, struggles and networks within, against and beyond the hegemony of neoliberal politics and discourses in the crisis-ridden Greece as part of the South European experience. Thus, the analysis offered here is an attempt to capture the function of the rules and structures that inform the practices and discourses of these grassroots actors by taking into account aspects of hegemony, antagonism and power. In other words, an emphasis on the former dimension cannot be considered exhaustive of the understanding and characterization of such social activity if it is not complemented by a focus on the processes that make such practices both possible and vulnerable, which also opens up the way to think of new political imaginaries and subjectivities that can inform a radical counter-hegemonic project.

1.2 Aim and objectives

Against this background, this thesis overarching aim is to analyse and critically explain the emergence and practices of commoning and solidarity alternatives in Greece,

located within and through the structuration of grassroots collective action against the crisis' austere governance in the South European region. As a result, the interest here is to offer a relational study of the processes through which the notion of the *commons* frames up such initiatives and the political networks that they articulate as well as on how participation in such networks constitutes an essential element in transforming social practices and subjectivities, and developing an incipient repertoire for radical democratic action (Castells, 2011; Dinerstein, 2015; Featherstone, 2008; Griggs and Howarth, 2008; Kioupkiolis, 2017; Stavrakakis, 2003). The aim is broken down into three interrelated research questions, which will be used to synthetically explain and analyse the findings of the thesis:

RQ1: What are the specific characteristics of the collective action of the grassroots projects within the South European experience during the crisis?

The first question sets out to empirically explore the formation of a particular universe of grassroots solidarity initiatives in the crisis-ridden European South, paying particular attention to the ways in which existing accounts of collective action in social movement studies and the theory of the commons are formulated in relation to both the contentious (antagonistic) and prefigurative (generative) dimensions of the emergent grassroots practices. My interest here is not only in explaining the different ways in which grassroots collective action is conceptualized (i.e. focus on mobilization and claim-making strategies on the one hand, and the provision of post-capitalist alternatives in the organization of day-to-day practices on the other), but in how a synthetic reformulation of concepts in the two literatures allows us to render more intelligible the underlying logics and rules that sustain new organizational formats, processes of political subjectivation and agentic articulations that have been emerged

within and through the proliferation of a common master-template of collective action against austerity in the European South.

RQ2: How do we determine the emergence of grassroots projects of commoning and solidarity in crisis-ridden Greece, and to what extent do such grassroots politics engage with transformative action and processes of social change?

By locating the Greek case as part of the aforementioned South European trend, this second question pays particular attention to the political implications of the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations, what changes they have catalyzed in the field of grassroots collective action, and how their repertoires and discourses interacted with those of Syriza as a progressive institutional left-wing agent. Designating Aganaktismenoi squares as both the peak moment of the anti-austerity mobilizations and turning point for the ways grassroots politics unfolded in the former's aftermath, I aim to extend existing research on the politicizing, meaningful and transformative dimensions of collective action.

RQ3: (How) can the logics that sustain the values, practices and institutions that are being developed at an everyday grassroots level inform an incipient radical democratic ethos and rationality?

Taking into account that such forms of collective action are still in an incipient form but can be expected to build up and expand in the near future due to the effects of multiple crises (e.g. crisis of democracy, financial crisis, environmental crisis, public health crisis, displacements of populations, etc.), the third question addresses what an alternative organization of everyday practices and institutions might look like and what types of action and interaction are made possible through the examined grassroots politics. Here, the emphasis is directed towards the emancipatory potential and

democratizing dynamics of commoning and solidarity practices and institutions from a bottom-up perspective.

To this end, this thesis aims to provide an account of the recently emergent forms of collective action as an incipient network of grassroots commoning initiatives that are collective, open and process based: from local assemblies through self-management efforts by workers, social health clinics and initiatives that struggle to protect vulnerable citizens from the repercussions of the imposed austerity and neoliberal policies. In this line of argument, it is hypothesized that the commoning and solidarity practices that have emerged in the Greek (as part of the broader South European) context could be seen as a reorganizational force for the collective re-appropriation of material (e.g. products and services) and immaterial (e.g. knowledge and skills) resources, bearing the potential to shape social relations, practices and subjectivities upon rules and principles of cooperation, openness, responsibility and solidarity to each other. Accordingly, the overall guiding intuition is that through their everyday practices and collective action, individuals and grassroots ventures craft new social spaces of political solidarity and radical equality that prefigure a radical democratic being in common. Thus, these grassroots experiments could be identified as the main innovation of a genuine democratic praxis as well as core processes of social and political transformation from below.

1.3 Contribution

The theoretical framework of the project offers a way of engaging with the on-going development of collective action in the European South, drawing particular emphasis on the crisis-ridden Greece. Adopting a three-step approach, the project brings into dialogue social movements studies, the theory of the commons as well as Post-Marxist

political and social theory. Paper 1 devises tools from Political Discourse Theory (i.e. the logic of formalization) to revisit social movement theory and the theory of the commons in order to ground a theoretical and analytical reflection on the structuring of grassroots initiatives in the South European context, the identity of individual actors as well as on their discursive and organizational repertoires of action (De Angelis, 2017; Della Porta, 2014b; Glynos and Howarth, 2007; Howarth and Torfing, 2005; Kioupkiolis, 2017; McCarthy and Zald, 1977).

Paper 2 moves beyond causal and general laws and instead emphasizes the contingent character of factors that structures social relations as well as social and political phenomena, linking social movement research to processes of democratization and politicization (Font et al., 2014; Hardt and Negri, 2009; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Palonen, 2003b; Rancière, 2010). By focusing on the rich Greek experience during the crisis, it re-appropriates the concept of the commons to exemplify processes and mechanisms that enable the translation of structural elements into action and outcomes, thus directing attention to the transformative dynamics of these alternative forms of collective action (Aminzade, 2001; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Giugni et al., 1999; Linebaugh, 2008; Ostrom, 1990).

Paper 3 draws on Post-Marxist political theory concerned with collective action as an emancipatory practice and explores the *doings* of actors: the politics, logics and practices of commoning and self-provisioning activities of collective initiatives in crisis-ridden Greece. Accordingly, this approach seeks to engage with the development of the latter processes by sketching a perspective of this particular field of contemporary commoning and solidarity politics as a productive supplement for Radical Democratic theory and practice (Glynos, 2003; Howarth, 2006; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Stavrakakis, 2003). This perspective foregrounds an understanding of

such commoning experiments as sites that bear the potential to sustain the elaboration of deeper and thicker webs of democratic practice and institutions of political association, driven by a desire of a radical democratic being in common that is responsive to new forms of subjectivity and to difference in, against and beyond the dominant neoliberal paradigm (Dardot and Laval, 2019; Hardt and Negri, 2004; Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis, 2014; Laclau, 1996; Rancière, 2011). From this perspective, the thesis explores how these practices shape novel logics of social and economic life, rearticulate social relationships and redefine public space through an everyday democratic praxis.

Thus, overall, the papers argue for an approach to the research of social movements and grassroots politics that remains attentive to their contingent character, going beyond identity-based politics and structural considerations, and embraces the opening of spaces for the *political* as a process which unfolds in, against and beyond institutional politics and state solutions.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of this introductory chapter, three (stand-alone) research papers and a concluding chapter that first outlines this research findings and in turn, by means of a reflective essay, articulates them together. The introductory chapter consists of three sections. In the preceding section 1 I have sketched out the background and scope of the thesis, an overview of previous research in the field of grassroots collective action and commons to point towards emerging dimensions and open questions, as well as the rationale and research questions. The introductory chapter proceeds with section 2 that provides a brief account of Political Discourse Theory (PDT) concepts that are used throughout this thesis and shows their relevance in the study of collective action

politics. Section 3 outlines the practical dimensions in carrying out this research, offering a description and reflecting upon the overall research approach and methodological strategy. This is followed by the three papers that constitute the main body of this thesis. Paper 1 seeks to engage with a set of theoretical queries that unfold around the characterization of these grassroots forms of collective action in the specific empirical context of the crisis-ridden European South. To address these queries (Paper 1) it proposes a distinctive, context-specific, theoretical framework that is grounded on the re-articulation of a set of three basic concepts in both social movements studies and the theory of the commons alike (social movement-commons, activist-commoner, mobilization-commoning). Subsequently, Paper 2 focuses on the Greek experience in the period between 2010 and 2015 and grapples with various aspects of collective action impact, drawing particular attention on the socio-political conditions and struggles that made possible the emergence of commoning and solidarity projects. Moreover, by highlighting the electoral rise of Syriza within this crisis conjuncture, Paper 2 seeks to draw some reflection on points of convergence and moments of divergence in the discourses and repertoires of grassroots actors and progressive institutional agents. Paper 3 focuses on the unfolding of new everyday practices and relations in such spaces and seeks to rethink, through the thick description of two exemplary grassroots ventures in Greece (the self-managed factory of Vio.Me and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko), how commoning and solidarity networks can shape innovative modes of co-production, co-creation and participatory decision-making that bear the potential to reinvigorate the principles and practices of radical democracy. The thesis concludes by first laying out the papers' individual findings and contributions, followed by a final *Reflective Essay* on grassroots

alternatives and radical democratic politics in relation to thesis's aim and research questions.

2. The post-Marxist trait of Political Discourse Theory: Defining Central Concepts for the Study of Collective Action

This research argues that the commoning and solidarity struggles examined here are engaged in the formation of an antagonistic frontier against the hegemony of neoliberal politics and constitute sites for the active experimentation with images of an alternative sociopolitical paradigm beyond capitalism. As the previous section suggests, such forms of grassroots politics emanate from the early anti-austerity and squares' movements which advocated for an alternative political rationality for social transformation. In attempting to offer a more fully-fledged account of collective action and social change *vis a vis* democratic collective agency, it is important for this research to underscore the role of meaning and language in the making of those relations and processes. In exemplifying these claims, the theoretical framework of this thesis is primarily grounded on Post-Marxist political theory and particularly on the so called '*Essex School*' of Political Discourse Theory (PDT).

Post-Marxism should not be assumed as a homogeneous tradition; in fact, it takes a variety of positions and covers a range of approaches, often divergent with each other. In order to gain a better understanding of the broader post-Marxist field, before I shift my focus to the central for this thesis conceptual tools of PDT, it will be fruitful to proceed by sketching the main points of difference between post-Marxism and the classical Marxist tradition.

What is common in both cases is the recognition of capitalism's inherent tendency to produce malfunctions, crises and divisions. In classical Marxist approaches such dislocatory events are invested with an objective meaning and the process of

change is bound up with a logic of historical necessity. Notions such as class, economy, forces and relations of production seem to carry an essentialist core that determines and fixes almost every social process and structural difference within a closed system. In this vein, capitalism creates its own *gravediggers*; the emancipatory subject (i.e. the proletariat or the working class) emerges as the privileged political agent that brings about the change. In this vain, history and society are presented as intelligible totalities that are constituted and predetermined by certain laws.

Undoubtedly, classical Marxist theory and political discourse remain highly influential for theorists, researchers and activists. However, a number of scholars and intellectuals within Marxist tradition, faced with the tremendous sociopolitical transformations and events that took place in the late 20th century (Cold War, collapse of the Soviet system, globalized economy, emergence of new social movements etc.), recognized the need to re-evaluate several of the basic categories of the classical Marxist corpus. Such theorists observed the multiplicity and plurality of social struggles and antagonisms against the various forms of domination imposed by modern capitalism. By the end of the twentieth century, the new economic and political conditions made evident the dispersion of the centers of power within the globalized and disorganized capitalist order. Accordingly, the numerous social dislocations and economic fragmentation in post-Fordist production signaled the decline of the centrality of class as the main political category as well as the *a priori* emancipatory status of the proletariat. Given this account, the rise of a series of new emancipatory phenomena such as feminism, indigenous and ecological movements, ethnic and sexual minorities' struggles were reviling the proliferation of social antagonism to a wide range of areas.

The dispersion of democratic struggles and the emergence of new political agents which sought to bring about social change have given rise to new theoretical approaches attempting to unravel their meaning and conceptualize them. These approaches endeavored to reread Marxist tradition in the light of the new problems and issues that were posed by the changing conditions of late capitalism. From this point of view, the intellectual transition from Marxism to post-Marxism could be described as an attempt of poststructuralist, autonomous/open and feminist approaches to re-appropriate the classical Marxist discourse. Although these currents seem to share the same point of departure - i.e. the claim that the classical Marxist theorizations of production, base/superstructure model and the classism of social struggle are no longer operative - it is widely argued that they remain heterogeneous and often incompatible with each other.

What becomes apparent via this short excursion into the post-Marxist move of emancipatory political thought is the never-ending task of radical political theory to develop novel conceptual tools in order to provide understanding and pose new problems around the crucial notions of democratic agency and social transformation. As it has been anticipated in the previous section, this thesis seeks to explore the forms and dynamics of emancipatory politics today by employing PDT. The elaboration of such a framework provides crucial conceptual categories to better understand the practices and discourses that unfold in the field of contemporary grassroots collective action and rethink the latter's relations and interactions with institutional players and structures.

Defining Central Concepts in PDT: Hegemony, Antagonism, Politics and the Political

Political Discourse Theory seeks to analyze and critically explain political and social phenomena, taking discourse as its central matter. For PDT discourse is conceived as a shared way of apprehending the world; it is a radically contingent construct (i.e. not essential) that can be interpreted and understood in many different ways. Importantly, discourse is the term that PDT uses to refer to a system (or systems) of meanings and practices. Importantly then, the notion of discourse for PDT arises both as a general category (including all the forms of a social practice/regime of practices and their symbolic and representational dimensions) and as a particular category (focuses on specific forms of symbolization: texts, speeches, and so on.). This conception of discourse draws heavily on Ernesto Laclau's own notion of discourse (Laclau, 1990b, 2005b), as an articulatory practice that sets the conditions for the very possibility of perception, thought and action, marking this way the structuration of a certain meaningful field which pre-exists any factual immediacy². These conditions of possibility are built upon partial fixations of meaning, and, in turn, may signify a hegemonic practice; an example of this is neoliberalism and its austere regime in the wake of the global financial crisis, as will be argued in Papers 2 and 3.

Gramsci's (Gramsci, 1971) innovative theorization of ideology and hegemony as well as the emphasis on the role of social and political agents *vis a vis* sociopolitical transformation have significantly broadened the terrain for theoretical reflection upon political struggle within PDT. In this context, the work of Ernesto Laclau is essential not only because it has established a new direction to the Gramscian notion of

² I will address more fully the ontological and epistemological grounds and implications of such an understanding in section 3 of this introductory chapter.

Hegemony but also because it offers a useful theoretical toolbox for the reformulation of radical democratic struggles today.

By drawing on several conceptions of Gramscian Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Social Strategy* (1985) elaborate a novel theorization of hegemonic politics within which they attempt to reconfigure some of its core categories such as: power, representation, state, leadership and antagonism. Despite their profound inspiration from the Gramscian tradition they move beyond it, seeking in this way to construct a framework that prioritizes the constitutive autonomy of the political and proposes a value of free differentiation (Kioupkiolis, 2014). For Gramsci the presence of a fundamental class is raised as the single unifying link of every hegemonic formation and thus the conceptualization of any hegemonic struggle necessarily has a class origin. On the contrary, Laclau and Mouffe propose a different theorization of hegemony according to which the collective subject of any political struggle cannot be specified on the base of necessary socio-historical laws and as a result it cannot be ascribed with an already given identity (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: pp. 65-71, 93-7).

In these terms, the identities of all ideological elements and social agents are precarious, contingent and negotiable. From this viewpoint, Laclau argues that the conceptualization of society as a unitary object that domesticates the field of difference is impossible or in other words that the concept of social totality has entered into a state of crisis (Marchart, 2007: p. 136). The always partial and temporal society is structured through a dialectical interaction between universality and partiality. In order to determine the partial meaning of any given society we need to deal with a complex set of contingent social relations; one which is only revealed within and through an articulatory practice attempting to constitute and organize them. Importantly here, given the radical contingency upon which the ontological core of PDT rests, even these

fixations, the hegemonic ones, are not, and can never be, fully closed. Hegemonic discourses will always have an opening, allowing for a moment of dislocation - of *breaking* or *shifting* - of the partial fixations.

To better understand this, it will be helpful to distinguish between ‘politics’, as the ontic domain (an established order) within which the *normal* forms of decision-making and interaction between agents unfold, and the ‘political’ as the domain of contestation and antagonism that becomes visible when routinized practices and relations of social conduct are interrupted (Balibar, 2002; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Lacoue-Labarthe et al., 1997; Lefort, 1994). Therefore, the essence of the *political* is shaped as an eventful dislocation/rupture in the name of a principal or ideal (Mouffe, 2005: pp. 8-9; Rancière, 1992: pp. 58-9).

From this perspective, any hegemonic practice presupposes a social terrain that is traversed by antagonisms and the presence of elements that are contingent and can be articulated by divergent political projects competing to hegemonize the field of discursivity (Howarth, 2000: pp.101-25). In these terms, the project of a radical counter-hegemonic project today can be conceptualized as the open and practical logic of the concentration of democratic struggles within and through chains of equivalence between different social agents with emancipatory claims.

3. Research Approach

Ontology and epistemology

The different ways we understand social phenomena or analyze politics is directly or tacitly informed by a set of ontological presuppositions, for example, about the way society, structures and human actors are, or concerning the nature of social relations, interactions and agency. As it has been suggested in the previous sections, this research is situated within the Essex school tradition of Political Discourse Theory (PDT). Against essentialist perspectives, which ascribe fixed essences to objects and phenomena that we encounter in social life, PDT emphasizes their socially and discursively constructed character. Speaking about changes in the repertoires of collective action in times of crisis and new forms of collective agency, PDT allows us to focus on how the crisis and austerity on the one hand, and practices of commoning and grassroots solidarity on the other, are discursively constructed into a pressing issue for activists, researchers and other key stakeholders as well as to shed light on the contingent process of their emergence.

More precisely, such a perspective addresses society, human agents, social structures and relations as incomplete and historically contingent entities, products of political decision and action (Howarth, 2018). This does not mean that such objects do not exist independently of particular discourses or externally to thought, but, importantly, that ‘their meaning and significance for situated subjects – and how they are engaged with – depends on these discursive articulations’ (Glynos et al., 2009, p. 8). The unity and identity of such entities is grounded upon the political exclusion of other elements and possibilities, seeking in this way to represent and construct the

domain of social objectivity (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, pp. 2-5). Yet, during moments of crisis the contingent character of these symbolic articulations becomes visible. This void enables actors to develop new relations, meanings, discourses and practices in interpreting and confronting the new situation in which they find themselves. Thus, crisis and dislocation make possible and disclose a variety of possibilities for the construction of new antagonisms, forms of subjectivity and agency. In this sense, for PDT, politics or to put it better the politically produced character of such practices acquires a primary role. This implies that an understanding of the grassroots responses to the global financial crisis and neoliberal austerity politics should be grounded in changes (or not) to the practices that activists and citizens have adopted and what this reveals about the role and nature of the dominant forms of politics, extended beyond institutional rules and procedures to consider the practices and activities that shape the everyday life of citizens and subjects .

Here, I claim that the concept of discourse plays a crucial mediating role between our ontological ground and epistemological horizon. On the one hand, seen as a general category, discourse is used to signal the symbolic and articulatory character of all social relations. In this sense, social relations involve the combination of various elements - physical, linguistic, cultural etc. – where the latter, due to their contingent character, can be hooked together and represented in various ways. On the other hand and in its more restricted sense, discourse is related to those specific linguistic and performative forms – texts, interviews, visuals, documents etc. – that constitute and signify social objectivity in multiple shapes (Howarth, 2018, p. 379). Nonetheless, the distinction between the general and linguistic conceptions of discourse is only pragmatic, this is because in a practical level any linguistic form of representation (e.g. a speech in a general assembly or a press release) is still a social practice and thus

constitutive of social relations. On the ground of such ontological assumptions, the epistemological account that we adopt here should necessarily focus on the ways in which social phenomena - in our case the crisis, neoliberal austerity and grassroots collective action - as well as facts and self-interpretations that inform them are constructed, taken upon their meaning and brought together through articulatory practices.

The retroductive cycle as a post-positivist research strategy

Departing from these ontological presuppositions, if we consider social phenomena as products of social interactions that are embedded in relational contexts and open to the particular interpretations that constitute their meaning in different ways, how can we generate scientific knowledge about the phenomena we seek to investigate? The research strategy that this thesis adopts is grounded on a cyclical, post-positivist, retroductive mode of explanation - as opposed to the more linear deductive and inductive approaches – that involves three dialectical moments (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 38): *problematization; retroductive explanation and theory construction; persuasion and intervention.*

The first moment introduces the problem-driven character of this framework of analysis. The point of departure is an empirical phenomenon that emerges and is constructed ‘from pressing practical concerns of the present’ (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 11). In this context, the researcher encounters a puzzling phenomenon that calls for further theoretical and empirical investigation. In this move, the researcher is actively engaged in the constitution of a problem (*explanandum*) that can alter the dominant perceptions of a social phenomenon. For example, with regards to this thesis, on the one hand I was puzzled by the insistence of national and international political and financial actors in a TINA dogma around the implementation of severe austerity

agendas in the crisis-ridden European South. More importantly, on the other hand, I was struck by the changes that occurred in the field of collective action during the same period in Greece (and the other countries of the European South) as a response to the intensity of the aforementioned austerity politics.

Moving to the second moment, here the researcher's task is to foreground an initial account (proto-explanation) of the problematized phenomenon that can make it more intelligible. Going beyond the strict dualism between the contexts of discovery and justification in social sciences, and the positivist law-like reasoning that it sustains, such an account is continuously informed by a 'to-and-fro' movement between empirical investigation (data, participant observation, self-interpretations, and so on) and theoretical work (concepts, mechanisms, logics, and so on) in negotiating and reviewing the different explanations that have been offered. As Glynos and Howarth (2007, p. 180) argue, this articulatory social scientific practice enables the researcher to avoid 'the temptation to subsume a particular empirical instance under an overarching law-like generalization'. In this respect, the logic of retroduction urges us to remain attentive to the radically contingent and always partially fixed meaning and function of social entities and relations. Thus, while acknowledging the influence of pre-existing conceptualizations and ideas, the constant reformulation and linking together of empirical and theoretical elements in a non-subsumptive way bear the potential to introduce something 'different in kind', a plausible and convincing explanation that renders the problematized phenomenon more intelligible (Glynos and Howarth, 2019). In this thesis, the moment of retroductive explanation and theory construction involves the deconstruction, bridging and re-articulation of key theoretical concepts in social movement studies, theory of the commons and PDT in the light of the empirical material assembled through fieldwork, reading, coding and document

analysis. The aim of this continuous reformulation is to generate a putative and convincing explanans, but also, as it is vividly demonstrated in Paper 1 that is a straightforward outcome of this retroductive logic, it can serve as a point of theoretical and methodological development.

Eventually, the third moment in the retroductive cycle deals with the evaluation of a proto-explanation, or, in other words, signals the passage from a ‘hypothesis’ to the articulation of a putative *explanans*. In this process a proto-explanation should be pitched against other publicly available accounts of the problematized phenomenon, presented to the agents being studied and staged for critical scrutiny to the relevant scholarly community. Such a post-positivist ‘elastic’ conception of justification is at odds with the rather narrow conception of ‘testing’ in positivist social science research. Accordingly, the latter emphasizes the deduction of falsifiable/verifiable predictions on the basis of a pre-established criterion that can determine the validity of a hypothesis, short-circuiting in this way the interpretation of research findings. By contrast, in the post-positivist account adopted here, an explanation is deemed valid only when, in the light of the ‘to-and-fro’ movement between the context of discovery and the context of justification as well as between empirical and theoretical work, it ‘produces insights and greater illumination according to criteria which can be publicly articulated’ (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 38). In my case, the initial findings (proto-explanations) of this research have been presented in different fora: on the one hand, in relation to the wider academic community, I presented my research in international conferences and workshops, shared the findings with colleagues at my university and my supervisors and also submitted my papers to academic peer-reviewed journals; on the other hand, in engaging with the wider public I had the chance to co-create and participate in workshops and events organized by activists and practitioners as well as to publish

newspaper articles in collaboration with them. On the ground of such collaborations and activities, my research framework, methodological strategies and interpretations of the findings have undergone constant revisions and additions in an effort to remain attentive to a critical engagement with the ontological, ethical, political and historical presuppositions that inform the scope of this research. In this sense, to give an example, the concluding reflective essay of this thesis can be addressed as the final output of this to-and-fro process, which by welding together the various concepts, logics and empirical data of this research attempts to produce a single explanatory account of the phenomena under investigation ‘as a legitimate candidate for truth or falsity’ (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 34).

Case Selection

In the context of the global financial crisis and the austere governance that has led to rising inequalities and exclusions, citizens, activists and scholars have been engaged in a search for alternative modes of organization and social forces that offer viable alternatives to imagine life beyond capitalism. The present thesis attempts to provide a snapshot of the commoning and solidarity politics in the European South and particularly Greece, where such grassroots responses gained pace especially in the aftermath of big anti-austerity mobilizations and social struggles. In the current conjuncture, crisscrossed by multiple crises and the rise of xenophobic and nationalist discourses, analyzing and explaining the ways through which common people are collectively and democratically organizing everyday life differently is a timely and much needed task.

In order to highlight (Paper 1) the continuity between the wave of anti-austerity mobilizations and the development of grassroots projects of commoning and solidarity and seeking to understand their contentious and political character, I have selected four

overarching cases: Social Solidarity Clinics and Pharmacies in Greece, Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca in Spain, the recuperated factories of Vio.Me in Greece and RiMaflow in Italy, and Initiative 136 in Greece. These cases are indicative of how commoning and solidarity ventures emerged in the crisis-ridden European South were predicated on the discourses, repertoires and relational matrix of the anti-austerity protest events and Indignant movements to create alternatives in a variety of sectors heavily affected by the repercussions of the crisis (dismantling of public services and welfare state, weakening of organized labor, etc.). These constitute important sites of grassroots collective action to consider because they allow us to understand how the creation of alternatives in the here and now stems from counter-hegemonic struggles to prevent the implementation of austerity measures and reverse policies that intensified material and social exclusion. To better conceptualize the political dimension of such struggles and sites of commoning and solidarity I have chosen to focus on the Greek experience (Papers 2 and 3), which during the crisis's vicious spiral of raising unemployment, extreme poverty, and the deregulation of welfare services, has experienced a significant growth of commoning and solidarity alternatives (Adam, 2016; Petmesidou and Guillén, 2017). I selected the Aganaktismenoi squares (Paper 2) as the point of departure because, as it has been already argued, it marks a turning point in the progress of grassroots repertoires and discourses of collective action during that period and resonates with the development of a common anti-austerity master-frame that have mobilized individual and collective actors to engage with the production of alternative organizational formats (Della Porta et al., 2017; Diani and Kousis, 2014). In seeking to better locate the impact of such struggles on the life-course of activists I have selected to draw reflection on some preliminary data from a protest survey conducted into the three-day mobilization 'for democracy and against austerity in

Europe’ on 11, 16 and 20 February 2015 in Syntagma square. The stationary mass rallies were called as a response to the urgent Eurogroup meetings regarding the new situation in Greece, after Syriza’s victory in the Greek national elections of January 2015. Three main factors have been contributed in the selection of this particular protest event: first the circulation of the call through social media accounts with roots in the *Aganaktismenoi* squares or linked with solidarity and commoning networks; second, the mobilizations supportive character towards the strategic positions of the newly elected government around the negotiations with the country’s creditors - in contrast to all the previous anti-austerity mobilizations that were strongly opposing the political powers in office for willingly implementing austerity; third and crucially, the significance of the particular political conjuncture, as the three days of the demonstration corresponded to the dates of the three ‘extraordinary’ Eurogroup meetings after Syriza’s victory in the January 2015 elections (Eurogroup, 2015). Finally, in analyzing and critically explaining the ways through which such projects organize their social practices and life (Paper 3), I selected to provide an account of the integral everyday routines and interactions that constitute them through a thick description of two of the most emblematic commoning and solidarity cases in Greece, namely the recuperated Vio.Me factory and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko. Both projects are still providing alternatives in two of the most affected by the crisis politics sectors, that is labor and healthcare provision.

I understand the above cases as ‘paradigmatic’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Glynos and Howarth, 2007), that is to say I consider them indicative of the way in which crisis’s austerity governance in the South European context is tied to the dismantling of basic democratic rights and social welfare structures and practices (Petmesidou, 2013;

Stuckler and McKee, 2012), as well as of how the reality created on the ground of such changes is lived and contested in an everyday level.

3.1 Methods of data generation

This research is focused on the analysis of repertoires and discourses of grassroots collective action in the European South, drawing specifically on the Greek experience. It seeks to bridge insights from the micro-level of individual participation and the meso-level of grassroots practices, and situate them in the social, economic and historical context of the global financial crisis of 2008. In order to create a more concrete account of the objects of this investigation my arguments are based on document analysis of publicly available campaigning material, documentation of activities, founding declarations and press releases of a number of organizations that have been active in the Greek social movement community during the crisis, as well as on activists' and practitioners' self-interpretations – about their participation in the broader wave of anti-austerity mobilizations and engagement with grassroots commoning and solidarity networks. Given the dynamic nature of collective action (McAdam et al., 2001), I have used a combination of three methodological techniques in the collection and generation of primary sources in an attempt to triangulate my data, 'a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods' (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012, p. 156). Thus, the empirical case study for this thesis comprises document analysis, interviews and participant observation in emphasizing the development of novel forms of grassroots collective action, its innovative logics and social practices within a crisis context in Greece.

Document analysis

In the study of collective action, document analysis usually includes primary sources that have been produced by the very agents at the heart of the events and practices under investigation (activists, social movement organizations, grassroots networks etc.). Therefore, such sources can constitute an essential starting point in putting the point of view of the activists and their social practices at the epicenter of the research account (Mattoni, 2014, p. 27). In distinction with archival research, which is interested with a selection of evidence of the past that are of permanent value and have been generated by professional activities, document analysis refers to the investigation and consultation of brochures, press releases, posters, campaign leaflets and communications that activists, organizations or movements have produced and distributed contemporaneously (Bosi and Reiter, 2014).

With regards to this research, the step of data generation from document analysis was based on material retrieved from the websites of relevant organizations and grassroots projects, online activist hubs (such as indymedia.org and libcom.org), radio, tv shows and independent documentaries created by activists, and during participant observation in the physical space of the networks under study, in festivals, campaigns or other events organized, hosted or sponsored by them. The analysis of documents, written, audio and video material around the practices of the commoning and solidarity networks has been an important step throughout the different stages of this research, that has facilitated the generation of conceptual abstractions to understand the different aspects and dimensions of the topic under investigation. Such primary sources, which are produced without the intervention of the researcher, ‘allow for the development of a richly detailed and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of interest’ (Snow, 2013a, p. 2), and hence have assisted the selection of the projects and

collective action cases emphasized in this thesis, the composition of interview and fieldwork guides as well as the actual process of fieldwork research. Finally, they have been an indispensable tool in the retroductive strategy of this research by stimulating the constant interaction among theoretical and empirical work, reflection and fieldwork.

Interviewing

Interviews are a key tool for the study of collective action and social movements, used to generate ‘first-hand’ data about participation in protest events, activities and practices of social movement organizations and other grassroots networks. As in different strands of social science, interviews in the field of collective action mostly take two forms: *structured* and *semi-structured* (Blee and Taylor, 2002). On the one hand, structured interviews have been utilized by scholars to generate comparable data through the use of a standardized questionnaire where participants are asked to respond in the same set of questions following a pre-established order. This specific technique has been operationalized for surveys at demonstrations as well as opinion and collective orientation polling of protest events and social movement participants. On the other hand, in semi-structured interviewing the researcher wields an *interview guide* comprising a set of open questions or categories to generate in-depth data about the experiences, interpretations, thoughts and memories of respondents in their own words. Compared to the fixity of the structured questionnaire, this type of interviews allows deviations and more flexibility in probing for additional clarifications and inquiries.

Both interview techniques have been operationalized in generating part of the data that support the arguments of this thesis. Driven from the curiosity to understand the transformative dynamics of collective action in the aftermath of the Aganaktismenoi square movement, I realized the need to gain insight into the ways

activists in the occupied Syntagma square make sense and justify their participation in the movement as well as if and how the latter have affected aspects of their identity. At the same time, I was interested to explore if such participation has enabled alternative perceptions of social and political issues in the context of the financial crisis and its austere governance in the Greek conjuncture. Thus, the main objective was to emphasize the meaning that a number of activists in Aganaktismenoi have given to their actions so as to make sense of the micro- and meso-dynamics of political participation in the aftermath of the movement (Della Porta, 2014a, pp. 228-230). To get at these questions, I have used data from 30 semi-structured interviews with the use of an interview guide (see Appendix), which I have conducted between 2013-2018 (half of them as part of my MA research) with participants in the Aganaktismenoi movement of Syntagma Square. Here the type of interviewing emphasized *life-histories*, a technique that has been employed by social movement scholars to shed light on the ‘interaction between macro events such as protests and social movements with individual actions and identities’ (Blee and Taylor, 2002, p. 104). The interviewees were recruited following a snowball sampling after establishing a first link with participants in the Aganaktismenoi event available to the researcher. Snowball sampling is a sampling method where subjects linked to the researcher introduce future interviewees among their acquaintances (Bosi and Reiter, 2014). Particular attention was paid in accessing an equal number of individuals participating in the different unofficial groupings (‘lower’ and ‘upper’ square) choreographing the everyday life of the occupied Syntagma square (for an account of the spatialization of repertoires in the Aganaktismenoi event see for example: Kaika and Karaliotas, 2016).

However, while in-depth interviews and life-histories open a window in understanding biographical consequences and processes of political socialization and

participation from the perspective of individual activism (Giugni, 2013, p. 2), a complementary set of structured interview data has been used to gain insight and contextualize changes in political socialization and life-course patterns at a more macro-level of analysis (Blee, 2013). Inspired by social movement scholars that have surveyed people while they protest (for a description of the Contextualizing Contestation project and the Demos project see Andretta and Della Porta, 2014), I have used data collected on-the-spot with the use of structured questionnaires (provided in the Appendix) in the three-days static demonstration '*for democracy and against austerity in Europe*', which took place in Syntagma Square in February 2015. To be sure, the use of the results of such a protest-survey by this thesis is not intended to support generalizability claims by means of quantitative analysis of survey data, but rather as a guide in bridging the gap between micro-, meso- and macro-level of analysis of attitudinal and meaningful aspects of participation in the anti-austerity protest cycle and grassroots commoning and solidarity projects. Against this background, my intention was to trace sociographic features around the protestors, to understand to what extent their identity and perceptions have been shaped by their participation (or not) in collective action, and gain a better picture on what ways the particular political and social context was important (or not) for individual actors, as well as for the latter's participation in collective action networks that seek to provide alternatives within a crisis context.

Finally, to gain access to insider understandings about social practices and organizational aspects of commoning and solidarity projects in the Greek social movement community, I have employed an additional interviewing technique, namely *key-informant* interviews. As Blee and Taylor (2002, pp. 105-106) mention, in key-informant interviews the participants are asked to offer their knowledge as experts

around different aspects of their collective action, therefore the questions can address the level of commitment and emotions associated with participation, or they ‘might pertain to organizational considerations, such as movement’s structures, strategies and culture’. This technique has been used by social movement scholars in an effort to provide thick-descriptions of movements’ organizations and practices (Della Porta, 2014a, p. 240). In my case, I have conducted semi-structured interviews (for interview guide see Appendix) with 27 key respondents from 3 emblematic grassroots projects in Athens and Thessaloniki and a nation-wide ‘umbrella’ solidarity network. However, in this thesis I present data from the interviews with participants in only two of the aforementioned projects, that is the recuperated Vio.Me factory in Thessaloniki and the Metropolitan Community Health Clinic at Helliniko in Athens. In contacting the different organizations, I have first communicated my request for conducting research to their official email addresses. In this first contact I provided detailed information around the questions, nature of participant observation, scope of the research and funding. This was an important step in establishing a relation of trust that values the internal procedures of the different projects. Initially, in the majority of the cases, the collectivities have assigned a number of interviewees as the first point of contact. Having established these links and through the actual engagement on the field, all the organizations agreed and allowed me to contact their members individually as potential interviewees. In such cases, I have similarly followed a snowball sampling and one interviewee introduced me to the next one.

All the interviews have been conducted in Greek and transcribed from the original language to English by the researcher³. The qualitative interviews, both with

³ In conducting the protest survey three additional interviewers have provided their invaluable help and assistance (for more information see Paper 2). Nonetheless, the analysis of the results has been done solely by the researcher.

Aganaktismenoi participants and commoning and solidarity projects' key-respondents, have been audio-recorded with the use of a digital sound recorder and conducted face-to-face. The different interview locations have been selected by the interviewees and thus the interviews took place either in neutral places or at the premises of their organization. The average duration of the interviews fluctuated between 45 to 75 minutes. Inspired by ethnographic interview techniques, I have made use of interview memos and notes on both verbal and non-verbal interactions to support the analysis and theoretical reflection (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014; Bryman, 2012, p. 476).

Participant Observation

Participant observation as a method has its roots in the long-established tradition of ethnographic work primarily associated with social anthropology research. There is much confusion surrounding participant observation and ethnography, and in many works the terms have been used interchangeably. I have avoided the term ethnography as, for me, the latter constitutes a broader framework of doing research that, to put it briefly, incorporates both the research process (with a focus on the immersion of the researcher in a group of study for a long period) and the written output (emphasis on a detailed account of the social and cultural context and on people's behavior within that context) (Bryman, 2012, p. 431). Here, instead, I have chosen the term participant observation as a more acute description of my research activities in the social setting and time of the processes of collective action under study and with the members (*protagonists*) of that setting. Therefore, speaking about participant observation in the context of this thesis I refer to a research setting that involves the researcher as observer and to a rather limited degree participant 'in action as the action is happening' (Lichterman, 2013, p. 1).

Against this background, my participant observation has been conducted primarily on the sites of the commoning and solidarity projects, in Athens and Thessaloniki, emphasized in this research. With the consent of the members of the relevant projects, I had the opportunity to visit under different occasions their premises and observe or participate in several instances of their daily life, such as: general assemblies, meetings of their broader solidarity networks, everyday activities related to the particular scope of practices of each project, and so on. Moreover, I have engaged as participant observer in demonstrations, fairs, festivals, conferences and other events such as grassroots workshops and seminars either organized by the studied grassroots actors or in which the latter have been participating, in the period between February 2015 and October 2019. In the context of such processes and events I have compiled written notes and memos of the rich social activities and interactions observed, which, together with interview notes and document analysis, culminated in the triangulation of a fieldwork corpus of primary sources. In this regard, participant observation allowed the generation of ‘firsthand’ data emphasizing the meaning that activists and grassroots collectivities give to their social practices and politics within the setting of their everyday encounters (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014), while, at the same time, enabled the better contextualization of the other primary sources and theoretical work through the perspective of the main actors under study.

3.2 On the researcher’s social positioning and reflexivity

As a final point, alongside the ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations involved in the operational aspects of this research, there is a need to address the influence of my social position in researching and writing about grassroots agents and social movements as potential carriers of social change. In these terms, the

researcher's reflexivity, as the capacity to comprehend and identify those positions that may affect our research practices (both in the 'office' and at the field) (Lichterman, 2017), is of crucial importance in the conduct of this study. Accordingly, during the different stages of my research I have sought to maintain a sense of self-reflexivity, that is, being attentive to the fact that the ways I engage with and interpret the social world are constitutive of the hypothesis and explanations I draw (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 36). In other words, to use Clifford Geertz's (1974, p. 32) terminology, in conducting empirically-informed social research one should be conscious of the 'inside'/'outside' dichotomy between on the one hand 'the felt realm of human experience' and on the other 'the observed realm of human behavior'.

To push my reflection further, my lived experience of the everyday reality in crisis-ridden Greece, my engagement in grassroots struggles and left-wing politics both before and during the crisis, as well as my familiarity with the historical and sociopolitical background of Greek society, have all played a decisive role in understanding the various effects of the crisis in the day-to-day structure of life; forging contacts with collectivities and interviewees and in analyzing the contextualized self-interpretations of actors. Moreover, I have been aware of the ways in which these factors that shape my social position might have influenced my relationship with the participants. To give an example, the fact that members of the projects in which I have conducted interviews knew about my prior-activist status seemed to have bolstered the trust and openness of their respective organizations towards my research practices (e.g. participant observation and access to wider number of interviewees). In other cases, such as in interviews with members of left-wing parties (that are not included in this thesis) this more grassroots-oriented positionality created some tension in the narratives of my interviewees in an effort to prove their leftist or radical attitude. Or, thinking

about my positionality within the academy, my identity as a researcher created mixed feelings in a couple of cases due to their previous negative experiences with other researchers. Here, again, my previous social activity played an important role in overcoming the initial hesitations.

To conclude this short reflection on social positions that might matter to the researcher and the researched, my identity as a young Greek researcher doing my research during and about the period of a crisis that resulted in severe repercussions in the everyday life of the majority of the population and devastated the most vulnerable, had, at times, proved a difficult obstacle to overcome in the ways that I have interpreted the social activity of groups and individuals struggling to keep themselves and society on their feet.

3.3 Limitations

Social science research demands considerations and choices with regards to research approach, methodological strategy and empirical material. The principles and practice that inform the choices of the researcher in social science research have implications for the articulation of the proposed explanations. Such choices, both planned and contingent, play a crucial role in designating what can and cannot be known and said by any particular approach in relation to the claims we make and the grounds for generalization beyond the particular confines of the cases upon which we draw our reflections. In what follows, I will attempt to sketch out the most important limitations in relation to my research and methodological strategy.

First, related to the choice of empirical material, my research is focused on a specific number of protest events, grassroots projects and their participants with an emphasis on the Greek experience. As I have suggested, my approach begins with the

construction of a particular problem - that is, the framing of austerity as the only solution to the crisis on the one hand, and, more importantly on the other, the contestation of this hegemonic norm by grassroots projects - and seeks to offer a singular retroductive explanation that will render the problematized phenomena more intelligible. To be sure, I do not claim that such a framework can be used to cast empirical generalizations by deductive or inductive means. Rather, in this post-positivist explanatory process generalization can take place on the ground of shared judgements about theoretical concepts and empirical cases. This means that the context plays a crucial role and that empirical generalizations can arise in conjunction with the theoretical language used to articulate them. In my view, the case of the Greek grassroots scene can contribute to the explanation of related cases of collective action in the European South (and *vice versa*), however the way that could do so is not straightforward. It rather requires to carefully investigate similarities and differences in both theoretical and contextual terms. As a result, in Paper 1, the thesis attempts to sketch a theoretical perspective, based on empirical manifestations of such collective action and exemplary grassroots initiatives in the South European crisis context, that can be used as a means to articulate shared judgments beyond the confines of the individual cases. In turn, on the ground of such shared judgements Paper 2 and 3 draw particular attention to the Greek experience, as an exemplary case of the South European grassroots trend during the crisis (Della Porta et al., 2017; LIVEWHAT, 2016), which can then be potentially used to reflect back and characterize similar or different instances in this South European context. However, for future research that would aspire to designate strong generalizing family resemblances it would be crucial to consider and articulate more thoroughly the similarities and differences between the

national contexts, forms of organization and the specific content of repertoires (service-oriented, production-oriented, etc.).

Second, related to the specific content of repertoires of the grassroots organizations studied here, the research has mostly focused on service-oriented (e.g. provision of primary healthcare services) and economy-driven (e.g. recuperated factories). This specific range of organizations potentially limits the insights that this research draws in thinking about alternative social practices and their logics (Paper 3). Thus, research on other service- and economy-oriented projects as well as on different scenes (such as education, networks of food distribution, timebanks, etc.) will enhance the characterization of alternative grassroots practices and provide us with a richer narrative on their transformative potential.

Third, the obstacle of time and resources have in a significant degree determined the spatial focus of the research in the two main urban centers of Athens and Thessaloniki. Undeniably, both cities can be addressed as the main focal points of the biggest collective action events during the crisis, as well as the cities where we can find a larger concentration of commoning and solidarity initiatives. However, a more spatially diversified account in terms of smaller cities, towns and islands would bear the potential to reveal different levels of engagement in contentious collective action events, patterns of politicization and content of practices.

A subsequent limitation derives from PDT's hegemonic conception of politics that raises questions around the strategic horizon of democratic struggles. The hierarchical, homogenizing and ideological closures of a hegemonic strategy (Laclau, 1996, 2005a), both in theoretical and practical terms, cannot be unproblematically combined with the more fluid, horizontal and direct forms of commoning and solidarity

politics (Stavrakakis, 2014). In the European South, the rise of left-wing parties with populist and movement-like elements, such as Syriza and Podemos, was met with the concurrent proliferation of grassroots repertoires of commoning and solidarity. As it is better demonstrated in the Greek case, despite the reciprocal influence between Syriza and grassroots agents, the complex reality of modern politics today - extended in multiple scales and levels (national, international, local, etc.) - have played an important role in fettering a substantial cross-pollination of a radical strategy for social change. While Paper 2 seeks to offer some initial reflection on the topic, it does not reveal so much about Party processes and logics as it focuses more on what is considered important by grassroots actors. Therefore, future research would be relevant to shed more light on the logics and fantasies that shape the choices and strategies of radical party formations that seek to maintain links with the grassroots. Furthermore, what is also missing is a coherent theorization of the strategy that will lead to the realization of the multiple levels in which contemporary political struggles take place and to the abolishment of dominant power relations, which, to be sure, are equally visible in several instances of radical politics today, grassroots and institutional.

Paper 1: Social movements and the commons: A framework for understanding collective action in crisis-ridden Southern Europe.

Abstract

Social movement studies and commons' literature provide rich accounts on anti-austerity mobilizations and urban uprisings in the European South. Social movement studies offer important insights regarding mobilizations' context and the raising of collective claims. A Commons' toolbox emphasizes bottom-up practices that move beyond institutional solutions. Although both literatures highlight similar phenomena, they remain unconnected. This distance does not allow them to fully grasp the implications of the dynamic and abundant to-ing and fro-ing between protest-based politics and everyday forms of collective action in this region, heavily affected by the crisis' austere management. Drawing on the South European context, this paper rethinks key concepts addressed in both literatures (social movements - commons, activists - commoners, mobilization – commoning) and highlights how a conceptual synthesis can sharpen and (re)politicize the theorization of contemporary collective action in the everyday level.

Introduction

Scholars in the fields of social movement studies and the commons provide rich accounts of the recent anti-austerity forms of collective action through a wide variety of approaches (e.g. De Angelis, 2017; Della Porta, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2017). In this respect, both disciplines highlight loose organizational forms, the institution of alternative communities and construction of collective imaginaries. In this paper however, we argue that the emergence of new forms of collective action focusing on the self-organization of everyday life, the provision of unofficial welfare services and the creation of novel forms of social production and reproduction, particularly in the South European⁴ context during the global financial crisis, cannot be fully addressed by any of the two literatures alone.

On the one hand, social movement studies pay close attention to mobilization processes and impose strict limitations on the definition of social movement organizations (SMOs) that set important barriers in understanding the aforementioned shift. Social movement scholars have used different definitions, such as direct social actions (Bosi and Zamponi, 2015), alternative forms of resilience (Kousis and Paschou, 2017), sustainable community movements (Forno and Graziano, 2014), to describe recent grassroots structures, something that points precisely towards this issue. On the other hand, commons' scholars often isolate their cases from the historical – social, political and cultural – context in which they emerge, by placing an uneven emphasis on the economic-institutional aspects of common-pool resources (CPRs) and their governance (Ostrom, 1985). From a similar, albeit different perspective, while theorists of the commons usually provide solid narratives of their examples, they too often fail

⁴ Hereafter S.E to denote Southern Europe and Southern European

to provide a context-dependent account of how the commons and their actors are politically constituted through antagonism and the establishment of political boundaries (Bollier, 2014; Hardt and Negri, 2004).

What we claim here is that the S.E experience in the post-2011 conjuncture is grounded in collective action processes that conceive social change not merely as an objective, but as a way of life, and this opens up promising research options. We take one of these to be the need to rethink social movement theory and theory of the commons in light of one another, in ways that are much more responsive in understanding social change and post-capitalist transformation as underlying characteristics of modern forms of collective action, particularly in the current S.E context. Our aim here is not to investigate whether the plurality of commons and solidarity initiatives constitute a social movement; but, rather, to suggest that the heuristic devising of a theoretical synthesis between social movement studies and commons allows us to render S.E grassroots politics more intelligible. Against this background, this paper's scope is constructed on the ground of a double problematization: on the one hand, it attempts to stage a conversation and relay between two theoretical approaches that have significantly shaped ongoing debates on the character, possibilities and limitations of collective action; on the other, it provides a critical engagement with and evaluation of the new grassroots practices and forms of collective action in S.E in the aftermath of the Indignants' squares in 2011.

We contend that such a synthesis allows us to sketch a better understanding of the more plural mobilizations and prolific social practices manifested within the ongoing collective action projects against neoliberal austerity in this particular region. Moreover, our synthesis seeks to account for the particular acts of identification and

the type of political subjectivity that emerges through antagonism and the construction of new political projects (Griggs and Howarth, 2002). Finally, of particular importance here is the way such actors construct new agentic articulations seeking to bring about social change in the organization of everyday life. However, in order for these phenomena and relations to be explored, there is first a need for both conceptual and theoretical clarification of a set of analytical categories used in the two literatures: 1) social movements and SMOs - commons 2) activists - commoners and 3) mobilization - commoning.

The paper is structured as follows: in order to empirically ground our theoretical exploration, the first part provides a brief illustration of the S.E context, informed by extensive qualitative field research conducted in commoning and solidarity structures in Greece between 2015 and 2018, and secondary literature and document analysis of founding declarations, campaigning announcements and press releases of such projects with respect to Italy, Spain and Portugal. The second part of the paper introduces the problem-driven strategy of our approach and develops the theoretical logic that informs our account in establishing a relation among elements of the two literatures. After discussing the theoretical and analytical underpinnings of the research, we then turn to review the tripartite set of analytical distinctions in four steps (reactivation, deconstruction, abstraction and commensuration) that allows us to demonstrate the relevance of our synthetic framework for understanding the current forms of collective action in S.E. The article concludes with some remarks about the potential of such a conceptual synthesis to sharpen and (re)politicize the theorization of contemporary collective action.

Empirical Context: Problematizing Crisis and Collective Action in the European South

The collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 signaled the beginning of the latest financial crisis. As the crisis rapidly expanded to Europe, it mostly affected the national economies of the South. The revelation of great public debts was combined with bail-out programs in Greece and Portugal as well as structural reforms and austerity cuts in Spain and Italy. To put it in a nutshell, the one and only remedy the EU, IMF and the global markets pushed for in return for their ‘support’, was the implementation of rescue programs based on austerity politics. The long lasting austerity had devastating impact on the day-to-day structure of life of local populations: wages and pensions were falling sharply, collective labor agreements have been removed, cuts in public spending figured as the only alternative and the official unemployment rates were increasing dramatically (Knight and Stewart, 2016).

It is against this backdrop, in 2011, that a series of global uprisings peaked in the countries of S.E with the occupied squares of M12M, Indignados and Aganaktismenoi. Although Italian mobilizations did not culminate in the same direction (Zamponi, 2012), over several weeks, thousands of people appropriated the streets in the biggest cities of Italy expressing their discontent. Disaffection with political parties, dissent against austerity politics and the forced economic adjustment were common elements uniting the protesters across the region (Della Porta, 2015). The establishment of an incipient network of protest camps played a crucial role in the self-organization of struggles and self-management of the participants’ everyday needs, mainly in Greece and Spain. The institution of popular assemblies, the production of material infrastructures and the prefiguration of alternative ways of being and practicing in common were the catalyst in weaving an alternative problematization of

the crisis's austere management (Roussos, 2019). Accordingly, despite their differences, such contentious events turned into a vast opposition to neoliberal governance. More importantly though, the dismantling of the national welfare systems gave birth to numerous commoning and solidarity structures providing informal welfare services, building social solidarity and economic alternatives and prefiguring another manner of organizing everyday life in common (Flesher Fominaya and Hayes, 2017; Kousis and Paschou, 2017; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014a) .

Greece could be characterized as a laboratory of grassroots social innovation: time banks and community gardens (Dalakoglou and Vradis, 2011), collective kitchens and open markets without middlemen (Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016), and social clinics providing free primary healthcare services (Kotronaki and Christou, 2019). Moreover, the recuperated factory of Vio.Me (Malamidis, 2018) as well as the K136 (Velegarakis and Frezouli, 2016) initiative against the privatization of Thessaloniki's water company are examples of contemporary struggles that have set forward plans for cooperative management, thus actively politicizing the urban landscape and engaging large parts of the local society.

Precarity and unemployment also brought to the forefront the rise of self-managed cooperatives in Spain. Spain's housing bubble triggered the emergence of the PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca), a grassroots network of horizontal organizations, which provides consultation to debtors, negotiates with banks, organizes demonstrations and squats vacant apartments (García-Lamarca, 2017). The Marea Blanca and Marea Verde mobilizations in health and education sectors respectively, are similar forms of practical political intervention on the basis of direct-democracy and self-management (Lois-González and Piñeira-Mantiñán, 2015).

With respect to Italy, indicative here are the alternative food networks and solidarity purchasing groups. Although numbers vary, research shows that in crisis-ridden Italy there were more than 1000 solidarity purchasing groups with more than 150 thousand participants (Grasseni, 2014a, 2014b). From critical consumerism and economic activist groups, markets and day-care centers, social centers holding informal welfare services to the self-managed factories of RiMaflow and Officine Zero (Forno and Graziano, 2019), the Italian context provides a variety of examples (Bosi and Zamponi, 2015; Di Felicianantonio, 2016).

Less intense in its fashion but based on similar repertoires and political perspectives, the Portuguese experience attests to a variety of agriculturally related and community-based initiatives. Between 2010-2015, almost 100 new grassroots projects of alternative consumption and production have emerged across the country (Santos et al., 2015, p. 6). The community groups in Lisbon and Coimbra have set forward alternative forms of social organization in the urban landscape (Amaro and Ferreira, 2018), while the examples of eco-villages in rural areas complement the picture (Esteves, 2017).

The birth of commoning and solidarity grassroots initiatives often coincides with periods of increased contention: for example the Global Justice Movement and the Social Forums in the 1990s played a key role in the outbreak of alternative economic formations in Latin America and Europe (de França Filho et al., 2012; Miller, 2005, p. 2). In this regard, several accounts stress that commoning and solidarity initiatives share similar ethical and political values with social movements, such as solidarity, ecological thinking, collective and individual autonomy, local rootedness and global inter-connection (Miller, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, scholars and practitioners

have long emphasized the need to strengthen the linkages of social movements with commoning and solidarity economy initiatives, and particularly to ‘integrate economic alternatives into social movements and social movements into economic alternatives’ (Miller, 2010, p. 35). Of course, such a development requires a contextual overlap between social movements and solidarity and commons projects, which is not always the case. For this reason, social movements are often presented as forms which challenge specific policies and powerholders (anti-politics), while commoning and solidarity initiatives are ascribed a more suggestive role (alter-politics) (Hage, 2015, pp. 49-78). Hence, they have been treated as different entities and studied separately: from a social movement perspective the focus mostly revolves around mobilization-related synergies, while from a commons’ perspective emphasis is given to an analysis of day-to-day practices and prefigurative politics.

At first glance, it would seem that these two opposed perspectives allow us to account for two different forms of collective action: the former organized around claim making - disruptive or conventional - repertoires, the latter sustaining mutual-help and community resilience networks to address everyday needs. In line with social movements studies, which emphasize the everyday and prefigurative dimension of collective action (Flesher Fominaya, 2015; Haunss and Leach, 2007; Leach and Haunss, 2009), and inspired by recent scholarship developed in the aftermath of Indignant events (see Bosi and Zamponi, 2015; Forno and Graziano, 2014), we argue that with respect to the crisis-ridden S.E context such a division is unproductive in two respects. Conceptually, it presents us with a clear-cut dichotomy in the provision of the context for agency; the critique against dominant discourses and claim-making towards power-holders as the context for social movements, and the establishment of counter-practices and provision of alternatives as the one for commoning and solidarity

projects. Empirically, it does not highlight the continuity between the wave of anti-austerity mobilizations and the development of grassroots projects of commoning and solidarity, nor does it help us to contextualize, and thus to understand, the contentious and political character of the latter. Although these responses created alternatives in a variety of sectors heavily affected by the repercussions of the crisis, this was predicated on the discourses, repertoires and relational matrix of the anti-austerity protest events and Indignant movements. Moreover, while commoning and solidarity networks aimed to create alternatives in the here and now - prefiguring in this way other forms of social organization - they also sought to prevent the implementation of austerity measures and reverse policies that intensified material and social exclusion. Table 1 provides a short description of grassroots projects that are used to illustrate our claims in the following sections of the paper. We understand these projects as ‘paradigmatic’ cases in our attempt to highlight the general characteristics and qualities of the forms of collective action in question (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Table 1

Social Solidarity Clinics and Pharmacies in Greece

In a context of widespread exclusion from the Greek national health system (GNHS) due to the rising number of uninsured and financially deprived citizens, a network of Social Solidarity Clinics and Pharmacies (SSCPs) started to emerge, seeking to counter the effects of the crisis’s neoliberal management in the health sector and thus offering primary health services free of charge to Greeks and migrants. At the same time, the more than 40 SSCP that have been operating across Greece (Teloni and Adam, 2018), have been engaged in campaigns for universal access to the health system and mobilized their members and patients against austerity governance

(Kotronaki and Christou, 2019). Organized mostly at the local level, social clinics comprise healthcare professionals and other citizens in solidarity without medical expertise. Decisions are taken on the basis of the members' general assembly, while the clinics reject funding from political parties, NGOs and the state.

Platforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) in Spain

The PAH was created in Barcelona, Spain, in February 2009 as a horizontal and assembly-based initiative, seeking to provide support to citizens facing evictions. In the aftermath of Indignados, the initiative gained increased popularity among activists, grassroots organizations and citizens. As a result, by 2014, 205 platforms have emerged to all 17 regions of Spain (Flesher Fominaya, 2015). In the beginning of the crisis, the main aim of PAH was to raise awareness, provide legal and moral support, and organize demonstrations against the intensification of eviction processes due to the housing crisis. However, beyond these movement-like repertoires and mobilization activities, the PAH developed solidarity practices and strategies to reclaim in a more practical way the right to housing for all (Romanos, 2014). Crucially, the platform neither acts on behalf of people threatened to lose their houses nor provides 'specialist' assistance; rather it aims to engage those affected through general assemblies and activities emphasizing mutual aid and self-support. Accordingly, the numerous platforms across Spain have managed to prevent the systematic evictions of debtors, but have also occupied empty houses and blocks held by financial institutions and transformed them into social housing (Flesher Fominaya, 2015). Such repertoires contributed to the reframing of debt issues from personal to collective, as against the neoliberal imaginary of individual responsabilization (Di Felicianantonio, 2016)

Vio.Me in Greece

Vio.Me S.A. was founded in 1982 as a subsidiary of Philkeram-Johnston S.A. in the outskirts of Thessaloniki, producing chemical products for the manufacturing sector. In 2011, the parent company went bankrupted. The former owners decided to abandon Vio.Me's plant, left the workers unpaid and faced with unemployment. After fruitless deliberations with the previous administration, Vio.Me workers' union decided to occupy the workplace and called for solidarity. In 2013, together with a great movement in solidarity, the workers took the production into their own hands (Malamidis, 2018). Since that moment, the factory became a source of dignity, equal labor relations and remuneration for the members of the cooperative. At the same time, the 'opening of the factory's gates to the society' through common assemblies of workers and individuals in solidarity, and the active engagement of workers in labor mobilizations and urban struggles, brought Vio.Me at the epicenter of the anti-austerity mobilizations (Roussos et al., 2018).

RiMaflow in Italy

In 2013, two years after the bankruptcy of the industrial group owning the Maflow metal factory in Milan and following the decision of the new contractor to relocate the plant to Poland, a group of workers decided to 'recover' their factory (Rinascita della Maflow, i.e. RiMaflow). Based on principles of self-management, coproduction and mutual aid, RiMaflow workers have created a cooperative for the re-use and recycling of electrical and electronic appliances (Forno and Graziano, 2019). The workers of the cooperative together with the Occupy Maflow Accosiation (a mass movement against neoliberal austerity) have converted the previously abandoned workspace into what they call the 'Citadel of the Alternative Economy' (Fumagalli et

al., 2017, p. 78). In this poly-functional space, more than 70 people are engaged in a variety of activities, including distribution of local farmers' products, organic market, artisan warehouse (carpentry, furniture restoration, modelling, upholstery and metal processing), co-working spaces, parking space for campervans, a bar and a restaurant.

K136 In Greece

Thessaloniki's Public Water and Sewerage Company (EYATH) was among the state assets included in the portfolio of the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) that was founded in 2011 to facilitate the privatization of public infrastructures and enterprises agenda, part of the Greek Structural Adjustment Programs. In 2012, HRADF initiated the bidding process and attracted the interest of companies like Suez and the Israel National Water Company (Kotsaka, 2016). Within this context however, an initiative of citizens and unions with the name 'Kinisi 136' (Initiative 136 or K136) attempted to participate in the process (Bieler and Jordan, 2018). K136 organized a campaign for the social management and ownership of EYATH. The initiative elaborated and proposed a citizens' buyout plan, based on a contribution of 136 euros per household to get the water company under social control. According to this plan, the management of the EYATH would be divided among a network of smaller local companies that would allow for citizens' direct participation in decision-making and management, following an open assembly and equal vote model. Although authorities excluded K136 from the bidding process, the latter's participation in protests and organization of a popular grassroots referendum led to the postponement of the EYATH's auction.

Social Movement Studies and the Commons: Towards a Synthesis

The 2008 crisis not only affected the economies of S.E, but it also assisted the formation of a particular universe of grassroots commoning and solidarity initiatives. Academic endeavors stemming both from social movement studies and the literature of the commons, each from its own perspective, have offered a plethora of valuable insights by thoroughly studying such developments. As we have already mentioned, at a first glance, it would seem that such a ‘division of labor’ is relevant. However, with a focus on the S.E context, their respective failure to communicate has instead produced partial explanations and theorizations of the phenomena we seek to understand here.

On the one hand, the strict defining characteristics of social movements, SMOs, human subjects and social formations in social movement accounts limit the contextualization of the recent grassroots struggles in S.E by missing the transformative elements they endorse during their everyday operation. On the other hand, the respective explanatory frameworks of the commons seem unable to capture the specific contentious dynamics that shape the meso (organizational) and micro (individual) levels. As a result, they often lead to a catch-all style of theorizing with a descriptive and affirmative particularism. We argue that neither of these two literatures alone can assist us in fully understanding the transformations of contemporary grassroots politics in S.E. In order to provide a more capacious interpretation of such politics, we devise a synthetic reformulation of a set of key concepts and logics in the two literatures, showing how it may fruitfully be applied to a variety of cases in different countries of the region.

In doing so, we adopt a problem-driven strategy as opposed to theory-driven or method-driven approaches. As Shapiro (2002, pp. 598-601) argues, the latter usually

resort to self-serving construction of problems animated by ‘misuse of data in various ways’, while the former tend to ‘vindicate a particular theory rather than illuminate a problem that is specified independently of the theory’. By contrast, our account starts with a double problematization: a) of the new grassroots practices and forms of collective action in S.E in the aftermath of the Indignants’ squares, and b) of the previous social movement and commons’ scholarly attempts to account for them.

We are thus led to focus on scrutinizing ‘different *kinds* of logics and concepts’ in social movement studies and commons’ literatures (Howarth, 2005, p. 326), seeking to account for the same political reality. Our task is far from exhausted in providing a review of the two literatures. Rather, we aim to bridge these heterogeneous theoretical and empirical elements into a context-dependent synthetic articulation that involves ‘*a mutual modification of the logics and concepts articulated together in the process of explaining each particular instance of research*’ (*ibid.*:327-italics in original). Operationalizing Howarth’s *logic of formalization*, we argue that such a modification allows us to render the different theories and concepts consistent and compatible with one another, in providing a theoretical re-articulation that constitutes the empirical phenomena under investigation more intelligible in four stages: reactivation, deconstruction, abstraction and commensuration. The stage of *reactivation* involves a ‘return’ to the founding problems initially addressed by the particular theory and to the underlying assumptions that led the latter to the construction of particular concepts. The next stage, the practice of *deconstruction*, proceeds by pinpointing and weakening of essentialist or deterministic aspects of the respective theory, which render them incompatible with one another. This opens up the way for the final stages of *abstraction* and *commensuration*, namely, the elaboration of purely formal concepts or logics that can be brought to bear on the object being explored, ‘and which have been purified of

those traces of particularity that may preclude their being applied to a variety of commensurate problems and questions' (*ibid.*:326).

Reactivation stage

In the reactivation stage we present the way social movement studies and the theory of the commons have previously problematized the phenomena they seek to understand and built their main concepts (social movements and SMOs-commons; activists-commoners; mobilization-commoning).

Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons

Attempting to provide an analytical framework for the study of social movements, Charles Tilly has offered probably the most popular definition: a social movement 'consists of a sustained challenge to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of repeated public displays of that populations worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment' (Tilly, 1999, p. 257). Over the years, scholars have stressed specific aspects of social movements based on the explanatory contexts of their respective inquiries: shared beliefs and opinions (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, pp. 1217-1218); sustained campaigns against specific claimants (Tarrow, 1998); networks (Della Porta and Diani, 2006), or forms of coordination (Diani, 2015). Since all the different conceptualizations do not contradict but rather complement each other, Snow's (2013b, p. 1201) synthetic definition provide a more complete picture of social movements as 'change-oriented in the sense that they seek or oppose change; [...] challengers to or defenders of existing institutional structures or systems of authority; [...] collective rather than individual enterprises; [...] act outside of existing institutional or organizational arrangements; [...] operate

with some degree of organization; [...] and typically display some degree of temporal continuity’.

Although social movements cannot be reduced to the sum of SMOs, the definition of the former often leads to the definition of the latter. In developing this idea, McCarthy and Zald (1977, p. 1218) defined a SMO as a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement and endeavors to carry them out. Departing from that, Kriesi (1996, pp. 152-153) suggested that along with SMOs, other organized formations, such as supportive organizations or formal associations, can also be components of social movements. NGOs, political parties, interest groups and other forms of political action might be sympathetic to a movement, while SMOs might also use formal means to defend their agenda (Diani, 1992, pp. 13-15). However, what distinguishes SMOs from the other organizations is the former’s direct contribution to the action mobilization (Kriesi, 1996, pp. 152-153).

Moving now to the conceptualization of the commons, we can distinguish between institutional and critical accounts. Institutional theories draw their attention to economy-driven assumptions (e.g. rational calculation, individual preferences, utility maximization). The most common reference in this tradition is Elinor Ostrom’s work, which suggests that fishing grounds, grazing areas, parking garages, mainframe computers, oceans, and so on, constitute common pool resources (CPRs) (Ostrom, 1990, p. 21). The appropriators of CPRs collectively set up design principles and rules to maintain their sustainability (*ibid.*:88-102). Thus, Ostrom counterposes to more orthodox rational choice driven models, which are favoring the ‘Leviathan’ (public management) or the exclusionary (private property rights) solution, the solution of

common property regimes as the most suitable way for collectively organizing and governing CPRs (*ibid.*:8-28).

Though insightful and rich, our view is that Ostrom's emphasis on the efficiency of common property regimes to sustain and manage CPRs, hinders other important dimensions of the commons. Contemporary research describes the commons as a form of collective action that contains multiple political, cultural and symbolic networks. For example, Gudeman conceptualizes the commons as all those material (lands, livestock, etc.) or immaterial (knowledge, culture, etc.) things that a community possess and share in common, 'so that what happens to a commons is not a physical incident but a social event' (Gudeman, 2001, pp. 27-28). In this sense, commons are plural social systems composed of commoners, social relations, communal labor and forms of collective decision-making. From recuperated factories and cooperatives to social solidarity structures and earthly commons, the twofold character of the commons, meaning its use value and the plurality of subjects claiming its ownership, is constituted within and through an ecology of social practices and interactions that at the same time sustain and reproduce the two former elements (De Angelis, 2017, pp. 29-32). Against institutionalist accounts, such approaches argue that the concept of the commons provides us with a broader logic of post-capitalist transformation, where resources are produced, managed and distributed based on collective and equal participation (Kioupkiolis, 2017, p. 47).

Activists and Commoners

If social movements are the macro-level and SMOs are the meso-level, then activists are the basic actors in the micro-level of social movement analysis. But how do we define activists? This task seems easy for those organizations with legal status and

membership lists. However, things get more difficult when it comes to grassroots organizations, such as social centers, squats and solidarity structures, which operate on self-organized and loose manners. The activist property in such networks is rather fluid, without any kind of ‘certification’, official definition or membership. It is quite evident then that these organizations hardly comply with the organizational characteristics usually defined by structural approaches to social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). In order to tackle this issue, Diani (2013, pp. 152-153) argues that the basic criteria for qualifying the activist status is the active engagement in the proceedings related with social movements and the respective organizations. The recognition of an activist as a member in one movement is attributed only by the social movement community itself. However, following the methodological approaches and techniques mostly used in social movement inquiries (Della Porta, 2014d), it seems that the attribution of the activist status remains strongly linked with someone’s participation in protest events and other forms related to street politics.

Shifting our attention to the term commoner, in *Ostromian* approaches individuals that participate in CPR systems are more often addressed as potential cooperators that calculate the outcomes of cooperative action for their personal welfare on the ground of pre-established interests and identities (Velicu and García-López, 2018). In contrast, critical commons’ literature understands the commons as a relational process, ‘a principle of cooperation and of responsibility to each other and to the earth, the forests, the seas, the animals’ (Federici, 2018, p. 110). Thus, several works tend to focus on the performative character of subjectivities in order to capture the experience of everyday life within the community. Seen this way, identity is understood as a social process between individuals and the social practices that they partake in. Focusing on the biopolitical *dispositif* of neoliberal capitalism, Hardt and Negri (2004) claim that

subjectivity emerges immanently through the forms that the biopolitical production takes and the *multitude's* cooperative interaction that provides the means to self-value its labor activity. Both labor (outside but in relation to capital) and the engagement with the production of alternative practices are key elements in De Angelis's conceptualization of commoners (De Angelis, 2017, pp. 181-184). As he clarifies, commoners are members of a plurality that claims ownership of a good or as he puts it 'use value' through practices of self-governance and self-management (*ibid.*:30). To sum up, the subjects operating within the commons are defined in terms of 'their mutual dependence on this shared economy' and community (Neeson, 1996, p. 321), which is being shaped by and shapes the (re)production of livelihoods beyond capitalism (De Angelis, 2017, p. 184).

Mobilization and Commoning

The factors around individuals' participation in collective action have long shaped the literature on social movements. Some scholars focus on individuals' motives and their structural position (Walgrave, 2013, p. 206), others on SMOs' success in achieving consensus mobilization (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987, pp. 519-520), or align their frames with the needs of the potential participants (Snow et al., 1986). Additionally, a number of authors favor individuals' agency and thus understand subjects 'as active attributors of meaning constructing their own ideas and searching for opportunities to put these ideas into practice' (Walgrave, 2013, p. 206). Moreover, cultural meanings and moral shocks constitute decisive factors for strangers' mobilization, while proximity and affective bonds seem essential for movement sympathizers (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995, p. 508). Over the years, scholars have indicated that the life of social movements also continues in times when there is not a public explosion of collective action (Castells, 1983; Melucci, 1996). Studies on dress codes, activists' social hubs

and entertainment traditions have shown that activism entails a social living that moves beyond the narrow participation in protests and demonstrations (Leach and Haunss, 2009). Yet, for the vast majority of social movement scholars, mobilization remains the central theoretical category for exploring the ways through which social movements seek to achieve social change.

Moving to the commons' literature, while institutionalist perspectives limit commoning to the ensemble of practices used by a community in claiming ownership and governing a commons (Ostrom, 1990), critical accounts treat commoning as the whole spectrum of the life of the commons (Federici, 2018). Seen this way, commoning involves an 'instituting praxis', the moment that a collectivity decides to (re)create a common (Dardot and Laval, 2019), and then moves to the patterns of production and reproduction that commoners set up upon principles of equality, horizontality and self-organization (Linebaugh, 2008, p. 45). While performing these activities, commoners develop forms of social relations and (re)produce values, affects and meanings, such as solidarity, mutual aid, reciprocity and care (De Angelis, 2017, p. 119). Thus, the concept of commoning is constructed based on the interconnections between the natural, social and cultural resources and a community on the one hand, and the multiple relations that are created among commoners through their plural interactions and active participation in the workings and everyday life of the community on the other. In this respect, social change is addressed in the active engagement with the experiment of self-governance and the collective social conditions within which commoners relate to one another in the here and now (Arampatzi, 2018).

Deconstruction stage

By reflecting upon the cases described in Table 1, in this section we seek to illustrate how each of the two theories alone fails to grapple with important characteristics of the collective action context during the crisis period in S.E.

Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons

As it has been shown above, social movement studies' definitions opt to provide ideal types of SMOs by emphasizing the ways they mobilize and structure their claims, as well as by shedding light on their relations with political institutions and actors. However, such a definition does not sufficiently elucidate the forms of collective action emerged in the crisis setting of S.E. For instance, thinking of the grassroots social clinics in Greece, this inadequacy becomes prominent. Indeed, in many occasions, social clinics mobilize their members to actively participate in hospital blockades and other local struggles. Crucially, however, social clinics focus their action in organizing and providing primary healthcare services to everyone in need. Hence, since the main goal of social clinics is not the mobilization of their constituencies or political brokerage with institutional actors and power holders, it is hard to define them as SMOs according to the categorization provided by social movement studies.

To further illustrate, studying Vio.Me or RiMaflow as SMOs highlights the contentious dimension of their activities (raising awareness on self-management, supporting other workers' struggles, providing resources for the organization of strikes, and so on) that in times have contributed in the development of powerful demonstrations (Malamidis, 2018). At the same time, however, such an analysis tends to overlook the social and economic activities in which the aforementioned initiatives are engaged in on an everyday level and enables them to construct an alternative

practical imaginary that prefigures social change in the workplace environment. Resource mobilization theory (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) would pay attention to the organizational structure, manufacturing equipment and products' distribution channels that enable these initiatives to sustain their action; but it would fail to analyze the significance of horizontal self-management in the workplace on a daily basis. Political process approach and the attribution of political opportunity structure (Meyer, 2004; Tarrow, 1998) can help us explore how the increased political pluralism, the rise of unemployment and the division of political and business elites in the S.E crisis context was interpreted as an opportunity by the Vio.Me and RiMaflow workers to suggest an alternative management plan. However, it does not flesh out the cultural underpinnings of solidarity that led workers to squat the factory premises and surrounds the latter's collective operation. Contentious politics framework (McAdam et al., 2001) would highlight the ways that the diffusion of repertoires of self-organization, brokerage of workers' with other SMOs and boundary formation between the workers and the former owners have led to the social appropriation of the factories. Nevertheless, the domain of practices and imaginaries that affects the use and government of collectively produced resources and social goods, put to work in the aftermath of contentious processes, would not be the focus of such an analysis.

As it has already been mentioned, this emphasis on alternative practices and imaginaries of collective well-being capable of transcending the capitalist organization of society and economy, can be found in critical commons' literature. Such conceptualizations draw upon a critical analysis of the modern state and its entanglement with neoliberal capitalism, by understanding the commons as political processes that involve actions and discourses that move beyond existing power structures (Holloway, 2005). The upshot of these perspectives is to recast the political

imaginaries and repertoires of collective struggles of autonomous social agents beyond hierarchical and representative forms of politics and outside the state and market (Hardt and Negri, 2009).

Despite the rich theoretical horizon of critical accounts, a mechanical application of theoretical abstractions to concrete processes and events entails a danger of *theoreticism*. This would tend to assume the emergence of transformative commons without examining their production and functioning through time. Therefore, such theoretical accounts should be complemented by thick descriptions of the practices of co-ownership, co-production and co-management of social goods and spaces, and critical reflection on the matrix of relations and power structures that these new regimes of practices animate and sustain. This becomes apparent when considering the plurality of identities, interests and social practices, organizational difficulties and contradictions towards state and market agents, that are evolving within grassroots projects in the crisis-ridden S.E. Moreover, attempting to render such projects as necessarily operating outside mainstream politics, downplays the impact of broader and consistent ‘dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics’ (Tarrow, 1998, pp. 19-20).

In this respect, an analysis of social clinics in Greece as *autopoietic* commons would pay less attention to key elements that have contributed to the former’s institution and ability to mobilize their members and maintain support from broader parts of the population, such as: the role of resources (e.g. medical and pharmacist education, medical equipment and medicines, organization and management of healthcare skills, etc.) that were essential in constructing their networks; the members’ previous engagement in social struggles, which was crucial for the clinics network

rapid expansion; or the crucial role of *movementality* (Rakopoulos, 2016), the actors' experience and knowledge acquired through their participation in the anti-austerity mobilizations and the squares' movement, for their internal direct-democratic operation (Teloni and Adam, 2018). Thus, from a commons' perspective, what needs more systematic analysis is the meso-level of organizational innovations, especially attentive to the production of new power structures and institutions.

Activists and Commoners

Earlier we noted that definitions on SMOs present ideal types that do not fit the organizations born in the S.E. crisis context. On the same ground, we are skeptical whether the application of the 'activist status' to those individuals participating in the forms of collective action developed after the 2008 crisis is able to analytically capture the characteristics of their actions. In particular, Vio.Me and RiMaflow workers are well-defined as activists when protesting by the respective labor movement. However, their political identity moves beyond their claims on workers' rights and is constantly realized through the collective management of their workplace environment. K136 and PAH participants are well-recognized from the respective urban movements against the water privatization in Greece and evictions in Spain. Nevertheless, their political participation in contentious repertoires is complemented with their active engagement in the construction of practical alternatives. Additionally, participants in social clinics are engaged in mobilizations in the health sector, but their role unfolds to a greater extent during their daily participation in clinics' operation. As such, the activist idiom contextualizes the contentious role of the subject and strongly underlines its political dimension within the existing dominant order or field of experience. However, it seems less ample in signifying processes of (re)subjectivation, 'the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable

within a given field of experience' (Rancière, 1999, p. 35). With regards to the S.E. crisis context, this process reflects the production and participation in alternative social practices in the everyday level.

Turning to the theory of the commons and devising the term *commoner* to understand the participants in the same cases discussed above, we are confronted with the opposite unresolved tension regarding subjects' formation. In such terms, the main points of interest in a commons' oriented study would be the development of alternative discourses in the production and distribution of products by the Vio.Me and RiMaflow workers, as well as the ways that the latter *perform* social practices in the workplace and the economy differently (e.g. collective decision-making, equal remuneration, distribution of products only in local markets, etc.). What becomes less important here, is the moment that actors decide and act upon certain issues. To add a second example, conceiving social clinics' participants as *commoners* emphasizes their identity as inherent in the practicing and organizing of grassroots healthcare provision. Hence, their participation in struggles against austerity cuts in public healthcare is relegated into a second order issue that usually escapes thorough analysis. Therefore, we claim that more often than not (for exceptions, among others, see Chatterton et al., 2013; De Angelis, 2017; Kioupkiolis, 2018) contemporary definitions discussed by the literature of commons lack the contentious contextualization which attributes to *commoners* the perspective of social antagonism. And it is precisely due to this absence that the literature on commons alone is incapable of comprehensively analyzing the participants in the post-2011 conjuncture.

Mobilization and Commoning

Over the years, the growing interest of social movement studies around popular struggles could be roughly crystallized in two main approaches: a) structural approaches which highlight movements' ability to mobilize people, run campaigns, raise awareness, challenge authorities and raise claims; b) New Social Movements theories that emphasize movements' transformative dynamics in the everyday settings, either by acting outside the typical institutional channels (Flesher Fominaya, 2017), or by underlying their class elements and their role in producing alternative socio-spatial, cultural and symbolic meanings (Castells, 1983; Melucci, 1996). Nevertheless, both approaches paid excessive attention to mobilization. Indeed, from the crisis' outbreak, anti-austerity mobilizations articulated claims around economic and political aspects of the crisis (Diani and Kousis, 2014; Flesher Fominaya and Hayes, 2017). Taking for instance the labor sector, various examples can be found in all S.E. countries, where unions mobilized their constituents in strikes and workplace sit-ins (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2014).

At the same time though, street politics have been complemented with the emergence and diffusion of numerous solidarity structures, actively providing informal welfare services to the affected population (Kousis and Paschou, 2017). In the labor sector, the re-appropriation and self-management of the Vio.Me and RiMaflow factories based on collective decision-making systems present only the tip of the iceberg among the numerous self-managed cooperatives emerged within this period. Against traditional social movement approaches, recent alternative theorizations highlighted that contention is endorsed in the practice of non-contentious actions (Forno and Graziano, 2014, p. 13) and underscored that actions acquire political importance per se, without necessarily addressing specific power holders (Bosi and

Zamponi, 2015, p. 13). In line with such works, we argue that conceiving mobilization only in terms of participation in claim-making contentious repertoires overshadows the actual practice of social change through everyday practices; the prefigurative dimension that is vividly highlighted in commons' literature.

The emphasis of the critical commons' literature on the concept of commoning has shifted the attention of various works in the field towards the matrix of social practices that are put forward by a collectivity in (re)creating, sustaining and (re)producing a commons. Thinking of the several grassroots organizations of solidarity and self-provisioning in the S.E, the concept of commoning can assist us in signaling the interplay of the repertoires of co-ownership, co-production and co-management of resources and spaces (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014; Chatterton and Pusey, 2020). Following such a perspective, a focus on the social practices developed by collective kitchens or grassroots food networks can help us to draw out the implications of alternative values and ethics in transforming the production and distribution of food (Rakopoulos, 2016). Similarly, in exploring the alternative educational practices that have been generated by various solidarity projects, we can provide nuanced understandings of education as a good or resource collectively produced and governed by the particular communities (Pechtelidis and Kioupkiolis, 2020). This is the case also for the grassroots practices of healthcare provisioning that have been evolved by participants in social clinics. Such initiatives made it possible to provide open and equal access to primary health-care services without discriminations (Teloni and Adam, 2018), incorporating in this way the aspects of community management and sharing in healthcare provision. Eventually, regarding worker cooperatives and recuperated factories such as Vio.Me and RiMaflow, an investigation

of their social practices can offer crucial insights for refiguring labor as a collectively produced resource and a socially produced value.

Still, although it is crucial to investigate social change through the prefigurative dimension of commons, it is essential not to underplay the variations of collective action repertoires only within each project or, at best, in their relationship with other similar projects. In short, the characterization of social practices along a synchronic axis can capture the ways subjects relate and interact with each other, as well as the rules and norms that inform the ways they understand their activities within a particular system of meaning. But while such a focus enables the researcher to capture the rules and norms informing commoning practices, inclusive of its subjects' positions and objects, it cannot be considered exhaustive. For us, then, there is also the need to foreground the diachronic dimension of a practice, 'whether in terms of how they have emerged, or in terms of how they are being contested and/or transformed' (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 141). To put it bluntly, not all commons are necessarily evolved by or produce antagonistic political imaginaries. In this respect, attention to the context and processes of collective mobilization that (re)activate antagonisms bears the potential to enhance explanations of commoning and deepen their accounts on the dynamics of social change.

Abstraction stage

This section presents the synthetic explanatory logic that emerges from the re-articulation of the two theories. To be sure, we do not suggest a general mixture of the two literatures. Social movement studies and the literature of commons neither analyze the same subject matter, nor do they focus on same research questions. Moreover, social movements and the commons are distinct entities, which often have different

starting and ending points (De Angelis, 2017, p. 364), and follow similar but not identical trajectories (Miller, 2005, p. 7). What we argue for, nevertheless, is that the development of numerous commoning and solidarity structures in S.E, in parallel to the dismantling of the welfare state, should be seen as cases of continuity of the wave of anti-austerity mobilizations. Thus, a synthetic framework allows us to draw a more fully-fledged account of the dynamics and trajectories of collective action in this particular context.

Social Movements, Social Movement Organizations and the Commons

Social movement studies may be well-benefited by approaching the emergence of solidarity structures as sites of commoning, where new sites of struggle opted for the preservation or creation of a commons. Departing from contentious origins and incorporating the characteristics of social antagonism, these organizations move beyond the traditional explanations offered for SMOs (i.e. the action mobilization of their constituents). They evolve into social systems of commoning, where people shape their daily lives collectively based on their shared needs and produce new commonwealth forged through relations of equality, trust, care and mutual aid (Gibson-Graham et al., 2018, pp. 16-18; Grasseni, 2014a).

At the same time, by incorporating the structural aspects of SMOs in the literature of the commons, the latter acquires a more defined shape. Instead of deriving explanations of concrete phenomena from abstract concepts of a general commons' theory, the denotation of commons in terms of their organizational structure, decision-making system, networking models and use of resources, deepens the level of analysis and reveals important insights regarding the democratic and strategic quality of their internal operation. Moreover, attention to the different sociopolitical environments that

surrounds the birth and reproduction of commons grants coherent explanations regarding the specificities and different trajectories of commoning projects.

Activists and Commoners

The activist status suggested by social movement studies underlines the political dimension of the actors involved in social movement activities, which is mostly realized through their participation in protest events. Although the importance of such definition is not contested, it offers a partial reading of the characteristics of subjects in the S.E crisis setting. From our point of view, an activist's identity is realized in the everyday reality of collective action, with the public raise of claims being only one of its aspects. In this context, the literature of the commons complements the activist idiom by emphasizing the participation of subjects in the decision-making process and administration of the everyday life of the commoning and solidarity projects with reference to the principle of equality. This engenders a dimension of civic learning within and through the new ways of doing and being in common (Biesta, 2011), against social exclusions and the privilege of enlightened leaders (Kioupkiolis, 2017). Indeed, activism in the S.E anti-austerity mobilizations has been connected with a radical notion of citizenship, departing from an anti-oligarchic perspective (Gerbaudo, 2017). This notion of citizenship grants a central role to the subject in the process of social transformation, through the active realization of the latter's subjectivity in everyday life. In this sense, aspects of care, trust, mutuality and equity become key features of the activist identity (Grasseni, 2014b). Crucially, the above key ethico-political values do not stem from a neoliberal civic understanding of altruism; rather, they are based on social antagonism and the ways people responded to neoliberal austerity.

The notion of commoner, on the other hand, reflects the member of a community who collectively participates in the production and governance of commons. Although such a characterization sheds light on subjects' exposure to processes of decision-making and administration of the everyday life of the community, it says little regarding the political character of such praxis, which was the cornerstone of the grassroots initiatives developed amidst the crisis. In light of the social movement studies, which contextualize activists' characteristics, it is important to bring into the discussion the instituting dimension (*the political*) of the social practices we seek to analyze (Laclau and Zac, 1994). Thus, beyond the investigation of alternative practices and relations, it is also important to emphasize the very contestation of the fundamental norms, which sustain and (re)produce the existing order, through decision and act (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, pp. 103-132). Analyzing the contentious origins of commoners within the crisis-ridden S.E context, allows us to identify the different political trajectories of the subjects, explore the various forms of participation depending on each political tradition, understand the continuity and the signification of their actions, and ultimately (re)politicize the governance of community life and resources.

Mobilization and Commoning

The end of mobilization in the S.E crisis context neither follows the periodization of the anti-austerity campaign (Kousis, 2014), nor it coincides with the decrease of civil disobedience actions (Sergi and Vogiatzoglou, 2013). Rather, it actively takes place in the everyday settings through (often locally-oriented) collective struggles and initiatives that create alternatives for the social reproduction of resources affected by state and market enclosures (Arampatzi, 2017a, 2018). By emphasizing alternative social practices as a horizon of lived social change in the here and now, the literature

of the commons complements the claim-based orientation of social movement studies and frames the characteristics pointed by recent alternative theorizations (Bosi and Zamponi, 2015; Forno and Graziano, 2014; Kousis and Paschou, 2017).

However, the identity of such practices should not be taken for granted, assuming that commoning will necessarily result in a post-capitalist or '*progressive-alternative*' social transformation. In fact, social movement studies urge us to remain attentive to the entire domain of politics and changes in subjectivities (motives, attribution of meaning and ideas due to moral shocks, proximity, etc.) in a particular historical context. Hence, it allows us to specify collective action practices with some precision independently of the primary field of meaning (i.e. specific to a community or SMO or to a broader network, etc.) within which they operate. Taken as a whole, we argue that the study of creative human agency and its relational dynamics, if it aspires to move beyond rationalistic, positivistic and teleological accounts, ought to focus more on the contextualized interpretations, through which individuals become actors and, in turn, these actors construct novel experiences and practices.

<p>Table 2</p> <p>Dimensions of collective action</p>			
Concepts and Dimensions	Social Movements Studies	Commons	South European Synthesis
<p>Dimensions and models of organization</p>	<p><i>Social Movement</i>: public and sustained challenge addressing specific powerholders by individuals and organizations.</p> <p><i>SMOs</i>: formal and/or informal political organizations, which aim for the mobilization of its constituents and their participation in different movements.</p>	<p><i>Commons</i>:</p> <p><u>Institutionalist</u>: CPRs</p> <p><u>Critical</u>: communities for the preservation, co-production and co-management of resources and/or goods.</p>	<p>Constellation of formal and informal communities: <i>a</i>) has its roots in the anti-austerity movements, <i>b</i>) engages with alternatives in the coproduction and provision of services and goods to meet basic needs.</p>
<p>Type of core agent</p>	<p><i>Activist</i>: member of a social movement community defined on the ground of loose participation in protest events, campaigns, SMOs and other SM activities.</p>	<p><i>Commoner</i>: member of a community or social network that co-produce or share resources substantial for their livelihood.</p>	<p>A radical notion of citizenship that raises politicized claims to commoning and democratic politics, constituted on the ground of antagonistic relations and renegotiated within the plural social practices, collective interests and needs of the community.</p>
<p>Political and social dimensions of agency-practices</p>	<p><i>Mobilization</i>: alignment of interests and resources to take political action: sustained challenges to authorities, participate in protest events, raise claims and demands towards institutions.</p>	<p><i>Commoning</i>:</p> <p><u>Institutionalist</u>: ensemble of practices used by a community in claiming ownership and governing a commons.</p> <p><u>Critical</u>: lived social change - the matrix of social relations and practices that inform and is being informed by the coproduction of the natural, social and cultural resources within a community.</p>	<p>A <i>political praxis</i> based on common interests and needs that adopts hands-on repertoires and engages in struggles to re-appropriate social production and reproduction from below in the here and now.</p>

Commensuration

In this final stage of our theoretical re-articulation (the movement from the abstract to the concrete in four steps) we show how such synthesis renders the post-2011 grassroots projects emerged in the S.E. context more intelligible. Instead of approaching social clinics or Vio.Me and RiMaflow factories as a generic or autopoietic form of commons, and thus present a linear and affirmative understanding of these collective endeavors, we draw our attention to a more movement-like analysis of their precise characteristics (Table 2-‘Dimensions and models of organization’). By incorporating the meso-level of analysis, we emphasize the organizational aspect of these initiatives and study them as organizations with defined procedures, aims, resources and coalitions that have developed in the aftermath of powerful movements, followed distinct trajectories, experienced various internal conflicts and formed diverse political alignments (Kokkinidis, 2015). Thinking for instance the case of Vio.Me and the role of resources, we can focus on how the change of production brought Vio.Me closer to the local community (Malamidis, 2018). Similarly, by paying attention to the medicines’ exchange and the connection of social clinics with different political actors, we are able to explore the formation of different networks and their role in preserving or affecting the autonomy of each clinic (Teloni and Adam, 2018).

Although these structural aspects provide crucial insights for the formation of such initiatives, attention to their everyday operation brings to light their prefigurative dimension. With respect to the occupied factories of Vio.Me and RiMaflow, we can see how the workers’ shared needs and self-management set the foundations for a new understanding of the content of their labor. Setting both the factories’ facilities and the decision-making model open in use for the local communities, the two factories constitute exemplary sites where social transformation is negotiated on practical terms

on a daily basis. Similarly, the provision of primary healthcare services by social clinics to everyone in need, offers a practical example of community management in the provision of primary healthcare.

As we have shown earlier, the process of subjects' formation in the S.E context can be better understood by taking into account both the antagonistic and the performative dimension of individual participation in such politics. Hence, this double movement involves the public contestation of neoliberal austerity practices, as well as the political processes that seek to establish new rules and institutions in the name of horizontal relations, common rights and community sharing. Understanding processes of political subjectivation through a synthetic prism, allows us to capture the process that actors identify themselves with certain struggles (Arampatzi, 2017a), and ensures that their content is based on specific sets of social relations, practices and values (Table 2- 'Type of core agent'). This perspective allows us both to highlight those contentious characteristics of Vio.Me and RiMaflow workers related to their vivid involvement in the anti-austerity mobilizations and be attentive on the 'process of becoming' a subject through acting out alternative imaginaries and establishing novel social practices (Forno and Graziano, 2019).

Similarly, in the case of social clinics, this synthetic lens enables us to trace the antagonistic elements of their collective militancy against the neoliberalization of healthcare provision through hospital blockades, participation in the square movement and broader anti-austerity mobilizations (Teloni and Adam, 2018). At the same time, it draws particular attention to the exploration of subject formation through the management of health as a common good at the community level. Such a synthetic view explains how the role of heterogeneous actors, e.g. the participants of K136 and

PAH initiatives, is not limited only in protesting against the water privatization or eviction processes, but it is also extended to incorporate their active engagement in the collective management of urban space in particular, and their desire for active participation in democratic politics more broadly (Biesta, 2011).

Within the crisis context, actors started to prefigure alternative practices, relationships and imaginaries, which were against and practically beyond the neoliberal ordering: this was realized by the combination of mobilization with elements of commoning. The cases of the recuperated factories in Greece and Italy are illustrative in showing how this combination took place. Started as typical workers' struggles by claiming back unpaid salaries and demanding not to lose their jobs, the cases of Vio.Me and RiMaflow are paradigmatic instances of the contemporary labor movement. Participation in protests and strikes, actions for the cancelation of the auction of their plants, the actual imprisonment of one worker and, of course, the seizing of the means of production, set the process of mobilization at the epicenter. At the same time, our synthetic approach also pays attention to the very process through which the workers appropriate their work in common and transform the former sterile workplace into an open infrastructure for social movements and the local community in the urban landscape (Kokkinidis, 2015; Roussos et al., 2018). Here, the 'political and social dimensions of agency' (see Table 2) are in a constant interaction. This involves a to-and-fro movement between *praxis* - the free action in which individuals are empowered to realize and release their creative capacities - and *poiesis*, a social activity (material transformation) that is socially realized and socially beneficial.

Conclusions

The onset of the recent economic crisis was welcomed by large anti-austerity protests across the S.E countries. The development of the crisis boosted further the welfare retrenchment and brought to the forefront solidarity and commoning projects, such as self-organized workers' collectives, markets without middlemen, social solidarity clinics and pharmacies providing bottom-up services that used to be hitherto provided by the state and the market. In this paper, we have argued that a synthetic re-articulation of social movement studies and the literature of the commons can assist us in elaborating a more capacious account of the developments in the everyday reality and grassroots politics of S.E.

In our effort to sharpen our understanding of the existing political configurations vis-à-vis grassroots politics, we examined the explanatory capacity of three core analytical categories in each of the two literatures by pitching them against each other and combining their logics: 1) social movement and SMOs-commons, 2) activists-commoners and 3) mobilization-commoning. The framework we propose here is neither intended as a general heuristic in explaining any form of contemporary collective action around the globe nor does it assume that the overlap between social movements and commons is total. Rather, it is a historically and spatially specific framework that can be proved useful in drawing a comprehensive understanding of the grassroots collective action in the European South. Nonetheless, we see it carrying both analytical and normative implications for the study of collective action and social change in a broader setting, granting that its application remains extremely attentive to the given empirical context. Analytically, we contend that our synthesis serves to highlight: a) the much more plural and more lived patterns of political organization; b) a more radical notion of political subjectivity focusing on both the

antagonistic/instituting dimension and the productive aspect of alternative norms and modes of being and governing; c) the importance of the prefigurative dimension in making sense of social change and agency.

This approach involves shifting the understanding of such struggles as claim-based, reactive or defensive towards a more critical account that addresses them as a *political praxis*; an act that seeks to transform social relations and practices and create an alternative to capitalism. In other words, the normative orientation we pointed out earlier arises in this particular move of projecting alternative ideals into the object of study in an effort to formulate a fuller critical explanation of what counts as politics. To conclude, we claim that the performative character of contemporary forms of collective action that we see unfolding in S.E calls us to rethink the impact of human agency on social structures. Furthermore, it suggests that it is only by foregrounding a dimension of lived social change within and through such projects, that we can begin to unravel the transformative potential of human agency in this specific conjuncture.

Paper 2: Grassroots collective action within and beyond institutional and state solutions: The (re-)politicization of everyday life in crisis-ridden Greece.

Abstract

This paper broadens and deepens the debates on the recent protests against austerity in Greece. The paper begins by investigating how the global crisis is understood, embodied and contested through the participatory forms of collective action and political organization in Greece. Secondly, it highlights transformations in the political behaviors and lived experiences of the subjects who participated in the recent and on-going wave of anti-austerity mobilizations in Greece. Finally, it emphasizes the (re-)politicization of everyday life through the commons, which is a process grounded in the establishment of novel and open spaces of solidarity and trans-local collective action within and beyond institutional and state solutions. Building on these considerations, it is argued that the recent forms of everyday collective action have played a crucial role in challenging the prevailing neoliberal crisis politics, while at the same time are raising key issues for progressive governments and other institutional agents.

Keywords: commons, crisis, politicization, Greece, Syriza, squares

Introduction

This paper explores the recent mobilizations that occurred in Greece in the immediate aftermath of the first wave of anti-austerity protests and, in particular, the Squares' Movements. Focusing on selected events and processes that took place in the period between 2010 and 2015, especially the proliferation of anti-austerity struggles and the trajectory of Syriza from the beginning of the Greek crisis until the referendum of 2015, it endeavors to analyze key features of the ongoing wave of collective action in crisis-ridden Greece. Moreover, the investigation of the parallel operations of these two sets of actors involves the construction of a more dynamic account between structure, agency and power (Howarth, 2013).

Connecting social movement literature with selected strands of social and political theory, I use a form of retroductive reasoning to make sense of the proliferation of grassroots commoning ventures in Greece after the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, pp. 18-48). From this point of view, this paper does not seek to identify general laws about the political processes under investigation (Goodin and Tilly, 2006). Instead, it problematizes a specific set of social and political phenomena and then endeavors to provide an explanation that renders more intelligible the relationships between the transformations of the repertoires of collective action within the context of crisis-ridden Greece, and the life-course patterns of the participants in the anti-austerity protest cycle. In short, by developing a genealogical account of the anti-austerity mobilizations in this particular period, I seek to capture the relationship between, on the one hand, the new repertoires of collective action and, on the other hand, the politicization and re-politicization of everyday life. However, to understand this shift I also construct a detailed narrative of the conditions and processes by which new relationships, social practices, meanings and alternative

pathways emerged, and were then reproduced and transformed through political decision, difference and collective agency. In exploring these relationships and constructing this narrative, I also critically explain the opening of new commoning sites, where people shape their daily life collectively on the basis of their shared needs and at the same time produce new common wealth forged within relations of equality, care and mutual aid. In this regard, I suggest that the theory of the commons can expand the analytical scope of the study of contemporary collective action.

The first part of the article stresses that the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations, from the beginning of the Greek crisis in 2010 until the evacuation of Aganaktismenoi squares (Indignants' events) in the summer of 2011, articulated new interpretations and representations of the crisis politics from below. This process, unfolded and extended in both the economic and political spheres, and shaped by various responses to it, is grounded upon collective agency and discourses against neoliberalism and the current forms of representative democracy (Knight and Stewart, 2016; Theodossopoulos, 2014). In the second section, which examines the *legacy* of the Aganaktismenoi, I argue that the dynamics of such mobilizations have catalyzed a significant transformation of the forms of collective action that emerged in its aftermath. More precisely, I claim that the ongoing wave of counter-austerity grassroots politics in Greece is mainly manifested through the institution of commoning ventures and social solidarity networks. In this sense, as I elaborate in the third part, the everyday repertoires and articulatory practices of these self-organized projects are shaping a (re-)politicization process from below, which opens up a horizon for a social transformation that will not, primarily, be institutionally driven. Having reflected upon the Greek case in the period after the formation of Syriza's government,

the closing section of the article intervenes in the timely and pressing efforts to rethink the complex interrelations between institutional agents and grassroots movements.

Theory, Methods, and Sources

This article seeks to delve deeper into the interplay between processes of signification and social transactions by highlighting the dialectical relationship between structure and agency (Tilly, 2002, pp. 3-14). Here I draw upon poststructuralist political theory, and its concern with ontological reflection, to render visible the underlying structures and the different modes of *being* of the basic explanatory concepts that shape and structure empirical investigation (Howarth, 2013). The ontological starting-point of my inquiry is that social structures are incomplete systems of meaningful practices or ‘symbolic orders’, which are the products of political decision and action. A further axiom of the approach is that during moments of crisis the core characteristics – what I term the ‘contingent essence’ - of such symbolic orders are made visible. This void enables subjects to construct new relations, meanings, discourses and practices within the situations in which they find themselves. Thus, crisis makes possible and discloses a novel horizon of possibilities for the emergence of political subjectivities and new political agents seeking to bring about social change.

In this approach, then, social practices are constituted and embedded within a relational context of meaningful systems and processes. This ontological framework signals the centrality of meaning to collective action practices and foregrounds the notion of (re-)politicization, which is a vital component of my argument. The concepts of politicization and re-politicization are used here to describe a practice of political articulation, which enables the researcher to name something as political. The concept captures a process that can be defined as the staging or reactivation of an issue in the

public political debate. In turn, this reactivation opens up a space for alternative political action and the creation of new social imaginaries (Luhtakallio, 2012; Palonen, 2003a). At this level of analysis, I thus move from an understanding of politics as a domain or set of institutions towards a broader and more inclusive understanding in terms of its content (Hay, 2007). Politicization and re-politicization are thus used in this context to define the processes of inventing alternative ways and practices of performing and enacting politics, which arise amidst the ‘normal’ and sedimented course of things.

In order to create a more concrete account of the objects of this investigation, my arguments are based on individual-level data I obtained through participant observation and fieldwork research in Athens, between 2013 and 2018. The analysis is based on two sources of individual-level data: the first part consists of a series of tape-recorded in-depth interviews with 30 participants in the Aganaktismenoi occupation of Syntagma Square (12 women and 18 men). The second part builds on data taken from a protest survey that was conducted among the participants in the three days of mobilization ‘*for democracy and against austerity in Europe*’, which took place in Syntagma Square in February 2015. Conducting on-the-spot interviews with demonstrators is a method already used by several researchers in the field of social movements studies when emphasis is placed on attitudinal and meaningful aspects of protest events (Stekelenburg et al., 2012). Inspired by the aforementioned studies, my fieldwork strategy follows a zone-sector sampling of the participants in the three stationary mass rallies. Two teams of two interviewers covered the main zones of the assemblage in the three days of the mobilization (the square and the road in front of the Greek parliament). Starting from the outer edge of each zone, the teams conducted interviews with every fifth respondent in order to reduce biased selection. The study

consists of 307 face-to-face interviews with the use of structured questionnaires and the response rate was over 90 per cent. The age of the respondents ranged from eighteen to seventy-five years old (average 41). 54 per cent of the interviewees were female and 46 per cent male.

Framing Grassroots Collective Action

Collective action and social movements considered to be ‘thick’ political phenomena that unfold in a structural interaction with social, political and economic factors, and which are grounded on the institutional and relational fabric of societies (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007). In this respect, to analyze the anti-austerity protest cycle in Greece, it is important to attend to the most pressing issues and puzzles that actors had to confront in the beginning of the crisis. While an approach based on the analysis of political opportunities structures could be used to explain some aspects of the emergence and formation of the Greek anti-austerity mobilizations (McAdam et al., 2001), a different set of parameters is needed in order to frame and problematize the crisis conjuncture that the events surrounding Aganaktismenoi have brought into play. Such parameters could partly derive from the effectiveness of collective action to transform, crystallize and produce meaning and knowledge. Following such a perspective, it is stressed that both the events of collective action, as well as the actors that carried them out, are involved in a constant process of creating and re-shaping meanings (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 613). Thus, initially, instead of a purely theoretical approach, which would involve the devising of a particular theory to explain facts, I adopt a problem-driven framework that investigates how the different solutions to the Greek crisis have been constructed, ‘but also how these different solutions result from a specific form of problematization’ (Foucault, 1997, pp. 115-119). To emphasize the links between

processes of signification and the dynamics of collective action, my analysis in this section draws also on reflections from a series of in-depth interviews, conducted between 2013-2018 and included 30 participants in the Aganaktismenoi occupation of Syntagma square.

The many events of collective action over these years in Greece are situated in a context where dominant elites mobilized fiscal debt as an opportunity for a massive restructuring of the political, social and economic reality of the country. Since the beginning of the Greek crisis in 2010, European political elites, successive governments, mainstream politicians and media constructed the Greek problem as one of stabilizing the country's weak economy; regulating and modernizing the hypertrophic and ineffective public sector; providing the ground for necessary reforms to build a globally competitive market; and so on. According to these agents, the only solution was one of combining a set of recessionary measures, such as wage and pension cuts, cuts on welfare state, increase in direct tax rates, etc. This kind of problematization, supplemented with a 'there is no alternative' dogma, sought to depoliticize the causes as well as the effects of the neoliberal crisis politics.

As a result, since 2010, Greek governments implemented massive austerity plans following the dictates of global markets and international organizations, as the only viable scenario to exit the crisis. The long-established pathogeneses of the capitalist transition in one of the most affected south European economies, which have already impinged on citizens' material conditions (living standards, unemployment rates, housing and working conditions), were combined with the intensity of the new socio-economic measures and challenged the coherence of the social fabric. Basic democratic, labour and human rights were defied or even crushed, while political institutions refused to engage in any debate about citizens demands and the state reacted

all the more repressively against popular dissent and collective action. However, in parallel with the dogmatic implementation of the neoliberal austerity agenda, sedimented political oppositions and logics have also been reactivated (Laclau, 1990a, p. 146). The economic and political dislocations provided political opportunities and revealed significant threats that shaped the conditions for the emergence of the wave of mobilizations against the global financial crisis in Greece. It was in this conjuncture that an anti-austerity protest wave, which was kick-started in Greece in 2010, came to its peak in the spring and summer of 2011 (from the 25th of May up until the evacuation of the square by police forces on the 30th of July) with the so called *Aganaktismenoi* squares. *Aganaktismenoi* echoed the dissent against austerity policies, precarity and the turbulent degradation of standard of living, and expressed widespread disaffection with the political system and disagreement with the weakening of the institutional body of democracy. For example, reflecting on her motivation to participate in *Aganaktismenoi*, one of my interviewees put it this way: ‘The movement of Syntagma square placed the real dimensions of the problem that we were beginning to face, the exploitation and inequality in every aspect of our life’ (Int.1).

Within the occupied public space, *Aganaktismenoi* set in motion protest camps across major squares of the country. They instituted popular assemblies and prefigured alternative ways of being and practicing in common based on participatory and deliberative conceptions of democracy. This was epitomized in the passionate words and story told by one of the participants: ‘All those thoughts and feelings that I was experiencing in the general assembly are unrepeatable. I felt the need to express myself and to share emotions and thoughts with everyone. It triggered me to participate and act in common with, until that time, strangers’ (Int.2). In fact, a double logic begins to emerge here. On the one hand, the framing processes that unfolded through these novel

schemes of political action affected the very struggle, emotions and representations of the subjects. On the other hand, they also played a key role in the construction of political boundaries by interacting with other political agents, including the state, media, political parties, bystanders and public opinion (McAdam and Sewell., 2001, p. 120; Tarrow, 2011, pp. 142-144). The words of two of the participants can help us to illustrate this double process better:

‘I was totally neutral before, not to say I felt disfavor with all these stories, demonstrations, protests etc. At Syntagma, I participated in manifestations, in riots against the police and I am still active’(Int.3).

‘Most of the participants had never experienced oppression like that in the past. They didn’t know. We didn’t imagine that they [the police] were going to hit us, because we were peaceful and we did not provoke them. It was extraordinary for many of us that they could behave like that. Some participants, who believe in conspiracies, in order to explain this violence still argue that many of the riot policemen weren’t Greeks, but a special German troop. And media changed the whole story; we are the bad now! Police and politicians just do their jobs’ (Int. 4).

As the foregoing suggests, through their engagement in the *Aganaktismenoi* mobilizations, participants shaped their reality and created alternative frames and cultural codes which have been confronted with several instances of the predominant system. In this movement we can see the onset of the process of (re-)politicization, which was introduced earlier in this article. As Theodosopoulos notes, ‘indignation with austerity operates as an alternative “sense-making” practice that challenges

dominant - presented as “transparent” discourses about economic recovery’ (Theodossopoulos, 2014, p. 492). Even more directly, in the occupied squares and through the everyday participation of citizens in several assemblies and thematic groups, participants had the opportunity to locate, determine and realize the actual nature and size of the political and economic effects of the crisis. The repertoires and discourses that emanated from and through these egalitarian practices broadened the frame of the anti-austerity resistance and targeted their critique beyond the economic sphere. One of the interviewees, a moderate supporter of the conservative Nea Dimokratia for many years until his participation in the squares, encapsulated this as follows: ‘What was born in Syntagma was the demand of direct democracy, the participation of citizens in public affairs. The anti-memorandum demand was the uterus which gave birth to the other claims, which, for me, are the most influential’ (Int.5). Thus, Aganaktismenoi brought into the epicenter the very nature and meaning of contemporary democracy. Indeed, there was a realization amongst a wide part of the Greek society that the situation they were experiencing was not merely a financial crisis but even more emphatically a political crisis. The economic grievances were transformed, rearticulated and mobilized in a wider political process, which was mainly targeted at the functioning of the neoliberal order: democratic deficits, social inequality and injustice, labor precariousness, technocratization of governance as well as citizens’ exclusion from decision making and democratic control.

The above characteristics should not be addressed as mere malfunctions of modern democratic governance. Rather, as several political theorists have indicated, governance in western liberal democracies is closely tied to neoliberal economics (e.g. favorable legislations, privatizations, liberalization and the deregulation of market and capital) (Crouch, 2011). Within this narrowly controlled governing process, state

institutions are tending to exclude citizens from any democratic practice and public debate on major social, political and economic issues - and hence the political contested character of the former is vanishing. As noted earlier, my intention here is to emphasize the role of politics in terms of its content and not as a domain. So the process of depoliticization I describe in this regard should not be understood as the end or absence of politics. Instead, it should be viewed as an inherently political act that attempts to displace politics to less politicized arenas, such as international organizations, expert committees, independent authorities, corporate interests, and so forth (Foster et al., 2014). By grounding these discussions in the Greek context I argue that, whereas one cannot oversee the rich political activity of grassroots movements in Greece during and after the military dictatorship, a significant part of society, especially in the 1990s and up until the beginning of the crisis, was gripped by the post-political consensus around neoliberal policies. Since 1974, in the post-junta period, the political landscape was dominated by two main parties, namely the social-democratic PASOK and conservative Nea Dimokratia. In the 1990s, considering also the entry of Greece to the European Economic Community, the country experienced increasing wealth and development. Accordingly, the two main parties, which have rotated in power until 2011, while governing together for over three years during the crisis (November 2011-January 2015), have been consistently championing and implementing a neoliberal modernization of the state and economy. During this period, Greek politics has entered an era of a technocratized consensual governance where crucial political issues have been gradually depoliticized, while the public discourse was largely dominated by an ethos of individualism and competitiveness (Karaliotas, 2017). However, as is evident in our previous analysis, the anti-austerity wave of mobilizations and more apparently *Aganaktismenoi* enabled subjects to demonstrate their disobedience within and through

the enactment of an antagonistic space, where the exclusive privilege of institutional actors to determine the future of the community has been questioned (Rancière, 2009).

As one of the interviewees mentioned in our discussion:

‘It [Aganaktismenoi] was breaking the routine and was creating a community out of nowhere. People, that under other circumstances would never meet each other in the street, stood there, talking in the general assembly and acting. The square enabled a different renegotiation of public space. Syntagma was not just a square that you were passing by. It was an occupied space, where life was constituted from the very beginning. People stood there, having a good time, knowing each other better, but the most significant was that they were discussing every issue relating to them: whether the canteen in the corner was to leave or if they demanded a constitutive revisionary parliament’ (Int.6).

It is here that the concepts of politicization and re-politicization can be invoked to understand the relational and differential configurations of elements that reactivate - and potentially constitute - new political identifications, practices and discourses. Against this background, and within the space of Syntagma square (and other squares across Greece too), antagonistic elements acquired discursive presence and were rearticulated in an emancipatory discourse. In this egalitarian field of political organization, ordinary people could be represented as the antagonistic pole that brought about the conditions of a rupture with the dominant neoliberal politics (Laclau, 2005c). Through this lens, these forms of protest allowed the re-articulation of subjects’ cognitive schemata and shaped shared understandings and meanings around the chance for a political change. As one of the participants concluded our interview with a spark of confidence: ‘The everyday life in the occupation shook me up. I was interacting with

other participants, I was watching a lot of people and I was considering that all of us together, collectively, we could make it' (Int.7).

The different ways in which the Greek crisis – as well as the various responses to it - have been problematized by the dominant institutional agents, on the one hand, and by a large part of the Greek society that participated or inspired by that first wave of mobilizations against crisis politics on the other, shed light on an active process of organization and confrontation of meanings. Seen from this perspective, it is argued that the practices and discourses emerged within Aganaktismenoi squares have extended the field of possible alternatives.

(Un)Making Everyday Politics

As I argued in the first section, the recent wave of mobilizations initially emerged against austerity policies. However, by reflecting upon the creativity of Aganaktismenoi collective action, this article attempted to rethink the latter as a broken time of democratic practicing, which has fueled a dramatic escalation of shared moral indignation and mobilized antagonistic consciousness that designated the deeper political dimension of the crisis. Research shows that moments of greater confrontation and escalating collective action, which unfold during periods of radical changes in sectors that instantly affect the social life of the community, could activate transformative dynamics (McAdam and Sewell., 2001). Such transformative events are defined as turning points in the field of collective action. In this line of argument, a wide body of literature on the contemporary forms of collective action has diagnosed notable innovations of the Indignants' and Occupy events (Della Porta, 2014c; Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014b). The most significant include: the invention and introduction of novel forms of resistance and self-

governance; the construction and making use of cross- and trans-national social-networking sites; and the institution of novel aspects of face to face interaction and political participation through practices and discourses which eventually transformed and affirmed a collective imaginary that weaved the conditions of an alternative paradigm of democracy.

With the evacuation of the occupied Syntagma square on the 30th of July 2011, mainstream media and political parties triumphantly declared the ‘death’ of the resistance movements and the victory of ‘common sense’ and consensual politics. Nevertheless, what these commentators were unable to predict was the intention of the participants to re-territorialize their struggles in a multiplicity of spheres in everyday public life. This decentralization shift of the social struggles effectively diffused the collective imaginary and counterhegemonic narratives born in the squares, and influenced individuals and grassroots movements to create several collective projects, whereby citizens are addressing the needs of their everyday life. These are, for this article, the contemporary sites of the commons.

This article seeks to approach the concept of the commons by reflecting on the everyday forms of collective action and on the implications that the latter takes in the field of emancipatory politics today. Hence, two important perspectives seem to underlie the centrality of the commons. On the one hand, the receding of a statist revolutionary strategy in the efforts of contemporary social movements to bring a change, while on the other the neoliberal subordination of every form of life and meaning to the logic of the market (Federici, 2011).

The latter perspective has been at the epicenter of commons-oriented scholarship that seeks to designate the privatization of urban and rural space as well as

the commodification of public life and social practices in contemporary neoliberalism (Blomley, 2008; Vasudevan et al., 2008). These phenomena are most often described under the term enclosures. From this standpoint, enclosures depict how neoliberal restructuring operates across a variety of scales, sites and networks in order to appropriate the common wealth and dis-embed it from the social relations' fabric. Enclosures are thus a key tool for the reproduction of modern capital as a social force, as well as one of the main strategies of the massive austerity plans that have been implemented in Greece. Through division, exploitation and exclusion, policies driven by a logic of enclosure aim to capture what is produced and lived in common, from resources and infrastructures to institutions (e.g. social healthcare and public housing), knowledge and culture, within the market order in an attempt to 'rationalize' economy and revitalize growth.

In such a framework, the discussion around the commons often revolves around practices and mobilizations for the conservation of common goods against marketization and commercialization. However, in light of the politicization of the ongoing Greek crisis by grassroots agents, as it has been elaborated so far, the struggles of the commons seem to underlie a more complex political process, namely one that constructs novel schemes of everyday life through collective production and sharing within, against and beyond neoliberal hegemony (De Angelis and Stavrides, 2010). To this end, the commons provides a language that can be used both to explain the forms of contemporary everyday collective action and to reframe the conflict between the commoning practices and neoliberal logics today, which in my view is a conflict that reactivates the political essence of everyday life issues. The analysis of the commons and the innovative patterns that the contemporary grassroots ventures are developing raise some crucial questions for my account, as it attempts to elaborate a better

understanding around social and political change: How can these novel forms of collective action make a difference? Are such struggles sufficient to produce the conditions of sociopolitical change? How is the emergence of a left-wing party like Syriza related to the anti-austerity collective action?

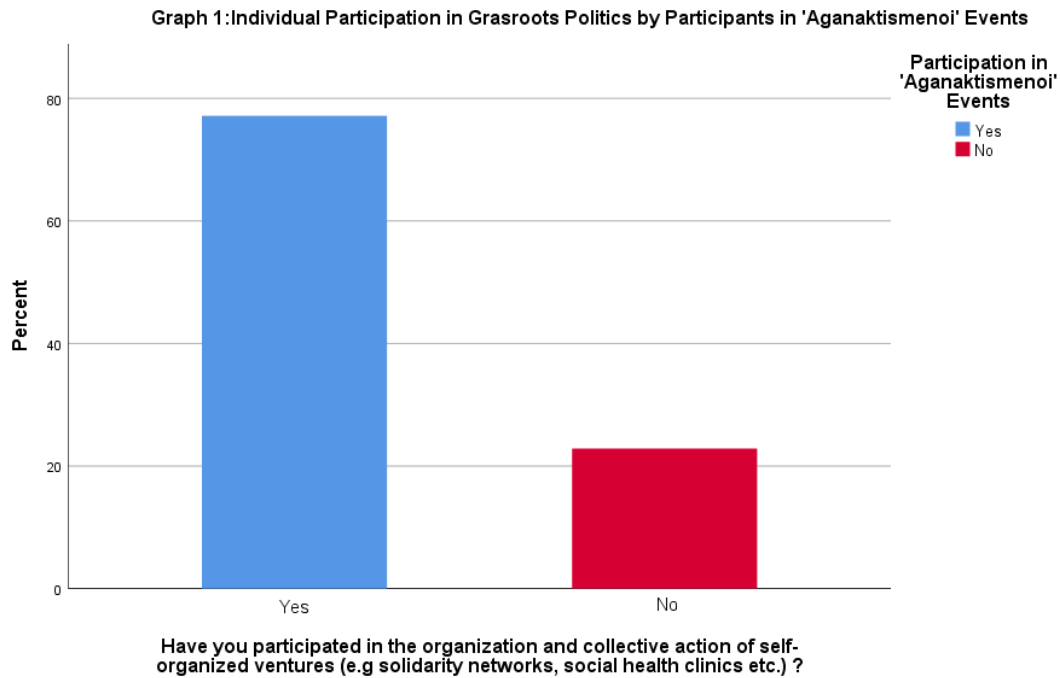
To get at these questions, I shall now present some preliminary findings from a unique protest survey conducted in the three-day mobilization ‘for democracy and against austerity in Europe’ on 11, 16 and 20 February 2015 in Syntagma square. The dates of these stationary mass rallies correspond to the urgent Eurogroup meetings regarding the new situation in Greece, after Syriza’s victory in the Greek national elections of January 2015. The call for the rally was mainly circulated through social media and informal activists’ networks, and its main slogan ‘We will not be blackmailed! Not one step back!’ illustrates the general orientations and motivations of the heterogeneous multitude gathered in Syntagma square during these days.

(Re)Inventing Democracy

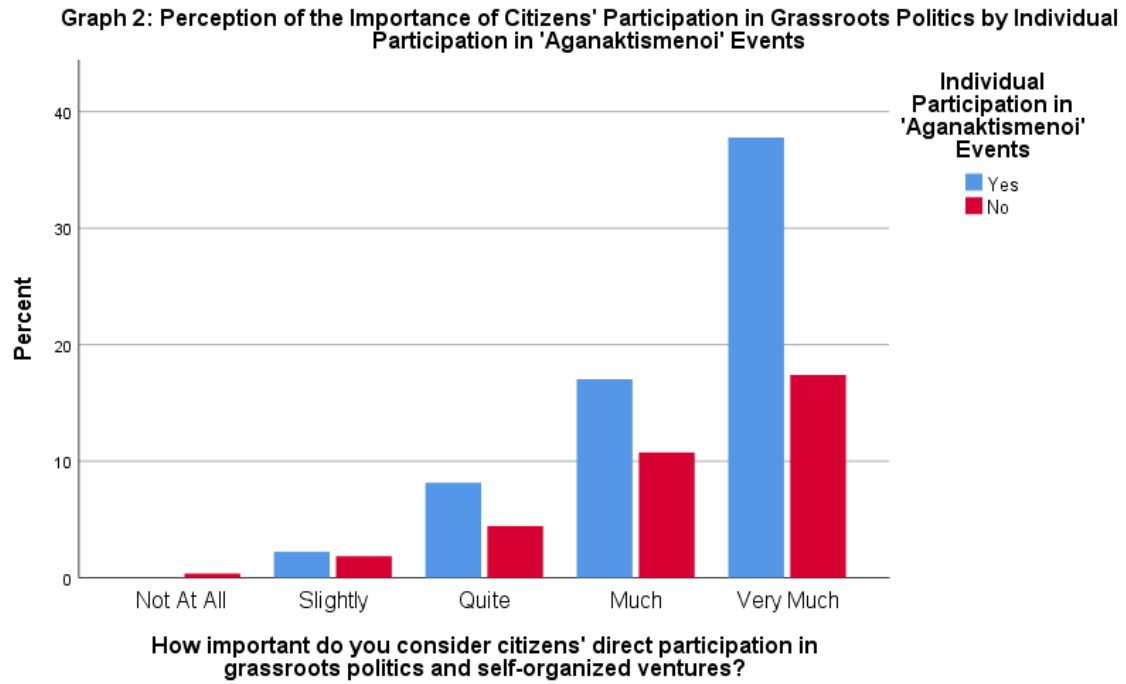
Since the 1970s a growing number of social movement scholars have been engaged in a discussion around the impacts of collective action and the characteristics that influence its success (Bosi et al., 2016). By drawing on these works, one can recognize three main broad clusters. To begin with, several scholars have focused on the impact of social movements on the life-course of insurgents involved in those mobilizations (Giugni, 2008). Moreover, scholarship has also emphasized different aspects of the cultural and behavioral transformation of actors (Earl, 2004). In short, a wide body of literature has been interested in collective action effects on the sociopolitical environment that the former unfolds (Burstein and Linton, 2002). Following such a perspective, I attempt to trace and determine the impact of the sites and struggles of the

commons in Greece on the life-course of active participants and other parts of the general population, as well as on their interactions with Syriza (as the most relevant, in terms of electoral power and affiliation, political party) and vice versa.

In this respect, it is widely argued that the squares' events and the grassroots collective action followed in their path have catalyzed changes in the Greek political system. Within a crisis context Greek citizens became less supportive of political elites in power and at the same time more open to adopting innovative and contentious repertoires of collective action. In the aftermath of the Indignants' squares there were many who rushed to dismiss their political dynamics and emancipatory potential, arguing that such forms of collective action sooner or later, confronting with the actuality of the 'real' politics, were doomed to dissolve within their own *anti-systemic* ambiguities. However, this paper insists that the actors, discourses and practices that developed during those collective action events did not disappear. Rather, they were diffused through the neighborhoods and workplaces, thus inspiring an alternative everyday production of social relationships (Graph 1 and Graph 2). In effect, they set in motion initiatives in collective self-organization and self-management across different fields of everyday-life: from local assemblies through self-management efforts by workers, social health clinics, media, art centres and solidarity initiatives (Arampatzi, 2017a).



Within the first months of 2012, the rapidly growing consequences of the bailout programs became more visible. Since the austerity agendas were introduced, the lower and middle classes have experienced a continuous degradation of their standard of living (increase of private debt, unemployment, income reductions, cuts in public spending and health services). The re-territorialization of struggles from the occupied squares to the neighborhoods and smaller towns of Greece, where the local community live, study, work and its everyday relationships are forged, enabled a more active engagement of people in grassroots collective action practices (Flesher Fominaya, 2017).



At this early stage, and focused on the micro-level of everyday life, local activists and residents put forward new local assemblies (or reframed those already in existence) in order to self-organize their struggles around their basic needs. Such initiatives were both widely inclusive and without a pre-established political orientation. The local assemblies developed innovative repertoires that were built around the sharing of space, needs, resources and services. By responding to the pressing needs of their participants and other citizens they deployed direct forms of collective action: they prevented house evictions, reconnected electricity, organized collective kitchens and distribution of agricultural products without middlemen, provided tutoring programs, and so on. These open and process-based initiatives reinvigorated commoning and solidarity practices, which emerged in the squares' events, and implanted them in the whole spectrum of everyday life.

At the same time, inspired by common struggles and the sharing of spaces, but now constituted on the basis of a larger collective purpose, a variety of solidarity initiatives, social centers and self-managed projects began to emerge. Their forms of

action were related to the most urgent issues and claims, as the latter have been addressed in previous mobilizations and local assemblies, and were adjusted to the most affected by the crisis' politics sectors. As a result, these commoning structures took the form of solidarity healthcare clinics; solidarity initiatives around housing and private debt issues; self-managed working projects; social and alternative economy cooperatives; social centers for migrants and refugees; and educational and cultural self-organized ventures. Each of these initiatives has set a main field of activities based on the collective needs and aims of active participants. However, far from being an intrinsic limit to their collective action framework, this has led them to structure more stable networks of collaboration, which are able to communicate their struggles and amplify their effectiveness across different areas where the various needs and activities of the community meet.

All these commoning and solidarity ventures started to explore new forms of living and practicing in common by rediscovering patterns of collaboration in shared spaces in order to organize their everyday struggles. Their main shared characteristics, in terms of collective action forms, include direct-democratic practices, self-organization and solidarity; deep political processes that enable a constant renegotiation and radicalization of concepts, such as the economic, the social, the collective and the personal. By adopting such a perspective, the commons could offer several insights important to the analysis provided in this paper. As I have already been stressed, the commons have a variety of meanings, which encompass common lands and resources to common rights and values. In short, the language of the commons is not restricted to things and resources, but also embraces collective practices and arrangements, processes of self-governance and self-provisioning designed to manage what is produced and lived in common.

In effect, the sites and struggles of commoning and solidarity are situated within the vast transformation of social relations of labor and capital instrumented in the context of the contemporary crisis. I thus, argue that the theorization of the commons offers useful analytical and theoretical tools in the effort to bring capitalism back into the ambit of collective action research. In other words, the commons emerges as a form of place-making (Blomley, 2008), which is a process that enables people to prefigure alternative practices, social relationships and imaginaries, in the here and now, within, against and beyond neoliberal ordering. From this point of view, the sites of commoning and solidarity in Greece constitute a living paradigm of social and political emancipation, while engendering a horizon of alternative institutions for societal transformation. The practices and discourses that have emanated within and through these commoning processes can be understood as a form of grassroots creativity and radical agency that breaks both with a past of political party brokerage and traditional social movement organization. In other words, the logics of politicization and re-politicization now appear as a dynamic process that is grounded upon the transformations of grassroots politics within and due to the crisis, and which establish an antagonistic dimension in the social space, while also referring to an alternative way of organizing everyday-life through collective action and direct democracy. However, as I stress above, both the early wave of mobilizations in the beginning of the crisis, as well as the ongoing (later wave of) everyday struggles of the commons, have produced outcomes in the field of institutional agency. I shall now endeavor to sketch out some preliminary reflections around the main interactions between grassroots collective action and Syriza.

Institutional Responses

In scholarship on collective action it is often argued that ‘no protest wave ends up where it began’ (Koopmans, 2004, p. 22). If this is the case, the most stated impact of the anti-austerity wave of mobilizations and struggles upon the Greek political landscape has been the case of Syriza. Syriza, a pre-existing coalition of the radical left with links in several pre-crisis struggles, managed to effectively channel the will of citizens for change and eventually, in 2015, to win the national elections. Accordingly, in considering these trends one could recognize an attempt by a formal political agent to institutionalize repertoires and discourses emanating from the popular struggles. In the immediate aftermath of the *Aganaktismenoi*, Syriza structured its public discourse around the main claims and concepts that arose from the squares. To refer briefly to the most prominent aspects of such discourse, beyond its anti-austerity agenda, Syriza was addressing the democratic deficits both of neoliberalism and of the existing political system. It thus criticized the corruption of political elites in power and embraced deliberative concepts of democracy and participatory decision making. At that moment, these counter-hegemonic visions seemed to express the potentiality of giving to a large part of society the means to advance its goals through an alternative social and economic change agenda within the existing institutional frameworks (Fernández-Savater et al., 2017, pp. 136-140). In this move, it can be argued that Syriza sought to include and articulate several ideas, discourses and repertoires, which emerged within and through collective struggles, into the field of mainstream (or even state) politics.

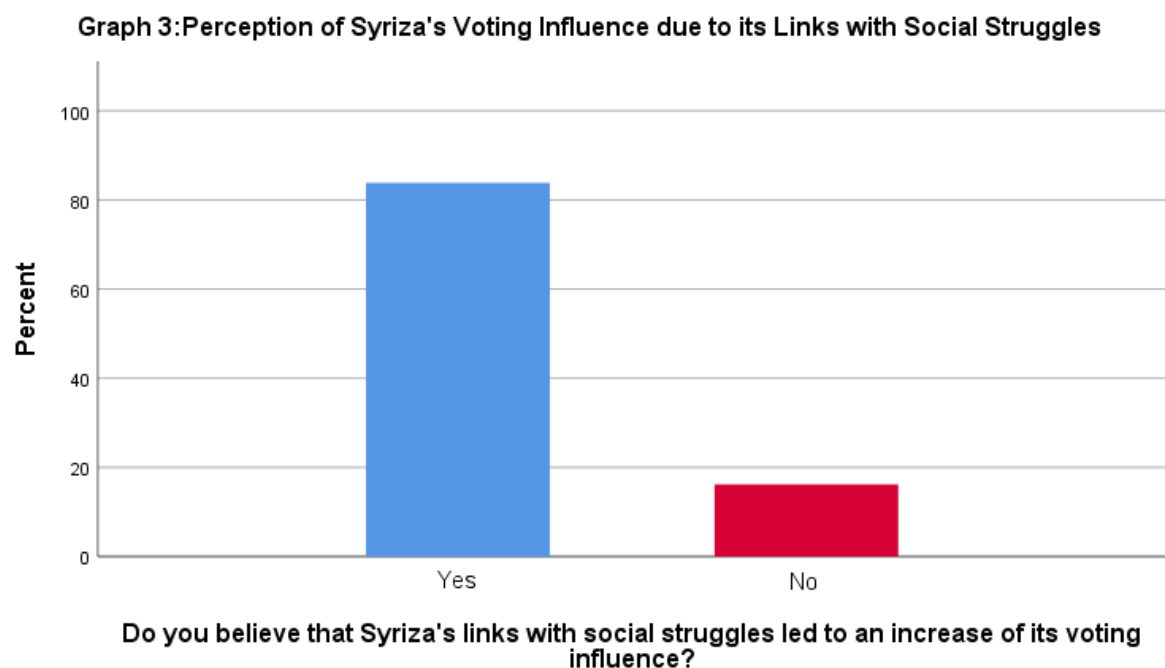
As a number of social movements scholars have asserted, drawing on different forms of citizen engagement in policy-making and governance, the institutionalization of collective action can underpin and augment prospects for the deepening of democracy (Meyer, 2007). The contemporary interest in citizen’s engagement in public

policy also suggests that where activists have access to sectors of governance, there is an improvement on decision making legitimacy and an increasing of space for claims of those previously marginalized (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). The upshot of these reflections is that the risk of co-option that social movements often face in their interaction with institutional agents and logics is not necessarily destructive for them. Rather, they could have a positive impact in policy implementation by strengthening liberal democratic institutions (Warren, 1992).

On the other side, however, several studies suggest that social movements have a greater capacity to produce effects and positive changes by remaining outside or against the dominant institutions. This means that the institutionalization of collective action is closely related to the decline of social movements and radical struggles (Kriesi, 1995). The resources that governmental and other institutional political actors have at their disposal serve both to disarm any radical potentiality of social movements' claims and also to ameliorate their position of power (Bosi, 2008, p. 243). Whether or not these actors open up channels for citizens' engagement is dependent either on the options that they have when they are confronted with popular struggles that threaten their legitimacy, or on the strategies they deployed in any given context (Piven and Cloward, 1977). However, even in the cases where they choose to facilitate citizens' participation and demands, the latter are framed by technocrats, state elites and party figures, whose interventions repress what is possible and designate what is desirable (Cornwall, 2004).

The grounding of these debates in the space and time of the empirical episode that this paper investigates, offers an opportunity to conclude by drawing some preliminary thoughts on the interplay between the space that institutional Left parties open up for citizens' engagement and the collective action of grassroots ventures. Since

the beginning of the crisis in 2010, Syriza adopted a militant anti-austerity stance. The political strategy of the party, publicly standing on the side of the protestors and with the active participation of the party youth and other members in the anti-austerity struggles during the 2010-2015 period, fostered its electoral success in two stages. Within the first stage, which coincides with the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations, and took place between the signing of the first memorandum in May 2010 and the twin elections of May-June 2012, Syriza progressively grew from a minor party close to the electoral threshold into the main opposition voice against the neoliberal austerity politics. During the second stage, that is between 2012 and 2015 when Syriza won the European elections of 2014 and the national elections of January 2015, Syriza's rise to the government was widely perceived as victory of a genuine collective hope for change, which has been forged within the pro-democracy and anti-austerity collective struggles. Graph 3 depicts this trend.



After its election, Syriza formed a coalition government with the national-conservative party of the Independent Greeks. By putting the renegotiation of the

bailout agreements at the top of its agenda, the new government endeavored to designate the effects of the austerity regime. In parallel with the renegotiation process Syriza government gave emphasis on social reforms such as: re-employment of public sector employees who have been dismissed due to the austerity cuts in the public sector, the re-opening of the Greek public broadcasting corporation (which the previous government had closed in just one day), legal framework for the rights of LGBTQ+ people to get married and create a family, new laws that grant Greek citizenship to second generation migrants etc.

Along the above trajectory, with the law 4320/2015 of the Greek parliament that enables the participation of non-institutional solidarity structures to the implementation of the EU's FEAD program, the government seemed to open some space for citizen's engagement (European Commission, 2014-2020). This enthusiasm became even bigger when, after seven months of inconclusive negotiations with the country's creditors, Alexis Tsipras (the then Greek PM) announced that the government had decided to organize a referendum in response to the new bailout agreement proposed by *Troika* (European Commission - European Central Bank - International Monetary Fund). Accordingly, on the 5th of July 2015, regardless of a massive campaign of fear expressed by the mainstream media and the established economic and political elites, and in spite of the closing of Greek banks and the *Grexist* blackmails from EU and IMF, 61.3 per cent of the citizens voted 'No'.

Immediately after the announcement of the result, many people gathered in Syntagma square to celebrate the victory of the popular vote. However, the events that followed the days after the referendum can help us to identify the latter as a major turning point for Syriza. Whether poor strategic planning or lack of preparation for such a turnout, the government chose to concede to Troika's demands. In this respect, on

July 12th, 2015, the Greek government signed a third bailout agreement. A party split followed, with Syriza's official youth brunch and a large number of prominent figures withdrawing from their ranks in opposition to the leadership's decision to ignore referendum's turnout and back a third memorandum. In an effort to renew the government's mandate and reconsolidate his power after the split and defeat in the negotiations, Tsipras called new elections in September 2015. While Syriza suffered significant losses among its voters, it won the elections and together with the Independent Greeks formed their second coalition government in order to implement the third memorandum.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the relationship between the transformations of repertoires of collective action and the politicization and re-politicization of everyday life in the context of crisis-ridden Greece. In exploring this dynamic process, I investigated the trajectories of anti-austerity collective action from the beginning of the Greek crisis in 2010 until the referendum of 2015. This particular period has been marked by highly concentrated protest events - 26 general strikes were carried out for the period between 2010 and May 2012 - and also by major changes in the country's political arena. Since 2010, successive governments accepted and implemented unprecedented austerity measures. In this context, international and national financial players, political agents and the media sought to depoliticize the causes and the effects of the crisis. Accordingly, as I argued in the first section of this article, the neoliberal restructuring of the Greek state and economy has been constructed as the last opportunity of an almost 'failed state' and its 'lazy' citizens to be rescued (on the geopolitical dynamics of stereotyping see Herzfeld, 2016). At the same time, however, with the announcement

of the acceptance of the first Greek bailout package in the first months of 2010, an escalating wave of strikes and mobilizations kick-started against austerity politics. While at the beginning of the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations the protesters targeted the impact of the imposed austerity agenda, Aganaktismenoi as the former's peak moment, highlighted the deeper political nature of the crisis. Within the space and time of Aganaktismenoi the opposition to austerity politics was transformed into an active experimentation with new forms of political participation and direct collective action.

After the evacuation of the Aganaktismenoi squares, these novel repertoires and discourses spread across neighborhoods and working places. In this respect, the analysis provided in the second and third parts of the article sought to shed light on the implications of the everyday life struggles of commoning and solidarity. Such grassroots institutions and practices are best viewed as democratic experiments in the making. The neoliberal crisis and the mobilizations that emerged in response to the democratic deficits and fiscal inequalities, which the former made more apparent, have brought citizens and their commoning and solidarity ventures to the forefront. What is more, these ventures resulted in the production and formation of citizens as political subjects. Within the 'normal' course of the crisis, these grassroots ventures gave the opportunity to larger parts of the populations to collectively organize their everyday needs through direct forms of democracy and solidarity. As the normal practices and regular routines of the subjects have been disrupted by crisis politics, their engagement in such repertoires formed the ground of new discourses and social relations and, consequently, enabled them to become active agents. This very process, which involves the production of difference, the intense focus and contestation of everyday issues such as work, healthcare, housing, food, and so on, through the opening of new public spaces

for staging and performing politics is what I have called the politicization and re-politicization of everyday life. From this perspective, the sites of commoning and solidarity and their novel democratic institutions ask us to consider an alternative paradigm of being and doing in common as a horizon for a different social order.

As I stressed in the last part of this article, the discourses and repertoires of these struggles have influenced institutional actors of the left to re-approach grassroots politics and disclose possibilities for citizens' participation in more conventional political spaces. In its attempts to embrace grassroots claims and pursue the change through conventional bureaucratic channels, though, Syriza has alienated activists and deflected the social energy of collective struggles. More emphatically, my claim here is that the Greek case has already exposed the limitations of progressive institutional agents to bring change on their own, while demonstrating how nation-centered accounts of resistance can be easily isolated. In this respect, the pathologies of institutional Left actors create crucial concerns for this paper. Syriza's promises for real democratic change, plurality and communication with grassroots actors has been sacrificed at the altar of party cohesion, the reinforcement of hierarchy, and the desire for power. Hence, the eclipse of its social profile and organization novelties has brought Syriza closer to the system, which it alleges to want to overthrow.

The crisis of legitimacy and trust in institutions, which is striking Europe today, is manifested in a variety of morbid symptoms, which include the emergence of far-right parties, the post-political technocratization of liberal democracy, as well as the deadly failure of European elites to respond adequately to the refugee waves. However, this article argues that the democratic struggles of commoning and solidarity provide an alternative framework for collective resistance and self-organization against xenophobic, racist and other fear-fueled agents, as well as towards the attacks on basic

democratic rights and freedoms. The traces of this democratic renewal are already evident in the sites of contemporary urban and regional social movements, and the new municipalist movements, as well as in the everyday struggles of common people. It is important that the study of collective action should make such phenomena and developments a core focus of its ongoing research and reflection.

Paper 3: Counter-Logics of Radical Democracy and the Commons: An Ethico-Political Interpretation of Everyday Struggles during the Greek Crisis

Abstract

In the light of theoretical and strategic debates about theories of radical democracy and the commons, this paper analyses and evaluates everyday struggles in Greek politics after the global financial crisis. It focusses on the cases of Vio.Me - the first workers' recuperated factory in Greece - and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko, which is the largest social solidarity health clinic in Greece. Viewed from the perspective of commoning practices, the paper identifies the logics that sustain the beliefs, values, infrastructures and institutions, which are being developed at an everyday grassroots level, finding traces of an incipient radical democratic ethos and rationality at work. While the new initiatives highlight crucial and often neglected organizational, prefiguring and subjective prerequisites for radical democracy, our evolving perspective also shows their political limitations and strategic dilemmas as they struggle to constitute a viable hegemonic alternative to neoliberal rationalities and forms of governance.

Introduction: Grassroots Politics, the Commons and Radical Democracy

The project of radical democracy today stands at a crossroads. For many, its promises of greater freedom, equality, pluralism and social justice have either failed to form a credible alternative to the dominant models of liberal and neo-liberal capitalist democracy, or been transmuted into authoritarian and populist forms, which jeopardize liberal values and democratic institutions. Others argue that the democratic imaginary itself has failed to cope with the pressing issues in our rapidly changing world, including increasing social inequalities, racism and climate crisis. Yet, in the last decade, a wave of grassroots struggles has shaken the world, including the Indignant and Occupy movements (Syntagma and Puerta del Sol squares to Zuccotti and Gezi Parks) in 2011-2012, through the Black Lives Matter, Ni Una Menos and Indigenous Right movements to the Climate Strike, Gilets Jaunes and the 2019 global wave of protests in Chile, Hong Kong, Catalonia, and elsewhere. Such movements have questioned the institutions and practices of representative democracy, as well as its notion of citizenship, while proposing different forms of democratic politics, which emphasize direct participation, horizontality, deliberation, equality and inclusivity (Della Porta, 2020).

Some of these theoretical tensions and practical challenges are crystallized in Greek politics since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008, which brought a resurgence of radical politics in Greece. After the *Aganaktismenoi* (Indignants) squares movement in the summer of 2011, a number of novel forms of democratic collective action and self-organization emerged, often deploying innovative strategies and tactics to counter neoliberal austerity (Arampatzi, 2017a). In January 2015, the new conjuncture ushered in the electoral victory of Syriza: ostensibly a party of the

European radical left. Yet, despite Syriza's active participation in the popular struggles, and its connections with several grassroots networks, the party moved away from its socially active grassroots base and its erstwhile radical credentials, which were grounded on a positive view of the latter's non-traditional, participatory and bottom-up style of politics (Spourdalakis, 2013, pp. 109-112).

In the context of a growing disaffection with existing models of democracy, this article endeavors to rework the project of radical democracy by engaging with the logics and practices of commoning both as a theoretical and socio-political project. Its aim is to evaluate the new practices and organizational forms that have emerged in Greece in the light of the ongoing debates about the character and future possibilities of radical democracy. Based on the lived experiences of such groups and communities, while tracing the values and ideals that inform their social practices, we seek to reimagine radical democratic thought by exploring incipient processes of democratization in particular sites and social spaces. We show how the distinctive social logics that inform the practices of these grassroots movements - social co-production, self-organization, democratic decision-making, distributed leadership, and so on - which are often associated with the practices of commoning can productively supplement the form and substance of radical democracy, while concretely prefiguring its accomplishment.

More precisely, we focus on a thick description of two grassroots projects in Greece - the recuperated Vio.Me factory and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko (MCCH) – which we judge to be 'paradigmatic cases' of the new politics (Flyvbjerg, 2001). As indicators of the way in which neoliberal austerity governance is tied to the dismantling of basic social rights (for example, rights to social security, access to health and medical care, housing, labor rights and unemployment benefits,

and so forth) by primarily targeting labor and social welfare structures and practices (Petmesidou, 2013), we show how the realities of such changes are lived and contested in everyday life. In developing these arguments, we start by saying a few words about our theoretical approach, research strategies and primary data. We then problematize and contextualize the two cases in the Greek context, before turning to the emergence, character and logics of such grassroots democratic politics. Our conclusions draw out the ways that such practices enlarge and deepen the idea of radical democracy, while posing challenges for its further elaboration.

Commons and Radical Democracy

Theorists of the commons argue that grassroots struggles represent relatively autonomous, democratic alternatives to the hegemony of neoliberal rationalities. Understood as seeking to enact a transformative *logic of commoning* - collective political processes that create new political subjectivities, which can bring about certain ends (such as the abolition of private property) while envisaging and constructing new worlds - such movements are often contrasted with the logic of hegemonic politics and the project of radical democracy (Beasley-Murray, 2010; Hardt and Negri, 2012). Proponents of radical democracy, on the other hand, are critical of this perspective on theoretical and strategic grounds, claiming that the celebration of the commons is predicated on the problematic assumption that ‘it might provide the main principle of organization of society’ without any recourse to political antagonisms and representation (Mouffe, 2018, pp. 54-55).

In its place, Mouffe and others continue to advocate a project of radical democracy, whose aim is not ‘to renounce liberal democratic ideology, but on the contrary to deepen and extend it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy’

(Laclau and Mouffe, 2014: 164). Such proposals are designed to deconstruct the orthodox Marxist model of change, which involves a revolutionary break with a particular mode of production led by a fundamental social class (such as the proletariat) in order to achieve a fully emancipated and transparent system (such as communism). Also opposing aggregative, deliberative, direct and certain forms of radically pluralistic and agonistic models of democratic politics, while profiting from the gains of the 'democratic revolution', radical democracy involves an elaboration of the values and ideals of democracy - equality, freedom and solidarity - into ever-widening sites and spaces.

Radical democracy is best defined as a potential hegemonic project, whose aim is to bring together a series of claims, demands and identities in a contingent constellation, which is grounded on the principle of democratic equivalence. Its normative aspirations and resources can then be iterated in different ways to construct a new common sense that can meet the challenges of particular circumstances. More concretely, this radical conception of democracy consists of a universal, though contingent, system of rules and institutions that can govern the operation of the political system in a responsive and accountable way (e.g. representative elections, the rule of law); the articulation of popular political agencies or forces that can actively contest relations of domination and oppression in various places in the name of democratic ideals and values; and the cultivation of a democratic subjectivity, which embodies an ethos of openness and agonistic respect.

Such proposals have in turn sparked wider theoretical and strategic debates. Some dispute the radicality of radical democracy, especially the degree to which it constitutes a meaningful challenge to capitalist social relations. Others criticize the fact that its political goals and strategy appear to remain within the existing parameters of

liberal democratic regimes, while questions are also raised about the role of institutions and organizations in the prefiguring and construction of new social orders. Finally, there are those who query the failure to develop a requisite form of democratic subjectivity that can construct and inhabit a radical democratic order (Deleixhe, 2018; Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis, 2014).

The Method of Ethico-Political Interpretation: Theory, Data and Research Strategies

Our approach in characterizing and evaluating these emergent social phenomena draws upon the resources of poststructuralist discourse theory and the logics of critical explanation. In setting out this perspective, we begin with a discussion of the categories of discourse and its implications for politics. We then present our method for the particular cases, while describing the empirical data that we collected and analyzed in their study.

Discourse and Politics

The category of discourse in our framework is not just about patterns of meaning, texts or symbolic representations narrowly construed. Instead, discourses consist of *articulatory practices* that connect and resignify physical and cultural components into particular worlds of being, doing, and thinking (Glynos and Howarth, 2007). The articulation of such elements yields relational and incomplete systems of practice, which are always bounded by an outside that is established by the exercise of power and exclusion. Such elements and objects are radically contingent entities, which can be signified and assembled in different ways by competing forces and political projects. Different social ‘realities’ are thus constructed and emerge within different discursive systems, though such discourses are never complete, because they are marked by other

discourses and practices against which they are defined, and which can challenge their meaning.

Social Logics

Our approach focusses on the emergence, reproduction and transformation of practices or constellations of practices that we call regimes. As discourses are not just ‘talk or text in context’, but concrete social practices that embody certain logics, the logic of a discourse is captured by the rules that govern them, and the ontological conditions that make such rules possible. What we term *social logics* – the norms and forms of behavior that make up a practice - can thus be detected by uncovering the rules and objects that condition what can be said or done in a particular setting. So the first step of our empirical analysis is to move from a gathering and description of the self-interpretations and actions of subjects in different contexts to the discernment of the discursive rules that constitute the underlying social logics that organize the discourses in question. Putative social logics can be further tested and elaborated by considering related phenomena. In pinpointing the unities, regularities and boundaries of pertinent political discourses, our approach also focuses on the construction of antagonisms and the creation of political frontiers that delimit the systems of statements and practices that are investigated.

Ethico-Political Interpretation: Counter-Logics, Normative Evaluation and Critique

Our chief goal is the production and testing of *critical explanations* of problematized social phenomena, where critique gains its foothold through the explanatory process. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, our main priority in this interpretation of democratic *counter-logics* is not explanation or critique *strictu sensu*, but the characterization and normative evaluation of the social practices and grassroots democratic politics in

question. That is to say, in describing, assessing and building-upon MCCH and Vio.Me as putative exemplars of new forms of self-organization in the Greek context, our method is to project our considered ideals and values into these counter-logics, while in turn using the implicit and explicit norms and values in the investigated objects to reflect upon and transform our understandings and conceptions of the project of radical democracy itself. Before returning to our empirical cases to test and develop our initial intuitions and hypotheses, we shall say a few words about the empirical foundations of the research.

Fieldwork and the Collection of Empirical Data

Much of the empirical data used in this study was gathered during fieldwork that was carried out between June and October 2018. The data arose primarily from 23 semi-structured interviews with participants in the two ventures and other members of their solidarity networks; three months of participatory observation (including participation in various organizational processes and observation of everyday arrangements); and document analysis of their publicly available campaigning material and press releases. Interviews were digitally recorded and supported by fieldwork memos with the informed consent of the interviewees. In constructing the official discourses of Greek governments, EU and International Monetary Fund, we assembled and analyzed a body of documents, which consisted of Greece's structural adjustment programs, policy reports and briefings. The material from the interviews and text analysis was manually transcribed and processed via repeated readings (Keller, 2012, pp. 107-109). We then used the logics framework as a heuristic device to delve beneath the texts and self-interpretations of the actors in different empirical contexts, so that we could identify the underlying rules of the different discourses under investigation, as well as the structures and conditions that made them possible.

Problematizing Austerity Governance and Radical Alternatives in Greek Politics

Various analyses have shown how the GFC of 2008 and the ‘remedy’ of austerity governance produced dramatic and adverse changes in Greek society. Both its causes and proposed solutions have been traced back to the predominance of neoliberal discourse, with its emphasis on a market-based organization of social relations through a series of governmental logics, including privatization, technocratization, generalized competition, commodification of labor, business deregulation, trade liberalization, market proxies in the public sector, tax aversion, and so forth (Jessop, 2016, pp. 67-86). Under the terms of the three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), which were imposed on Greece by the EU from 2010-2015, the Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund) was able to dictate economic policy in detail (Vassalos, 2018).

In subordinating the state to an increasingly coercive legal, constitutional, and policy restructuring (Bruff, 2014), successive Greek governments - independently of election results and electoral programs - implemented a series of structural reforms that have been dictated by bodies of unelected technocrats and EU officials. Moreover, the planning and implementation of such measures was based on an abuse of legislative decrees (i.e. special laws not subjected to judicial review), significant deterioration of social dialogue and social partnership consultation, fast-track or one-sitting procedures, last minute law amendments, constant threat of the governmental MPs’ with dismissal in case of negative vote, and so on (Koutroukis and Roukanas, 2016; Tsiftoglou, 2019). Indeed, the introduction and entrenchment of the logic of austerity as a series of policy practices has led to the reconfiguration of the Greek state, which has been transformed into a less democratic entity. Articulated around the neoliberal logics of technocratization, competitiveness and market growth (through deregulation,

privatization, and the flexibility of *human capital*), the dominant problematization of the crisis thus promoted austerity as the only strategy for the management of the crisis, the restoration of its integrity, and the ability to regain the trust of the global financial markets and investors (European Commission, 2010).

Intensifying Neoliberal Practices in Labor Market and Healthcare in Greece

To briefly illustrate how such logics work, in this section, we shall set out the main policy components of the neoliberal restructuring of the labor market and public healthcare in Greece during the crisis. As key pillars of the EU's 'Structural Reform Support Program', labor market and social welfare policy (mainly healthcare and pensions) have been at the epicenter of all the three bailout programs that Greece signed with the Troika between 2010 and 2015 (European Commission, 2010, 2016). Although the labor and pension reforms were among the priorities of EU's general structural reform approach to restore competitiveness and growth, as stated in the ECFIN Economic Brief (2014, p. 1), it was only in the case of Greece (and to a much less degree in Portugal) that the profound retrenchment in public health spending was included as a major bailout clause (Petmesidou et al., 2014, p. 338), and then specifically addressed as a crucial component of the country's fiscal consolidation efforts (European Commission, 2012, p. 36).

Regarding the reforms in the Greek labor market policy, the governing bodies of the EU and IMF concluded that both the public and private sectors were characterized by low productivity, high wages, strict employment protection legislation and labor market structural rigidity (European Commission, 2010, pp. 1-10). The reforms introduced under the MoUs to tackle these *problems* have thus targeted both collective and individual labor law by proposing changes in five basic directions. They included the dismantling of collective bargaining to determine wages; the legalization

of new flexible labor arrangements; the facilitation of flexible labor time; the weakening of collective dismissal restrictions and lay-offs protection; the adjustment in real wages and labor conditions between the public and private sectors in line with productivity outcomes (e.g. Koukiadaki and Kretsos, 2012; Kouzis, 2018). By pushing down labor costs through austerity policies and wage repression the nature of this reform process - characterized also by a 'heightened EU intrusiveness in national social and labor market policies' (Theodoropoulou, 2016, p. 125) - addresses the deregulation of labor law as the means to enhance employment and consolidate fiscal and competitiveness variables.

If we turn our attention to healthcare, the implementation of austerity in such a sensitive sector started as part of the general cuts in public expenditures, in which there was a significant shrinking of the public share in the total health expenditure - down 30 percent from 2011 to 2012 (Teloni and Adam, 2018). The same logic also led to the curtailing of the public budget for drugs and medication, with an estimated fall of 32 percent (Economou et al., 2015, p. 14). At the same time, such budgetary reforms were followed with policy changes that increased patients' contributions to 5€ for visits to outpatients clinics (Karanikolos et al., 2013). Similarly, the austerity governance of healthcare prevented hospitals from hiring new personnel and purchasing medical equipment or maintaining their infrastructures (Economou, 2012). Hospital workers and personnel, mainly doctors and nurses, whose salary had been cut by 40 percent, were forced to work increased hours to cover the extra needs (Simou and Koutsogeorgou, 2014). With rapidly increasing numbers of fired and unemployed people, the new austere policy framework restricted the free access to public healthcare, excluding almost 2.5 million people (Economou et al., 2015).

Yet the statistics of the real Greek economy present a picture that tarnish the effectiveness of the promoted *remedy*: the country's debt to GDP ratio escalated from 103% in 2007 to 178.9 % in 2014 (Eurostat, 2018); the unemployment rate rose from 7.76% in 2007 to 27,46% in 2013 (ILOSTAT, 2019); and, finally, from 2010 to 2012 more than 100,000 small enterprises closed leading to the loss of more than 500,000 job positions (GSEVEE, 2013). The highly diminished income, combined with the severe cuts in public spending and welfare state, created an environment in which millions of citizens were faced with the risk of poverty and multiple exclusions. Significant numbers were left unable to meet their day to day subsistence costs and without access in medical care and other primary services, such as social security, education, social services for vulnerable groups, and so forth (Leventi and Matsaganis, 2016). Coming full circle, then, we argue that austerity politics in Greece, which were presented and defended as necessary for recovery and growth in an attempt to pre-empt popular dissent, have reinforced and institutionalized neoliberalization processes through a technocratic regime shift, which has led to the dismantling of collective democratic rights and spaces.

The Greek Context Revisited: Grassroots Practices

The implementation of severe austerity measures caused profound changes in Greek society. In the spring of 2010, demonstrations against the first austerity program brought together thousands of people in the biggest cities of the country. Almost a year later, on the 25th of May 2011, a multitude of heterogeneous actors occupied the central squares of several urban centers to give life to the Aganaktismenoi movement (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013). This new socio-political spatialization stimulated the active engagement of citizens in popular assemblies and different working groups, which created an intensified process of (re-)politicization that opened up the way for

an alternative problematization of austerity as a rationality that reinforces processes of neoliberalization (Roussos, 2019).

After the evacuation of the squares, the re-territorialization of struggles in local neighborhoods gave rise to an expanding network of bottom-up alternatives - reaching more than 400 groups in 2016 - in different areas of social and economic life (Kousis, Kalogeraki, Papadaki, et al., 2018). Such alternatives included collective initiatives for basic services' provision (for example social solidarity clinics and pharmacies, citizens self-help groups); work-related cooperative structures (coffee shops, groceries, publishing collectives and other labor cooperatives); educational and cultural networks (self-managed theatres, tutoring and support for students); projects for the direct support of the most vulnerable social strata (collective kitchens, social foodbanks); local initiatives prefiguring alternative forms of socioeconomic organization (markets without middlemen, neighborhood assemblies, time banks) (Solidarity for All, 2014).

Scholars have elaborated different definitions and concepts in order to characterize such initiatives. On the one hand, a number of broad-brushed studies tend to focus on one central aspect of their social practices, typically emphasizing the role of solidarity and self-management (Kokkinidis, 2015; Vaiou and Kalandides, 2017). But while we agree that such notions do inform the repertoires of the initiatives under study, we do not wish to subsume their breadth and richness under a single social logic. On the other hand, from a social movement studies perspective, the new forms have been characterized as alternative forms of resilience (Kousis, Kalogeraki, Papadaki, et al., 2018). Most notably, for example, researchers involved with the LIVewhat project (2016, p. 30) propose that the direct action organizations, which emerged during the crisis, foster resilience, as they 'aim to provide citizens/people alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties and challenges under hard economic times, which

relate to urgent needs'. But again, while we agree that the grassroots initiatives that emerged in crisis-ridden Greece were an immediate response to the dismantling of the welfare state and labor precariousness provoked by the austerity regime, and that they provided alternatives that enabled people to meet their daily needs, we do not accept that the idea of resilience is a satisfactory way to conceptualize the movements.

In our view, the idea of resilience is intimately bound up with a politics of catastrophe, or the neoliberal promotion of risk, and thus incites individuals to learn and become more responsive to crises and hardships (Evans and Reid, 2015). So, while those who use the concept of resilience in the study of grassroots networks do not necessarily share this orientation, and though the notion of resilience can be articulated in different ways, we argue that the adoption of resilience to explain and describe the collective action of these grassroots actors obscures their political dimension, thus making it difficult to explore the roles of hegemony, social antagonism and power in their constitution and reproduction. Indeed, in this specific context, by remaining tethered to a defensive mode of politics, the language of resilience does not provide the means to consider and elaborate new political imaginaries and subjectivities that can inform a radical counter-hegemonic project.

Against this background, we construct a more complex and inclusive account of the new ventures. We show how their social practices contribute innovative models and images for the construction of social and political relations, which can furnish us with an alternative vision of organizing the social. We also claim that the social activity of these grassroots actors is shaped by the construction of equivalences and resonances between multiple networks and democratic struggles, which were designed to preserve or create resources, or to re-appropriate privatized public resources against state and market driven enclosures that have been intensified by the regime of austerity. These

alternative social activities are thus informed by a political logic of *being* and *doing* in common, as they constitute discursive articulations whose objective is to overcome the hegemony of neoliberal logics (such as individualization, commodification, hierarchy in organizing social relations and practices). Hence we find ourselves closer to accounts that seek to understand these practices as initiatives and struggles to exercise democratic control of ‘the commons’ (Kioupkiolis and Karyotis, 2015; Varvarousis and Kallis, 2017).

Two Exemplary Cases: MCCH and Vio.Me

Initiated and performed by ordinary women and men, such social activity involves collective processes to produce services and goods that are forged through practices of social co-production, democratic decision-making, and logics of association that are grounded on equity and care. Thus, in an effort to offer a more empirically informed mapping of these incipient social practices in the Greek context, we will provide an account of the integral everyday routines and interactions that constitute them through a thick description of two of the most emblematic projects: the recuperated Vio.Me factory and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko (MCCH).

Logics and Practices of Social Co-Production

The social activities of the formal and informal grassroots initiatives that emerged during the Greek crisis have taken two general forms: (a) the provision of services to meet everyday needs in the midst of the dismantling of the welfare state (collective kitchens, tutoring, housing, health and medical provision, and so forth), and (b) alternative economic activities that seek to empower and engage those excluded from the austere restructuring of labor market (networks of exchange, working cooperatives or worker-recuperated companies, producers’ collectivities) (Papadaki and Kalogeraki,

2018). Our detailed descriptions of MCCH and Vio.Me allow us to reflect on both aspects of these practices.

Stemming from an initiative of a group of participants in the Aganaktismenoi squares, the MCCH was launched in the autumn of 2011. Until 2015, in a context of widespread exclusion from the Greek national health system, MCCH provided its free-for-all services to more than 41,000 care-seekers (MCCH, 2015a). As the data of the clinic demonstrate, the number of visits today fluctuates between 370 and 500 per month (MCCH, 2019). Having 280 volunteers (half of them healthcare professionals, and half of them other volunteers including once care-seekers), MCCH is member of a network of Social Solidarity Clinics (SSCs) with roots in the anti-austerity struggles. As Rakopoulos (2015a) demonstrates, the element of ‘movementality’ in such networks works as an educational technique informing their mobilizing political will to spread the repertoires, discourses and modes of living emanated in the social struggles and movements against austerity:

All of us, doctors and solidarity citizens of the SSCs, believe that the whole society should fight to safeguard the public good of health (SSCs-Announcement, 2012).

Due to the size of MCCH, different thematic groups and sub-groups are assigned specific tasks, such as communication, material maintenance, pharmacy organization, and so on (MCCH, 2015a). All of the groups coordinate their activities through the general assembly, where all the participants can equally participate and vote. As one interviewee put it, ‘our general assembly of volunteers is the ultimate organ for us where we discuss and take the decisions all together’ (Int.1, MCCH). The self-management of the clinic was the way to secure its free-for-all and independent

character. One of the first decisions, which vibrantly exemplifies MCCH's vision against profit-driven logics, which treat medical and pharmaceutical services as commodities, was the rejection of funding from political parties, NGOs, market agents and the state (MCCH, 2015a). Moreover, the equal cooperation of all the volunteers in the life of the clinic has facilitated the co-creation of new knowledge and practices of healthcare organization and provision. In this respect, with equality and co-operation as the focus, MCCH's social activity - the free-for-all provision of primary healthcare services without discriminations - comes to incorporate the aspects of community management and sharing in healthcare provision. Against the neoliberal curtailing and commodification of services, the practices of MCCH and the other SSCs means that healthcare is socially co-produced as a common good.

As a subordinate enterprise of Philkeram-Johnson S.A., the factory of Vio.Me was established in Thessaloniki in 1982 to produce chemical products for the manufacturing sector. In May 2011, in the midst of the crisis, the parent company went bankrupt. Abandoning Vio.Me premises, the former owners left the 65 workers unpaid, facing unemployment and an uncertain future. In February 2013, Vio.Me's workers ,with the support of an Open Solidarity Initiative, which was formed to promote their struggle and advance their demands (VIOME-OSI, 2013), declared that they would restart the production under workers' control:

We undertake the operation of the factory in terms of complete self-management and workers' control of both its production and management structures (VIOME-WU, 2013).

Vio.Me is one of the first self-managed, large production units in the last few years in Europe, and the first in Greece (Kiouпкиolis and Karyotis, 2015), currently employing

24 workers. Since their first steps, the workers established a model of rotating roles in the production line and equal pay for all the members of the cooperative. In the words of one interviewee: ‘since the beginning, the assembly decided that all the workers will have the same share. We all earn the same salary and work the same hours; eight hours, in which we include the time for our assembly and also our break’ (Int.1, Vio.Me). Moreover, the members of the cooperative have been committed to the principle that each of their salaries cannot surpass the double of the minimum wage in the Greek private sector: ‘we always redirect any surplus to the society that has supported us, or creating new jobs in the factory and bolster other struggles and projects’ (Int.2, Vio.Me). Vio.Me organizes its co-production activities on principles of reciprocity, knowledge and skills sharing, and collective ownership of the recuperated means of production. In this way, labor emerges as a common in a twofold way: as a collectively produced resource essential for the life of the community; and as a socially produced value, a condensation of collective thought and collective action (Fattori, 2011), that is reinvested back to the broader society.

MCCH and Vio.Me are part of a series of everyday struggles, in which people are shaping their daily lives collectively on the basis of their shared needs. Manifested in the participants’ self-interpretations and MCCH and Vio.Me’s official discourses, their social activity is founded upon a problem- and action-centered social logic that we can name an ‘economy of care’. MCCH and Vio.Me’s practices of co-production thus crystallize the norms of cooperation and the values and ideas of community sharing, while also problematizing the dominant regime of (individual) private property rights, profit expropriation and competitiveness, which function as the dominant drives of social and economic life. In this sense, the human potential to create and the outcomes of such actions are not conceived as an individual-centered ‘human capital’

to be exploited in the free market, but as a social activity that is socially realized and socially beneficial, nurtured on collectively produced and learned skills and developed through collectively managed tools and means of production (Kioupkiolis and Karyotis, 2015, p. 317).

Organizing and Decision-Making Practices

The spread of anti-austerity struggles and prefigurative repertoires at the local level also carried important implications for the organizing practices of new commoning ventures. One interviewee put it in the following terms: ‘the philosophy of our organization, or its basic principle if you will, is horizontal; in the sense of direct democracy and self-organization as we know it from the squares (Aganaktismenoi)’ (Int.1, MCCH). The most illustrative practice here is the General Assembly (GA). For both projects, this forum is given the ultimate responsibility for determining the operational processes and political actions in each organization, thus ensuring the equal participation of its members in decision-making and the control of work-related tasks and flows.

The GA is an open space for deliberation, where the participants share their ideas and opinions on collective interests, each with an equal vote to make collective decisions: ‘we aim to take decisions with a unanimous vote. It takes a lot of discussion but it is important, and the equality among us starts from that and expands to all the other relations’ (Int.3, Vio.Me). Importantly, within the setting of the GA, the disagreements that may and do arise, are addressed as an opportunity for further collective deliberation and reflection. As one interviewee put it, ‘naturally there are different opinions and conflicts, but we are continuously learning to listen to each other and make compromises that in a way can satisfy everyone’ (Int.2, MCCH). In this sense, the individual aspirations and ideas of participants are realized not in

antagonistic and mutually exclusive terms, but rather in a reciprocal way. The result is that such organizing practices are seen to foreground and cultivate an ethos of cooperation and equality in practice, unfolding as an ongoing exercise for the participants to become open to different ideas and learn to work together. As one of our interviewees explained:

it functions as a school; and you start from the nursery school understanding that this world is not only about you, and then you slowly learn to respect the others and engage with our differences in a meaningful way (Int.4, Vio.Me).

In a subtle interweaving of autonomy and cooperation during the assemblies, the participation of individual activists as equals in defining the rules, goal setting, and task allocation also *prefigures* an alternative social organization, whose explicit aim is to supersede the dominant hierarchical taxonomies between those who are entitled to take decisions and those who merely execute, or between those who know and those who do not. As one of the workers in Vio.Me highlighted to us, ‘nobody is born knowing, you learn by doing and participating. Whoever enters here [in the GA] is equal, newer or older it is the same. One vote each, all equal!’ (Int.5, Vio.Me). It is in this way that the lived experience of collective administration and equal participation in decision-making fosters an ethical dimension to work that hinges upon the principles of equity, trust and mutual awareness. ‘There is no hierarchy’, said one participant, ‘we are a collectivity in which we all decide, act and take the responsibility together’ (Int.3, MCCH).

Occupying a nodal position within the life of commoning projects like MCCH and Vio.Me, the GA thus comes to symbolize the main social practice of governance. Often characterized as at the ‘heart of the project’, self-governance exemplifies a

horizontal and consensual logic of decision-making, emphasizing the values of equality, reciprocity and collective responsibility in order to meet common problems and achieve common interests. At the same time, such ventures are (re)produced according to certain rules and norms that enable the logics of self-governance to keep ticking over: direct participation; one vote for all the participants; equal role in expressing their ideas and opinions; negotiated outcomes and engagement with the different opinions; mutual awareness; the investment in and recognition of the GA as the ultimate instrument of decision making and organization. Through the self-interpretations of our interviewees we can now see how the notion of self-governance operates as a social logic. Self-governance emerges here as a set of practices and rules based on the creation of more open and participatory spaces, both in decision making and in everyday relationships, thus breaking with the neoliberal logics of expertise, central authority and individualism in the workplace and community.

Practices of (Mutual) Association and Collective Political Solidarity

Self-governance fosters direct engagement and inclusive participation in the organizing and decision-making practices of both projects. But for practices of self-governance to flourish there is the precondition of a shared social life and visions of sociality, which can be extended to include broader parts of the society. Thus, a third aspect of our analysis focuses on the practices and discourses of association and relatedness that are enacted by such projects within the context of the Greek crisis. We have noted that the politicization of the crisis, which had been staged and cultivated within the anti-austerity protest cycle of 2009-2012, led to the diffusion of a number of grassroots projects, which responded to the multifaceted exclusionary effects of austerity (Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016). In this regard, their participants have been engaged in such activities based on experiences of shared predicaments:

The SSC and Pharmacies [...] provide voluntary and completely free primary health and pharmaceutical care services to uninsured, financially deprived and unemployed people - Greeks and immigrants without any discrimination. They are solidarity structures that have been set up to counter austerity policies and the humanitarian crisis, and are fighting for a free and universal public health system (SSCs & Pharmacies, 2015).

As illustrated in this press release, which was signed by MCCH and 15 other clinics across Greece, the main aim of the SSCs is to tackle the exclusionary effects of austerity in public healthcare provision. In this way, the access to health services is framed as a shared human need and hence the clinic's services are common for everyone regardless of ethnic origins, race, class or gender.

In a similar fashion, Vio.Me also prioritizes the association of equal struggles against austerity:

For the struggle to be victorious it cannot stay with Vio.Me, it should spread to all the factories and businesses that are closing ... [We want] an alternative organization of production and economy, without exploitation, without inequalities and hierarchies (VIOME-OSI, 2013).

Thus, in their public discourse, both MCCH and Vio.Me call for the active participation in protest events against austerity governance and initiatives for the support of other networks or individuals. They also emphasize common challenges and take actions that foster the interdependence and interconnectedness of struggles to overcome them. In so doing, such practices of association address social and structural aspects of labor and healthcare through the production of a lateral relationality, which is directed against the austerity driven reforms that seek to individuate workplaces, welfare

provision and persons: ‘we reclaim healthcare provision for all; it’s not charity (*philanthropia*) that you come from outside or above and you say take this or that and that’s it. It is solidarity, we are all together in this, we are experiencing the same problems so we act all together’ (Int.2, MCHH). The notion of solidarity expressed here is tied to ethical ideals about how society should be, and how people should relate to one another (Rozakou, 2016). In a similar manner, ‘the opening of Vio.Me gates to the society’ (interview notes in Vio.Me) postulates that individual needs cannot be isolated from the needs of the other and the whole of society. Instead, ‘there is a continuous connection with the society; as we have received material and moral support to keep fighting, now with all our powers we contribute back and not in terms of charity but by considering how the society as a whole can move one step forward so as to create better living conditions for everyone’ (Int.2, Vio.Me).

Importantly, our analysis of the participants’ self-interpretations also enables us to discern a political dimension in these practices of association, which is articulated against social norms of charity and social exclusion. Regarding the first, the term charity is used to describe a set of institutional or bureaucratic activities organized by the state, big corporations, NGOs and the church, which seek to alleviate the effects of austerity governance in a top-down relationship, thus tending to objectify and normalize austerity effects by silencing their political origins. Moving to the second, as Vaiou and Kalandides (2016) argue, austerity politics created a space of multiple exclusions in the labor market, public services, public goods, housing, and so forth, as it reconstituted the public sphere in line with the neoliberal values of self-reliance and atomization. In contrast, we argue that Vio.Me and MCCH’s practices of association signify a call for a more active social engagement with bottom-up practices of direct self-help and support.

The practices and discourses of association that are articulated and enacted by Vio.Me and MCCH construct society as the epicenter of relationships of care and mutual aid. We have shown how they constitute a matrix of relationships with others, where they are grounded on the bridging of interests, struggles and needs of all people in a horizontal way. Our claim here is that the signification of processes of relatedness in this context rests upon ideas and norms of reciprocity, inclusion and mutuality of interests, which position solidarity at the core of the everyday life and practices of such ventures (Rakopoulos, 2016). In these terms, solidarity produces and is produced by individuals within and through the everyday engagement with the other. It thus involves an incipient form of agency, which implants an alternative vision of citizenship that emerges in opposition to the neoliberal logics of individualization, commodification and self-reliance. From this perspective, we can now address solidarity as an integral for commoning projects social logic; one that informs the relationships between participants, other grassroots networks and most importantly with all those who have been marginalized or deprived of the possibility of participating in the social body due to the effects of the austerity governance.

An Ethico-Political Interpretation: Rethinking and Enriching Radical Democracy

If anything, the challenges faced by proponents of radical democracy in the present conjuncture are much more daunting than those of the past. Yet, as we have shown in our analysis of two exemplary cases in Greece, there are alternatives and glimmers of hope in the emergence of new projects and identities at the local level, which have in turn spawned links and connections within (and also between) states. How can they be interpreted and evaluated in the light of democratic theory and practice?

Radical Democracy L'avenir

At first glance, the language of radical democracy, as developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) for example, offers a useful means to classify and interpret organizations such as MCCH and Vio.Me. Seen from this perspective, their demands represent an extension and articulation of the core ideals and values of democracy – equality, autonomy and solidarity – into new sets of social relations and practices, and such forces have endeavored to link themselves to other struggles, either to construct broader political coalitions or to display solidarity with similar initiatives and projects. Equally, the new organizations challenge embedded relations of domination and oppression in different social sites, while promoting more diverse modes of production, care, and so forth. In this way, they contribute to the construction of a new egalitarian and libertarian common sense, which is organized around a democratic principle of equivalence. New subjects and identities are manufactured in their antagonistic confrontations in particular social spaces, while the new organizations and spaces are integral in promoting a democratic ethos and affect. In short, such interventions confirm that the project of radical democracy is not a spontaneous product of capitalism or neoliberalism, or any particular regime of domination, but a contingent, reversible and politically constituted alternative, which has to be constructed and welded together from diverse demands and identities.

As an incipient hegemonic project located within the progressive sweep of the democratic revolution, the idea of radical democracy thus offers a convenient means to characterize, analyze and evaluate the new forms. Demands for socialized forms of production and healthcare are thus internal to the overall goal of achieving a radical democracy and restructuring the contours of the ruling historical bloc. And yet there

are notable remainders and supplements, which are exposed if we consider these new forms in the light of the commons.

The language of the commons brings to light occluded and concealed elements in the new struggles and forms of organizations. Of prime importance in this regard is that the new forms are seen to *prefigure* novel ways of being and doing, and the members of the ventures often make much of this fact; they are not just the strategic blocks that make possible the creation of a wider political project that can achieve a particular hegemonic end, but the actual enactment and embodiment of new rules and modes of social interaction. So rather than serving as the instruments for the construction of a new hegemonic order, following the attainment of political power and the control of the state (via elections and campaigning), they are endeavoring to *transform* oppressive neoliberal structures, rationalities and social relations in everyday processes of struggle and action in the here and now. Indeed, one concrete manifestation of this logic of prefiguration is evident in the elaboration of deeper and thicker webs of democratic practice and institutions of political association. As we have noted, the new associations and enterprises encourage and enact greater levels of participation and deliberation, which are evident for example in the operation of the General Assemblies, in reaching collective decisions, and then implementing the resultant policies.

The Logic of Commoning: A Productive Supplement

At the same time, the theoretical gaze of the commons directs our attention to the complex dynamics of local contexts, thus adding to an exclusive - and often exclusionary - concern with the national, regional and global levels of analysis. As we have charted in our two empirical cases, this focus on the micro-politics of particular social struggles and activities, as well as the molecular changes in social relations that

they can and do engender, brings out the intensities of each specific struggle and its peculiar spatio-temporal contexts. What is more, and which is very evident in the cases of MCCH and Vio.Me, this dimension highlights the affective bonds and reciprocal enjoyments that are generated in the creation and reproduction of these operations. Such sensibilities in turn foster a vibrant radical democratic ‘ethos of receptive generosity that is capacious, hospitable, and engaging with respect to extant and emerging difference’ amongst its members, and the communities that they are designed to serve (Coles, 2016, p. 143).

Bound up with these new types of resonance and social interaction are questions of leadership, as well as the logics of social organization, political representation and multiplicity (Hardt and Negri, 2019). These are pressing and often neglected issues in the discussion of hegemony and radical democracy, sometimes denigrated because of their alleged ‘sociological impressionism’ (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). The question of organization is not a primary concern in Laclau and Mouffe’s approach; it is either neglected as a relevant independent factor or they unwittingly rely on traditional parties and (new) social movements to pursue radical democratic or populist political strategies. But the careful assembling of durable and flexible organizational machines, which can mutate in new circumstances, while sometimes engaging in wider political activities, is an essential ingredient in building a resilient and transformed social order.

Questions about leadership and leadership style also arise here, as different models come into play. The hierarchical and executive types of leadership associated with the dominant rationalities of our time have been challenged by more radical movements. Proponents of left and right populism have tended to extol the essential importance of charismatic leaders with which supporters can identify, whereas other radical theorists have called for a return to Leninist forms of leadership, which are

embodied in a revolutionary, vanguard party. As our characterization suggests, self-organizing assemblages and associations like MCCH and Vio.Me have elaborated more decentralized and distributed styles of political leadership, which run counter to these paradigms. In short, then, our cases function as exemplars or paradigm cases that offer new visions and collective social imaginaries, which can be replicated, elaborated and augmented in other contexts. Such alternative forms of life exist in the here and now everyday practices of subjects and communities, and though they retain their own relative autonomy they add novel twists to the struggle for a radical and plural democracy.

Limits and Challenges

By supplementing the post-Marxist project of radical democracy with the perspective of ‘the commons’ we can disclose novel aspects of our problematized social phenomena. We can also enlarge the radical democratic horizon itself. Yet, in to-ing and fro-ing between the two theoretical gazes, as we endeavor to interpret and evaluate the social phenomena, we can also disclose certain limits and challenges in the forms and practices that are observed. An immediate and pressing issue facing local endeavors and experiments to challenge and rework social relations in particular sites is their scale and scalability. Although they can and do clearly function as models that can be copied in particular national contexts, and across national boundaries, questions remain about their ability to replace the large-scale enterprises and systems whose rationalities and logics they seek to contest and transform. Issues and questions of specificity also arise in this regard. Can the counter-logics that arise in particular parts of the economy or the public sector, say a particular branch of manufacturing or in the provision of health goods, also and easily be extended to other, adjacent domains?

Related to this concern is the restriction of such ventures to local contexts and social sites (Purcell, 2006; Russell, 2019). While this new ‘localism’ is a potential strength of the new forms of social and economic experimentation, it also raises questions about the possibilities of articulating and disseminating a national interim vision, which can bring about significant social change. This limitation also focusses attention on their overall political strategies and tactics in relation to the role of state power and national struggles for hegemony, as well as the construction of an alternative and sustainable historical bloc. Such considerations problematize the connection of these sites of struggle to local and national political parties and social movements. Indeed, even erstwhile proponents of a reinvigorated and transformed commons have begun to argue against purer forms of autonomy and self-organization, calling for greater intersectionality between demands in different sectors, so that a spiraling movement can be set in motion (Hardt and Negri, 2019). Calls for hegemony, the creation of ‘a people’ through a series of equivalential linkages merge with the politics of the multitude, a post-hegemonic politics, and the production of a new commonwealth, though this leaves unresolved the types of organization and leadership that are both strategically effective and radically democratic.

Conclusion

The future of radical democracy – indeed, liberal democracy itself - is precariously balanced. New struggles and subjectivities have sprung up in diverse contexts, promising a renewal of the democratic tradition and the potentialities of freer, more egalitarian and more ecologically sustainable societies. Yet they are increasingly vulnerable to anti-democratic forces, which claim to speak in the name of the people against vested interests and forms of domination. In the face of powerful authoritarian

and exploitative regimes, which have been installed in the last three or four decades, and which continue to flourish in the wake of severe shocks and dislocations, novel experiments in production, association and community provide a beacon of hope that another world is possible. Such new forms can be understood as *exemplars* of innovative modes of co-production, co-creation and participatory decision-making in an era when neoliberal rationalities continue to strive for hegemony. In their social organization and political practices they prefigure a more democratic and egalitarian imaginary, generating an ethos of receptive generosity.

Yet they are often limited by their local scale and scalability, so that legitimate questions are raised about their generalizability to other sets of social relations, as well as their long-term resilience and sustainability. Undeniably, the complex reality of modern politics operates at multiple levels and scales (regional, national, international, and so on), and the representative and electoral dispositions appear as the unquestionable way to secure meaningful participation in democratic decision-making. But a hegemonic strategy that only recognizes the predominance of representative and electoral politics can easily lead to a type of politics that is inextricably bound to the established form, institutions and legal disposition of (neo-)liberal democracy: the case of Syriza is a rather telling illustration of this difficulty.

So in a global conjuncture where neoliberal hegemony is maintained through the marginalization of subordinate social groups and their collective interests, and via the technocratization and disempowerment of democratic institutions (Bruff, 2014), everyday life can become a prime locus for the emergence and enactment of counter-hegemonic radical democratic struggle. As Stuart Hall put it in a previous conjuncture, ‘unless people identify with and become the subjects of a new conception of society’ then ‘it cannot materialize’ (Hall, 1988, p. 282). By invoking the supplementary role

of commoning practices and politics in this paper, we thus reinforce and develop the idea that a radical democratic hegemony cannot be a simple party-state formula. Instead, as Laclau insists, a hegemonic project that is ‘not accompanied by mass action at the level of civil society leads to a bureaucratism that will be easily colonized by the corporative power of the forces of the status quo’ (Laclau, 2014, p. 9).

Encouraging the languages and practices of the commons to flow into and positively supplement our accepted understandings of radical democracy enables us to view the new forms of commoning as ‘spaces of heterogeneity’ that make possible the construction of democratic subjectivities (Howarth, 2006). In our view, such open and dynamic spaces of interaction foster an active sense of togetherness and interdependence between subjects - a ‘being-in-common’ as against a ‘common-being’ as Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) would put it - as issues for reflection, negotiation and social action are performed in equal and reciprocal relations with all others. Heterogeneous spaces are not fixed or teleological ideals, which are waiting to be reached in a future that is predicated on a utopian or essentialist imaginary of final political solutions (Stavrakakis, 2003). The construction and multiplication of such spaces and interventions can alter the very terrain that neoliberalism has established, while sustaining and intensifying the possibilities for and conditions of *game-transformative practices* and a generative politics (Coles, 2016, pp. 25-26). As we have demonstrated, following such lines of flight, MCCH and Vio.Me point to the creation of new commoning and radical democratic resonances and subjectivities, which can foster the development of a radically democratic habitus. They can in turn trigger a spiraling logic of democratization through society as a whole.

4. Thesis Conclusions

This thesis is concerned with providing a critical explanation of the proliferation of grassroots alternatives in the crisis-ridden European South, with a particular emphasis on the Greek experience. Therefore, it engages with the emergence of commoning and solidarity initiatives in times of crisis, their characteristics, political articulations and social practices. Namely, the thesis aims to analyze and critically explain the ways in which commoning and solidarity politics are constructed, under what conditions, and how their practices and discourses are engaged with social change. It puts forwards the argument that, in this particular conjuncture, a shift in the focus of collective action responses from claim-based politics towards more practical repertoires of grassroots organizing and social activity played a crucial role in the re-politicization of everyday life, while it also provided the motivation and opportunity for common people to build alternative social infrastructures and imagine society differently.

The sequence of the papers in this thesis follows the progression of my thinking on commoning and solidarity politics in a contextual and conceptual sense, and not necessarily the chronological order that they were written. The first paper emphasizes how grassroots responses are conceptualized in social movement studies and the theory of commons in seeking to provide a synthetic context-specific framework, capable of highlighting the specific characteristics of such forms of collective action and delineate both their antagonistic and productive dimensions. Moreover, the paper enabled me to better situate the Greek case within the South European context. The second paper is concerned with the politicizing dynamics of grassroots collective action and seeks to explain how the austere governance of the crisis in Greece has been understood and contested from below. Building on this grassroots activity it also draws some reflection

on the electoral rise of Syriza within the same context. Lastly, the third paper looks at the specific social practices that emerged in two exemplary grassroots commoning and solidarity projects in Greece to reflect on the import of the latter's politics for radical democratic practice and thought, and *vice versa*.

The first part of this section lays out the three individual papers that compose this thesis and their key findings. In the second section, *by means of a reflective essay*, I draw attention to what can be learned from the main arguments of the three papers in an attempt to provide a singular explanation of the problematized phenomena under study and identify paths for future research.

4.1 Papers and Findings

Paper 1

Social Movements and the Commons: A Framework for Understanding the Current Forms of Collective Action in Southern Europe

Paper 1 is the point of departure of the thesis in navigating between social movement studies and the theory of the commons and interrogating their respective recourse in the study of grassroots politics as sites of antagonism, open and plural encounter, and ongoing experimentation with democratic politics. It starts by observing that the new forms of collective action that emerged within the crisis-ridden European South and emphasized the self-organization of everyday life, the provision of unofficial welfare services and the (re)invention of alternatives in social production and reproduction, cannot be fully addressed by social movement studies nor common theories alone. Thus, Paper 1 was constructed on the ground of a double problematization: First, it endeavors to stage a dialogue between the two bodies of literatures that have vastly contributed in informing contemporary scholarship and research on the character,

possibilities and limitations of grassroots politics. Second, in doing so, it critically engages with and evaluates new grassroots practices and forms of collective action in Southern Europe in the aftermath of the Indignants' squares in 2011.

Accordingly, in rethinking a tripartite set of central concepts in both theories - that is, a) social movements and social movement organizations (SMOs)/commons, b) activists/commoners and c) mobilization/commoning - the paper provided an overview of how social movement studies and commons-oriented accounts consider the characteristics and politicizing dynamics of such collective action projects *vis a vis* social change. More precisely, it asks whether a clear-cut dichotomy in the way the two literatures define their respective contexts for agency (i.e. protest and claim-making as the context for social movements, counter-practices and prefiguration of alternatives as the one for commoning and solidarity projects) is relevant in the south European context, where new collective projects closely aligned with the anti-austerity insurgencies organized everyday needs differently. To grapple with such questions, the paper draws empirical insights from fieldwork research in Greece, secondary literature with respect to other South European countries and document analysis of such projects' publicly available material (e.g. founding declarations, campaigning material, press releases, and so on).

The key arguments of the paper can be summarized as follows:

1. In terms of dimensions and models of organization, the alternative collectivities of commoning and solidarity in the South European context move beyond dominant understandings of collective action in social movement studies as they do not simply mobilize their constituents in challenging or directing claims towards governments and/or other powerholders. Similarly, with regards to the

commons' scholarship, such forms of collective action fall outside institutionalist forms for the governance and appropriation of Common Pool Resources on the one hand, and ,on the other, they traverse more radical accounts of the commons that tend to assume something inherent in commoning practices without carefully examining their production and functioning through time, as well as the role of hegemony, social antagonism and power.

2. In thinking the type of core agent in such practices, the status of activist in social movement accounts offers a limited framework to understand the characteristics of participants in the new forms of collective action under study due to its focus on claim-making and participation in protest events and other forms of street politics. Turning to the literature of the commons, the main emphasis around the subjects is directed either to pre-established interests and identities of potential co-operators (institutionalist perspectives) or to the engagement with the production of new social practices (critical perspectives).
3. Considering the political dimensions of the new commoning and solidarity initiatives' collective action, an understanding of their agency cannot be confined to their capacity and ways to pose sustained challenges to elites, authorities, dominant institutions and agents with political and economic power. Inspired by the prominent role of political process and resource mobilization theories, for many years, such a strict focus has led social movement scholars to prioritize protests' policy outcomes and direct engagement with the state when studying the consequences of collective action. Equally limiting to the understanding of collective action dynamics *vis-a-vis* change is - from a critical commons perspective this time - the prevailing focus

on commoning practices as immanently transformative or progressive, almost as such practices emerge in a political and social vacuum.

Paper 1 contributes to the knowledge of grassroots politics by proposing a synthetic framework in understanding the new commoning and solidarity forms of collective action in the European South. By drawing a movement-oriented emphasis on the meso-level of analysis, this synthesis enables a study of such projects as organizations with defined procedures, aims, resources and coalitions that have developed in the aftermath of powerful movements. At the same time however, it remains particularly attentive to the productive dimension of such spaces as social systems of commoning, where participants produce new commonwealth and shape their daily life collectively based on their shared needs. Accordingly, it renders more intelligible processes of subject formation in such projects by emphasizing both the antagonistic and the performative dimension of individual participation in such grassroots alternatives: the public contestation of neoliberal austerity practices on the one hand, and the creation of new rules and institutions based on horizontal relations and community sharing on the other. Approaching processes of political subjectivation through such a synthetic prism, allows us to highlight the moment that actors identify themselves with certain struggles, while at the same time enables us to remain responsive to the latter's content as they produce - and are equally reproduced by - specific sets of social relations, practices and values. Finally, talking about collective action and social change, this synthetic framework pays attention to both the meaningful and structural complexity of collective action practices. In the post-2011 crisis-ridden European South, mobilization (as sustained challenges to authorities) mostly unfolded in the everyday settings of collective struggles for the preservation of material and immaterial resources affected by austerity driven enclosures. At the same

time, the actors in such initiatives prefigured alternative practices, relationships and imaginaries, which were against and have practically moved beyond neoliberal capitalism. By complementing new social movements theories with a critical commons perspective, the paper demonstrates the need of collective action theories to be more responsive in the political and ethical dimensions of possible changes in the realm of social practices, subjectivity and everyday life.

Paper 2

Grassroots Collective Action Within and Beyond Institutional and State solutions: the (Re-)Politicization of Everyday Life in Crisis-ridden Greece

Paper 2 investigates the transformations and politicizing dynamics of grassroots repertoires during the Greek crisis. To do so, it takes as its starting point the first wave of anti-austerity mobilizations and emphasizes the Aganaktismenoi squares as the catalyst for an alternative problematization of the crisis and the diffusion of commoning and solidarity politics. Moving forwards, the paper explores the ways in which such novel repertoires and discourses of self-organization and self-provisioning have shaped a (re-)politicization of everyday life from below. Moreover, it sheds light on the conditions under which such grassroots social activity has influenced and in turn has been influenced by institutional left-wing agents, reflecting on Syriza's rise to the government. Hence, it offers an empirically informed account of the trajectories of collective action against austerity over the development of the crisis and its neoliberal management between 2010 and 2015. The analysis is grounded on two sources of primary data: a) semi-structured interviews with participants in the Aganaktismenoi Syntagma square so as to explore the micro and meso dynamics of political participation in the aftermath of the movement; and b) a protest-survey in the three-days static demonstration '*for democracy and against austerity in Europe*' aiming to

trace and determine political socialization and life-course patterns at a more macro-level of analysis.

The key findings are:

1. Against the attempts of dominant political agents and media to de-politicize the causes and effects of the crisis, as well as to affirm a TINA dogma around the latter's austere management, the first anti-austerity protest wave and particularly the Aganaktismenoi mobilizations enabled an active process of organization and confrontation of meanings, which highlighted the political character of the crisis. Moreover, within the occupied space of Syntagma square ordinary men and women have actively experimented with new forms of direct democracy and self-organization.
2. In the aftermath of the Aganaktismenoi squares, discourses and repertoires of direct collective action, solidarity and self-provisioning spread across numerous grassroots projects seeking to provide an alternative organization of people's needs and everyday life in sectors such as: healthcare provision, food, labor, and so on. The opening of new spaces and sites of commoning and solidarity enabled larger parts of the population - that is, not only activists and militants - to actively engage with grassroots alternatives.
3. Syriza's active participation in the popular struggles of the 2010-2015, and its connections with several grassroots networks, played an important role to the party's electoral rise and proved crucial for the result of the July 2015 referendum. Moreover, by embracing such grassroots repertoires Syriza contributed to the opening of channels for citizens' engagement in policy-making and governance while at the same time provided an institutional backdrop for these more radical or transformative possibilities to gain political

visibility. However, in the aftermath of the referendum and the signing of a third bailout program, Syriza's strategy had been clearly channeled into the institutional level, deflecting the social energy of the popular struggles.

Paper 2 contributes to the knowledge of collective action impact by demonstrating that the political outcomes of movements and other grassroots actors are not limited to changes in legislation or other policy gains. In fact, it shows that what would have been most likely theorized as cultural and/or social outcomes of collective action (e.g. subject formation, the production of alternative meanings, symbols, practices and discourses, the creation of counter-cultures and counter-logics, and so forth) played a pivotal role in the politicization of the causes, effects and management of the Greek crisis. Moreover, the re-territorialization of the struggles at the local level, which encouraged a more active engagement of non-militant people with the experiment of democracy and the organization of their everyday needs through commoning practices, bear with it the potential for thinking and enacting politics outside of its subjection to the state and the party framework. However, at the same time, such politicizing effects have also built up to the national level, as the electoral rise of Syriza demonstrates, and played an important role in the reshaping of the parliamentary politics in the period between 2012-2015.

Paper 3

Counter-Logics of Radical Democracy and the Commons: An Ethico-Political Interpretation of Everyday Struggles during the Greek Crisis

Grassroots struggles, practices and politics have been at the epicenter of debates about the character and future possibilities of radical democracy and emancipatory politics. Within the Greek context, the dispersion of grassroots politics into different sectors of

everyday life, which have been heavily affected by the austere neoliberal management of the crisis, has reinvigorated the interest of academics, activists and other political agents on the strategic impact of such struggles for counter-hegemonic projects. Against this background, Paper 3 investigates the ways in which the austerity governance of the crisis intensified neoliberal reforms, what its underlying assumptions and social and political implications are. In constructing the official discourses around the implementation of austerity, the paper conducts a qualitative document analysis of Greece's structural adjustment programs, policy reports and briefings.

More importantly however, Paper 3 evaluates two paradigmatic cases of grassroots projects in Greece - Vio.Me (the first workers' recuperated factory in Greece) and the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko (the largest social solidarity health clinic in Greece) - and asks how alternative practices, values and institutions that are emerged at an everyday level can productively supplement the form and substance of radical democracy, while concretely prefiguring its accomplishment. To this end, the paper draws empirical insights from qualitative interviews with participants in the above projects and qualitative document analysis of their publicly available campaigning material.

The key findings are:

1. In framing Greece as the greatest threat for the economic security of Eurozone, the Greek *problem* has been constructed as one of modernizing the state and public administration, and regulating the country's weak institutions and economic structures, which were deemed responsible for the persistent economic deficits and falling competitiveness through the implementation of a widespread austerity agenda. Hence, any financial aid

included in the three bailout programs that Greece signed from 2010-2015 with the European Commission, IMF and European Central Bank, has been attached to the fulfilment of strict conditions that have contained a specific austerity agenda in line with the neoliberal rationality and practices of government downsizing (wages and pensions cuts, curtailing of welfare state provisions, and so forth) and rolling privatization of state assets, public infrastructures and enterprises.

2. The social activity of the expanding network of grassroots commoning and solidarity initiatives in Greece sought to counter the immediate effects of austerity in the day-to-day life of the population. At the same time however, the practices and discourses of such grassroots agents have moved beyond reactionary or defensive politics to engender an alternative horizon for organizing the social. Independently of their primary field of action (welfare provision from below or economic alternatives), their plural activities prefigure different aspects of social and political organization, which is forged through practices of social co-production, democratic decision-making, and logics of association that are grounded on solidarity, equity and care.
3. While they retain their own relative autonomy, the logics and practices of commoning can, and should be addressed as a productive supplement to the post-Marxist project of radical democracy (both in theory and practice). The open and dynamic spaces of commoning foster an agonistic sense of togetherness and interdependence between subjects. Moreover, they sustain and intensify the possibilities for organized forms of social contestation and the conditions of transformative practices at the everyday level.

Paper 3 intervenes in the ongoing debates surrounding radical politics and alternatives to neoliberal capitalism by offering an ethico-political interpretation of commoning and solidarity practices, which addresses the latter's strategic import for radical democratic theory and politics. In doing so, Paper 3 attempts to bridge two seemingly opposing strands of Post-Marxist thought. Furthermore, it contributes to debates on the characterization of new forms of self-organization in the Greek context by: a) empirically demonstrating how their practices encompass a plurality of social logics; and b) offering a normative evaluation of grassroots democratic struggles that is not tied to an ontology of defensive politics. Thus, Paper 3 complements accounts from various disciplines of social sciences (e.g. anthropology, human geography, business and management, etc.) that tend to subsume broader sets of grassroots practices under a single overarching logic (i.e. most often solidarity and self-management). Finally, it also attends to a gap in social movements accounts that seem to overemphasize the reactionary character of such struggles, hence obscuring their productive dimension.

4.2 Re-Thinking Grassroots Alternatives and Radical Democratic Politics: A Reflective Essay

This concluding essay returns to the three main research questions posed at the introduction of the thesis, reflect on what can be learned from the overarching observations of the three papers and consider the pathways for future research. Let me first recall the questions:

- i. What are the specific characteristics of the collective action of the grassroots projects within the South European experience during the crisis?
- ii. How do we determine the emergence of grassroots projects of commoning and solidarity in crisis-ridden Greece, and to what extent do such grassroots politics engage with transformative action and processes of social change?
- iii. (How) can the logics that sustain the values, practices and institutions that are being developed at a grassroots level inform an incipient radical democratic ethos and rationality?

The following discussion, structured along these questions, attempts to bind together theoretical concepts and empirical elements from all the three papers, in an effort to articulate a singular explanation of the problematized phenomena at hand, that is grassroots alternatives in the empirical context of the crisis-ridden European South and particularly Greece in the period between 2011-2018. Against this background, it also seeks to reflect on the future of radical democratic politics and emancipatory struggles.

Towards a Radical Democratic Synthesis

The upsurge of grassroots commoning and solidarity projects in the European South in the post-2011 crisis conjuncture opens up for this thesis the need to rethink social movements studies, the theory of the commons and political discourse theory in ways that are more responsive in considering the organization of grassroots alternatives in the realm of everyday life as a crucial site for staging antagonisms, forging new social practices and values, and experimentally producing new forms of democratization that prefigure an alternative (post-capitalist) social order.

By sharing the ontological presuppositions of political discourse theory, this research addresses human agents, social structures and practices as incomplete and historically contingent entities that are constituted and embedded within certain discourses. In this sense, discourses are understood as systems of meaningful practices that set the conditions of possibility for subjects and objects in the social world. From this standpoint, these conditions of possibility are built upon partial fixations of meaning. In other words, the being or the identity of all objects is constructed within historically contingent systems of rules and relations that constitute social reality. This foregrounds the non-necessary character of any attempt that seeks to fix the meaning of social practices and relations and designate what is possible. In turn, this means that both social structures and human agents are not fully constituted entities, but rather, they are products of political decision and action (constituted through the exclusion of other possibilities and the exercise of power) (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000). Thus, in my theoretical account the politically produced character of such practices acquires a primary role. In these terms, within the social field, the identities of all objects and social agents are precarious, contingent and negotiable, and can be articulated by divergent political logics attempting to hegemonize them (Howarth, 2000: pp.101-25).

To understand this better it is important to recall the distinction between ‘politics’ (*la politique*) and ‘the political’ (*le politique*) (Balibar, 2002; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Lacoue-Labarthe et al., 1997; Lefort, 1994). The field specific to *politics* can be defined as the *ontic* ground whereby normative functions and actions are taking place between institutionalized social actors, who are seeking to participate in the authority structure. The *political*, on the other hand, emerges in the *ontological* level, as the inherent in society and human relations dimension of antagonism. The political then can be thought as an eventful dislocation/rupture, whereby the social space is divided into opposing camps attempting to defend or challenge existing social relations or practices in the name of a principle or ideal (Mouffe, 2005: pp. 8-9; Rancière, 1992: pp. 58-9). Dislocation and antagonism reveal the impossibility of any social objectivity to attain a full identity, thus enabling social agents to construct new meanings, relations and practices within which they identify themselves. In this sense, the moment of the political opens a ‘playful’ horizon, wherein new unidentified spaces and practices for enacting politics can emerge. Such a conceptual determination of the political moment invites us to rethink our understandings of what counts as politics, and, within the scope of this research, has allowed me to decenter the focus of political analysis from the sphere of institutional politics and re-center it on the political potential of everyday grassroots collective action, practices and discourses.

In sum, the moment of the political and the creation of antagonistic frontiers does not necessarily disclose a certain form of political agency with reference to the institutional level of politics (e.g. party and representational politics as the domain considered to be *politics proper*) and neither do they prescribe the terrain within which the political struggle will unfold in terms of governmental and policy arrangements (e.g. parliament, state mechanisms and formal authorities -at national, regional or local

scale- as the ‘high grounds’ of the political activity). Accordingly, this research has attempted to tell a different story; one that highlights the often neglected or at least underappreciated, as politically infeasible or merely peripheral for a left-wing strategy, politicizing effects of grassroots practices, forms of subjectivation, discourses, imaginaries and spaces. In other words, with reference to the empirical context of the thesis, the dislocatory effects of the global financial crisis and its austere governance in the European South and particularly Greece, signaled for me the need to bring grassroots commoning and solidarity politics to the center of theoretical (and practical) attention in thinking about social change and radical democratic alternatives.

In seeking to construct a context-specific account of the models of organization, types of political identification and agentic articulations that sustain a number of grassroots ventures in the crisis-ridden European south (e.g. self-organized workers’ collectives, social solidarity clinics and pharmacies, tutoring networks, and so on, providing bottom-up resources and services that used to be hitherto provided by the state and the market) this thesis has deconstructed and synthetically re-appropriated central concepts of social movement studies and the theory of the commons. This framework allowed me to better exhibit the retroductive and problem-driven strategy of this research; one which begins by observing a set of political and ethical phenomena in the present and proceeds to construct them as a particular object of study in an attempt ‘to produce new interpretations either by rendering visible phenomena previously undetected by dominant theoretical approaches, or by problematizing existing accounts and articulating alternative interpretations’ (Howarth, 2005, pp. 320-321).

Accordingly, the emergence of grassroots ventures in the aftermath of the early anti-austerity protest cycle and Indignant movements in the European South (Greece,

Spain, Portugal and Italy), served as the springboard for the problematization of social movement studies accounts that limit the vector of collective action to claim-making towards institutions and political brokerage practices on the hand, and commoning approaches tied to a politics of immanentism and *exodus* on the other. Such a problem-driven approach enabled this research to better situate the linkages between the dislocatory effects of the crisis's austerity management, the pre-Indignant anti-austerity struggles and the post-Indignant commoning and solidarity initiatives in seeking to render more intelligible the emergence of novel practices, forms of organization, processes of subjectivation and agentic articulations in the South European context. In other words, it provided the means to delimit the research objects (i.e. the grassroots collective action of commoning and solidarity initiatives in the European South), to account for the historical and structural conditions that gave rise to them (i.e. crisis, austerity governance, anti-austerity movements, discourses and repertoires) as well as to foreground possibilities disclosed in the structuration of alternative practices and relations (i.e. new forms of organization, agency and political subjectivation).

In these terms, this research has elaborated a set of formal concepts and dimensions of collective action (see Paper 1 Table 2), which when articulated together can assist us in creating a putative *explanans* to account for the emergence of commoning and solidarity projects in Southern Europe. More precisely, the devising of a historically and spatially specific framework has proven useful in fleshing out the particular characteristics of a set of paradigmatic cases of commoning and solidarity networks and critically examine their role in: staging antagonism; mediating between claim-based and hands-on repertoires of social self-activity; sustaining the encounter of politicizing subjects; engendering counter-hegemonic social practices and values;

and generating moments and places that enable an active experimentation with democratic politics.

By situating the Greek experience within the broader socio-political South European context, I have shown (Papers 1 & 2) that the proliferation of grassroots commoning and solidarity projects (e.g. new forms of cooperatives, solidarity networks, exchange and alternative currency networks, community clinics and pharmacies, and so on), emanates from the early anti-austerity and squares' movements. These spectacular uprisings emerged against austerity measures, but at the same time targeted the crisis of political responsibility and the deterioration of democratic institutions. They involved massive numbers of participants who, in their majority, had not been politically active before and appeared to be autonomous from the traditional political actors (parties, unions etc.) (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). As a result, the demographics of the actors varied both socially and ideologically (Giovanopoulos and Mitropoulos, 2011). Within occupied public spaces, these mobilizations constituted an alternative example of social organization. They appeared leaderless and shaped horizontal processes of self-organization (Hadjimichalis, 2013). By setting up popular assemblies and through the creation of several thematic micro-assemblages around social relations and practices (housing, work, food, environment, welfare and community services, etc.) they brought the function of liberal democratic institutions into question (Flesher Fominaya, 2017).

Importantly for this thesis, such collective action events, which following McAdam and Sewel's (2001, p. 118) typology, I have addressed as *transformative* (Paper 2), instigated a process of creation and handling of meanings that required 'participants to reject institutionalized routines and taken for granted assumptions about the world' and enabled new ways of doing and being to come into existence.

Within the occupied space of the squares actors invented new ways of engaging with democratic politics, created symbols, new lines of interaction and a capacity for a form of political articulation which have been confronted with several instances of the predominant field of experience. It is precisely at this moment, concentrated in the space and time of the occupied public space, that one can start tracing ‘the emergence of a collective action, directed towards struggling against inequalities and challenging relations of subordination’(Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 153). Seen from this perspective, this research argues that the Indignant squares effectively distilled and expressed the potential for insurgent collective action within the crisis environment, by bringing to the epicenter a series of - tightly connected to the dominant neoliberalizing forms of social exclusion and inequality - relations and practices that have previously remained largely uncontested and by transforming them to sites of antagonism. What is more, the spatially concentrated sequences of political and cultural creativity that unfolded in the squares to deal with the particular contingencies faced by the very actors at the beginning of the crisis have brought the articulation of new forms of political action, shaping in this way new possibilities for the conduct of grassroots politics. As McAdam and Sewel (2001, p. 120) illustrate through the examples of the Greensboro Sit-in and the Montgomery Bus Boycott events, when thinking through the sequences of collective action that the latter had catalyzed in the case of Civil Rights Movements, transformative ‘events serve as an example of how such action might proceed’.

Accordingly, drawing from the Greek experience of the *Aganaktismenoi* (Paper 2), I have attempted to show how such collective action that initially unfolded as a response to the crisis’ moment of dislocation, has enabled subjects to give a different shape to the ‘problem’ of the crisis (which has been produced by the dominant political

and financial agents as a ‘problem’ of particular type: i.e. stabilizing the country’s weak economy; regulating and modernizing the hypertrophic and ineffective public sector; providing the ground for necessary reforms to build a globally competitive market; and so on.), as well as to also challenge the TINA dogma around its austere governance (that is, the framing of structural adjustment programs combining a set of recessionary measures, such as wage and pension cuts, cuts on welfare state, increase in direct tax rates, and so on, as the only solution). In this respect, through an analysis of the contextualized self-interpretations of the movement’s participants I have argued that the politicization and equivalential re-articulation of everyday relations and social practices such as work, housing, healthcare and food gave discursive presence to an antagonistic frontier that has been drawn by the very actors on the ground of a grassroots *acting upon*. Such a process of politicization gave content to new organizational forms (e.g. popular assemblies and thematic groups for the organization of everyday needs), imaginaries and forms of political subjectivation around the central signifiers of direct democracy, self-organization and solidarity. In the aftermath of the squares’ events, these collective imaginary and repertoires spread in a multiplicity of spheres in public life and bolstered individuals and movements to envisage and create, what I have called in line with other scholars, grassroots commoning and solidarity ventures to meet everyday needs (Arampatzi, 2017a; Malamidis, 2020; Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016).

Undeniably, as several scholars rightly argue, such demands and repertoires have also influenced and in turn found expression in the discourses of institutional actors of the Left with strong populist characteristics (Stavrakakis, 2015). The cases of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain have attracted the interest of researchers, theorists and activists in considering the possibilities of progressive governments and

parties to represent a social-popular ‘unitary front’ within parliamentary politics and institutional channels. The political project of Syriza, with its insider position to the pre-crisis (since its formation in 2004) and during the crisis movements (Paper 2), has effectively articulated together a series of demands, struggles and identities in its attempt to re-appropriate and stage a sharp antagonism between the camp of ‘the people’ and that of the established ‘oligarchy’ (Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis, 2018, pp. 205-210). Hence, Syriza’s strategy resulted the creation of an equivalential chain gripping together desires and aspirations of the popular mobilizations of the period and the growing disaffection of Greek society with the two-party ‘establishment’ (PASOK and ND), opposed to neoliberalism, austerity policies and the technocratic structure of the European Union (Katsambekis, 2015). As I have argued, Syriza’s high promises, once in office, have been confronted with serious obstacles and limitations stemming from its isolation within the EU, the lack of leverage in the negotiations with the country’s creditors and its straightjacketing within the institutions and the ‘maturing experience’ of governance (Venizelos and Stavrakakis, 2020).

However, this is not to say that a left-wing populist strategy should be deemed *a priori* as failed; but rather, as Syriza’s experience can help us to exemplify, that for a radical social change to occur the political act of creating ‘a people’ out of movements and struggles should be seen as a continuous process that cannot easily be maintained in a top-down fashion through the institutions, that is at an interstitial distance from the everyday struggles and practices of the ‘people’ you claim to represent. To be sure, a fully-fledged discussion of Syriza’s trajectory and strategy in this particular conjuncture goes beyond the primary scope of this research, however the interpretations of the findings presented in Paper 2 (see figure 3), from the protest survey conducted in the three-day mobilization ‘for democracy and against austerity in

Europe' on 11, 16 and 20 February 2015 in Syntagma, allowed me to sketch out some preliminary reflections around the main interactions between grassroots collective action and Syriza's agency. If anything, such reflection allowed me to show that Syriza's public support to the Aganaktismenoi and the active participation of several of its members, organizations and official youth branch - both in the occupied squares and in the expansion of a network of grassroots alternatives in the former's aftermath - should be deemed as crucial factors in understanding the party's rising popularity in the national elections of 2012 and the European elections of 2014, as well as for its surge to government in the first national elections of 2015 and the result of the referendum in the same year.

Much ink has been spilled on analyzing and evaluating the rise, difficulties and limitations of Syriza in government, which was followed by the bitter political disputes about the agreement and implementation of the third bailout program between the Greek government and its international creditors. In this context, the policies and practices of the second Syriza government, after the referendum of July 2015 and the September elections, failed to stem or transform the new regime of austerity, leaving the election of the right wing Nea Dimokratia government in 2019 and, more importantly, a serious questioning of the Greek and international left strategy to shape a counter-hegemonic project for the reversal of neoliberal policies. Today, for Syriza (and other parties of the left, such as Podemos) this radical challenge to build on the lived experiences and political culture of movements and grassroots struggles has remained unaddressed. Indeed, rather than thinking about the possibilities for more radical social and political transformations, as the movements and grassroots initiatives emphasize the urgency for more democracy and the development of new ways of doing politics, it appears as if the first priority is to build a populist *electoral* strategy.

In closing this short but crucial detour to account for the interconnections between movements, left-wing agents and the potential for change in institutional and governance arrangements, the early anti-austerity protest cycle and the square events as its peak moment have shaped the likelihood of transformations and re-articulations of grassroots politics in the field of everyday life. Decisively, the focus of the analysis on such grassroots forms of social and political acting, instead of privileging the articulation of a series of struggles and demands within the discourse of institutional politics and left-wing agents, opened up for this research an interesting dimension that attempts to direct theoretical and empirical attention towards processes and possibilities for social change and transformation from the bottom-up. What is more, rethinking the structuration of antagonism in the level of society, as the former has been equally staged and disclosed in the new forms and practices of the grassroots struggles and self-organizing movements running parallel to - and at times intersecting with - the populist and anti-populist national politics in Greece since the beginning of the crisis (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2019), has allowed this thesis to ‘supplement’ the post-Marxist project of radical democracy with the perspective of the commoning and solidarity grassroots politics.

Thereby, as it has been argued throughout this research, these counter-hegemonic struggles have not only remained defensive and reactionary (i.e. identifying and contesting the new austere forms of exclusion), but they have generated and prefigured alternative social practices and relations. In an effort to offer a more empirically informed mapping of this set of practices and relations, this research has drawn reflection from the lived experiences and participants’ self-interpretations in two exemplary cases of commoning and solidarity ventures in Greece, namely the Metropolitan Community Health Clinic (MCCH) at Helliniko (Athens) and the

recuperated Vio.Me factory at Thessaloniki (Paper 3). These two grassroots projects arose from the anti-austerity movements in crisis-ridden Greece, and they have been an integral part of the broader equivalential struggles⁵ against austerity and at the forefront of the grassroots responses in two of the most profoundly affected by the austerity governance sectors, that is the domains of work and healthcare provision.

As a case in point, the analysis of new practices and organisational forms (Paper 1) of these grassroots alternatives and their further evaluation through the cases of MCCH and Vio.Me (Paper 3), allowed this thesis to approach the notion of the commons not only as a thing or a resource to be shared, but rather as a social activity that is performed by a collective subject and it is grounded upon a set of norms regarding the use, care and sustenance of crucial for the livelihood of the community services and resources. Relatedly, the thesis has pointed out that such social activity is based on common practices and rules of self-organization, collective management, and mutual association and provides practical examples of collective decision making and

⁵ To illustrate some of these links: MCCH, together with the provision of voluntary healthcare services to deprived and wider parts of the population, has led or participated in a series of struggles for universal access to the health system, nationally and in a European level (e.g. MCCH, 2013a; SSCs & Pharmacies of Attica and Korinthos, 2015). It has supported a number of public hospitals by donating drugs and equipment (see for example MCCH, 2012, 2015b). Moreover, MCCH has played a crucial role in the collection of medical supplies and other materials for refugee camps in Greece and shipment missions to other countries, such as Palestine and Syria (MCCH, 2013b, 2014, 2015c). Regarding Vio.Me, one should start with the establishment of the 'Workers' Health Clinic in Vio.Me' part of the extended network of social clinics that offers holistic primary healthcare services to Vio.Me workers, their families, the members of other workers' collectives and other people either lacking medical insurance or not. Vio.Me workers has also provided economic support to individuals and other recuperated factories or cooperatives both in Greece and abroad (e.g. Robben tou Ksilou and RiMaflow). Notably, a big part of the facilities was used as a collection center of first aid materials for refugees and migrants incarcerated in the northern borders of Greece in 2015. Finally, the gates of the factory have been open for the organization of a plethora of social and cultural activities and international events such as bazaars without middlemen, concerts, the 2nd Euro/Mediterranean meeting of Workers' Economy and the annual CoOpenAir Festival for cooperativism.

participatory planning of everyday activities (Ostrom, 1990, pp. 88-102; 2008). The analysis of these new types of resonance and social interaction, which involve collective processes to produce services and goods, and share knowledge and skills pinpointed three possible social counter-logics: social co-production, self-governance, and political solidarity.

By further engaging with the logics and practices of commoning this research has set to rework the project of radical democracy, both as a theoretical and socio-political project. The dislocatory effects of the neoliberally-driven austerity reforms included in the MoUs and structural adjustment programs that Greece has signed with its creditors, led people to form a number of commoning and solidarity alternatives such as initiatives for basic services provision, work-related cooperatives, alternative currencies, educational networks, and so forth. Seen from this perspective, it has been argued that austerity governance can be thought as the constitutive outside of the social struggles and commoning initiatives in the crisis conjuncture, affirming their political dimension. Hence, my claim here is that the public contestation of the austerity enclosures through the social activity of grassroots agents enables us to articulate the deeper political essence of the latter. Constructed as demands, on the ground of common interests and needs, and enacted as real alternatives in the here and now, the social activity of these grassroots actors is shaped on the ground of equivalential relations between multiple networks and democratic struggles to preserve/create resources or re-appropriate privatized public resources, against state and market driven enclosures intensified by the regime of austerity.

For this research then, the particular politics of this alternative social activity is informed by a political logic of being in common and constitute a political articulation whose objective is to overcome the hegemony of neoliberal logics (e.g.

individualization, commodification, technocracy, etc.) in organizing social relations and practices. To put it in a nutshell, the emergence of commoning and solidarity initiatives within a crisis context instantiates the proliferation of points of antagonism in the sphere of everyday *routinized* social practices, thus reactivating the latter's sedimented political origins and challenging them in practice. These struggles, which as it has been suggested represent an articulation of core democratic ideals and values (e.g. equality, autonomy, solidarity) into new sets of social practices, contest and change embedded relations of domination and oppression in various social fields, while prefiguring more diverse modes of production, care, decision-making, knowledge sharing, and so on. Through collaborative engagements beyond government and the state, the practices of commoning and solidarity projects come to radicalize and extend democratic values into different sites of the economy and civil society within the weaving of discourses and repertoires of social change as a part of a bottom-up project in the making.

The empirical conjuncture of the early 2010s - from the Arab Spring to the 'squares' and occupy movements - saw the beginnings of the politicizing flows the 'decade of movements'⁶ ushered in, as a response to the global financial crisis and its austere neoliberal management, ecological devastation and worldwide rise of social injustices, inequalities, xenophobia and structural racism. These grassroots insurgencies have not only demonstrated a profound discontent with the present situation of neoliberal domination, nor have they simply exposed deeply structural injustices and inequalities. In a context of multifaceted crises, extreme social polarization and political immediacy, such grassroots insurgencies have instituted

⁶ Different analysts, scholars and journalists have used such terms to describe this decade. It has been also characterized as the decade of 'riots and protests' or the decade 'in social change' etc.

alternative forms of political acting and imagined new horizons at a distance from the state and party politics and beyond the rule of neoliberal capital (Abensour, 2011). Indeed, considering the commoning and solidarity projects in crisis-ridden Greece as part of the various democratic struggles that have dotted the South European (and global) landscape since 2011, the papers that constitute this thesis have attempted to rethink and analyze them as sites for nurturing political subjectivation, staging equality and prefiguring alternative practices and discourses for a radical democratic being in common.

More than ever, it is this fidelity to a radical democratic ethos that challenge us to theorize, think and practice politics beyond its subjection to existing institutional and governance arrangements, in seeking to remain attentive to new possibilities and the opening of new sites of questioning, thinking and doing differently. In this thesis, I have sought to bring these specific contradictions in radical democratic theory and practice to the fore in order to designate their timely character; one which enables us to understand the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the contemporary sites of emancipatory collective action and their struggles for social transformation, without any pre-established solution.

The road ahead: future research

For this research, the practices and discourses of commoning and solidarity projects shape a productive political force, at a relative distance from spaces and procedures that are *normally* thought as the sites accorded with the exercise of political power and within which what it is *usually* perceived as politics proper is performed. Seen this way, these synergies can be understood as a grassroots counter-hegemonic project emerging against the domination of established political and economic elites and questioning their exclusive privilege to determine the future of societies. This kind of approach has

not been the main focus of analysis in the study of collective action, let alone mainstream political science, apart from the emphasis on the mobilization of demands towards governments, powerholders and other institutional actors. However, the advent of the global financial crisis brought profound changes in the socio-political settings of many countries around the world, making the relation of social movements with the state even more complicated (Dikeç, 2017). Thus, in recent years, grassroots actors, practices, and more local- or micro-process of democratic struggles and political organizing have attracted the interest and theoretical gaze of scholars and researchers from various academic disciplines (Chatterton and Pusey, 2020; Pechtelidis and Kioupiolis, 2020; Russell, 2019; Yates, 2015).

The anti-austerity mobilizations and the square movements have catalyzed the emergence of a number of movement-parties in the Southern Europe (Della Porta et al., 2017); Syriza, in Greece, and Podemos, in Spain, are usually the main points of reference in this discussion (Kioupiolis and Katsambekis, 2018). Moreover, constellations of new municipalist forces that bring together urban movements, neighborhood groups, commoning and solidarity projects ascended to power in the local elections of 2015 and 2019 in Spain and 2016 in Italian cities. In this respect, such hybrid forms have shaped the momentum for a more radical confluence of the boundaries between grassroots politics and progressive institutional actors. Barcelona en Comú, Adelante Cádiz, Mas Madrid in Spain, the municipal administrations in Naples and Turin in Italy, as well as more recent examples of municipalist formations in Greece (e.g. the ‘City Upside Down’ in Thessaloniki) adopt movement and commoning driven organizational forms and practices: such as collective and distributed leadership, open public assemblies, actions for the re-appropriation of public housing and public spaces, re-municipalization of water supplies, and so on.

As a consequence of the grassroots oriented approach that this thesis has adopted, the nature of the relationship between the abovementioned party and municipalist formations with the emerging grassroots groups has not received attention. Importantly though, this kind of approach also signals the need to account for these kinds of relationships, and their contextual and scalar differences, without privileging or conceding normative priority to institutionalized structures and government practices. Accordingly, the key question for future research that aspires to rethink such processes without guarantees, is the question of moving from one level of politics to another, and transforming the social activity of democratic grassroots agents into an issue of major importance for social change and radical democratic agency. Such an analytical viewpoint could allow us to better respond and relate perennial questions - what, how and why - around the constitution of radical democratic politics, forms of representation, strategic horizons and social organization.

These developments are linked with a turn to commoning, prefigurative and everyday aspects of collective struggles and social movements. It is no coincidence that such a turn emerged in parallel with ethnographic approaches that are more participatory and action oriented. The direct engagement and co-production of knowledge with and for the communities and subjects under study bear the potential to develop new insights that are able to challenge *objective* knowledge and experts' orthodoxies (Cameron and Gibson, 2005). In this sense, a promising horizon for studies involved with carrying out research around processes of politicization, emancipatory alternatives and social change is to ensure that everyday practices and knowledges of 'ordinary' people and communities can be used in shaping their lives.

References

- Aalbers, M. B. (2013). Neoliberalism Is Dead... Long Live Neoliberalism! *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 1083-1090.
- Abensour, M. (2011). *Democracy against the State: Marx and the Machiavellian Movement*: Polity.
- Adam, S. (2016). *Social and Solidarity Economy and the Crisis: Policy Challenges and Opportunities*. Paper presented at the First International Conference in Contemporary Social Sciences, Rethymno, Crete, June Last
- Amaro, R. R., & Ferreira, B. (2018). *The Community Groups of Greater Lisbon as Commons*. Paper presented at the Social Solidarity Economy & the Commons, Lisbon. Retrieved from: Last
- Aminzade, R. (2001). *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Andretta, M., & Della Porta, D. (2014). Surveying Protestors: Why and How. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford: OUP.
- Arampatzi, A. (2017a). Contentious Spatialities in an Era of Austerity: Everyday Politics and 'Struggle Communities' in Athens, Greece. *Political Geography*, 60, 47-56. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.03.010>
- Arampatzi, A. (2017b). The Spatiality of Counter-Austerity Politics in Athens, Greece: Emergent 'Urban Solidarity Spaces'. *Urban Studies*, 54(9), 2155-2171. doi:10.1177/0042098016629311
- Arampatzi, A. (2018). Constructing Solidarity as Resistive and Creative Agency in Austerity Greece. *Comparative European Politics*, 16(1), 50-66. doi:10.1057/s41295-016-0071-9
- Balibar, E. (2002). *Politics and the Other Scene*. London: Verso.
- Balsiger, P., & Lambelet, A. (2014). Participant Observation. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* (pp. 144-172). Oxford: OUP.
- Beasley-Murray, J. (2010). *Posthegemony: Political Theory and Latin America* (pp. xxi, 376 p.).
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611-639. doi:10.2307/223459
- Bickes, H., Otten, T., & Weymann, L. C. (2014). The Financial Crisis in the German and English Press: Metaphorical Structures in the Media Coverage on Greece, Spain and Italy. *Discourse & Society*, 25(4), 424-445. doi:10.1177/0957926514536956
- Bieler, A., & Jordan, J. (2018). Commodification and 'the Commons': The Politics of Privatising Public Water in Greece and Portugal During the Eurozone Crisis. *European Journal of International Relations*, 24(4), 934-957.
- Biesta, G. (2011). The Ignorant Citizen: Mouffe, Rancière, and the Subject of Democratic Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 30(2), 141-153.
- Blee, K. (2013). Interviewing Activists. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, P. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Blee, K. M., & Taylor, V. (2002). Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research. In B. Klandermans & S. Staggenborg (Eds.), *Methods of Social Movement Research* (Vol. 16, pp. 92-117). Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press.
- Blomley, N. (2008). Enclosure, Common Right and the Property of the Poor. *Social & Legal Studies*, 17(3), 311-331. doi:10.1177/0964663908093966
- Bollier, D. (2014). *Think Like a Commoner : A Short Introduction to the Life of the Commons*. Gabriola Islands (Canada): New Society.

- Bosi, L. (2008). Explaining the Emergence Process of the Civil Rights Protest in Northern Ireland (1945–1968): Insights from a Relational Social Movement Approach. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 21(2-3), 242-271. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6443.2008.00337.x
- Bosi, L., Giugni, M., & Uba, K. (2016). *The Consequences of Social Movements* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bosi, L., & Reiter, H. (2014). Historical Methodologies: Archival Research and Oral History in Social Movement Research. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* (pp. 117-143). Oxford: OUP.
- Bosi, L., & Zamponi, L. (2015). Direct Social Actions and Economic Crises: The Relationship between Forms of Action and Socio-Economic Context in Italy. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 8(2), 367-391.
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*: Mit Press.
- Bruff, I. (2014). The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 26(1), 113-129. doi:10.1080/08935696.2013.843250
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burstein, P., & Linton, A. (2002). The Impact of Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Social Movement Organizations on Public Policy: Some Recent Evidence and Theoretical Concerns. *Social Forces*, 81(2), 381-408.
- Caffentzis, G., & Federici, S. (2014). Commons against and Beyond Capitalism. *Community Development Journal*, 49(1), 92-105. doi:10.1093/cdj/bsu006
- Cameron, J., & Gibson, K. (2005). Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein. *Geoforum*, 36(3), 315-331.
- Canton, E., Grilo, I., Monteagudo, J., Pierini, F., & Turrini, A. (2014). The Role of Structural Reform for Adjustment and Growth. *ECFIN Economic Brief*, 34.
- Castells, M. (1983). *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. London; Berkeley, Calif.: Edward Arnold; University of California Press.
- Castells, M. (2011). *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chatterton, P., Featherstone, D., & Routledge, P. (2013). Articulating Climate Justice in Copenhagen: Antagonism, the Commons, and Solidarity. *Antipode*, 45(3), 602-620. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01025.x
- Chatterton, P., & Pusey, A. (2020). Beyond Capitalist Enclosure, Commodification and Alienation: Postcapitalist Praxis as Commons, Social Production and Useful Doing. *Progress in human geography*, 44(1), 27-48.
- Christopoulos, D. (2013). *Within the Risk of the Crisis: Strategies for a Left of the Rights*. Athens: Alexandria.
- Coles, R. (2016). *Visionary Pragmatism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Cornwall, A. (2004). Introduction: New Democratic Spaces? The Politics and Dynamics of Institutionalised Participation. *IDS Bulletin*, 35(2), 1-10. doi:10.1111/j.1759-5436.2004.tb00115.x
- Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Dalakoglou, D., & Vradis, A. (2011). Spatial Legacies of December and the Right to the City. *Revolt and Crisis in Greece: Between a Present Yet to Pass and a Future Still to Come*, 77-88.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2014). *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*: Verso Trade.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2019). *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century*: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- De Angelis, M. (2017). *Omnia Sunt Communia: On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- De Angelis, M., & Stavrides, S. (2010). Beyond Markets or States: Commoning as Collective Practice (a Public Interview). *An Architektura*, 23.

- de França Filho, G. C., Júnior, J. T. S., & Rigo, A. S. (2012). Solidarity Finance through Community Development Banks as a Strategy for Reshaping Local Economies: Lessons from Banco Palmas. *Revista de Administração*, 47(3), 500-515.
- Deleixhe, M. (2018). Conflicts in Common (S)? . *Thesis Eleven*, 144(1), 59-79.
- Della Porta, D. (2014a). In-Depth Interviews. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford: OUP.
- Della Porta, D. (2014b). *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*: OUP Oxford.
- Della Porta, D. (2014c). *Spreading Protest : Social Movements in Times of Crisis*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism Back into Protest Analysis*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.
- Della Porta, D. (2020). *How Social Movements Can Save Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Della Porta, D. (Ed.) (2014d). *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford: OUP Oxford.
- Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2006). *Social Movements : An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Della Porta, D., Fernández, J., Kouki, H., & Mosca, L. (2017). *Movement Parties against Austerity*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.
- Della Porta, D., & Mattoni, A. (2014). *Spreading Protest : Social Movements in Times of Crisis*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Di Felicianantonio, C. (2016). Subjectification in Times of Indebtedness and Neoliberal/Austerity Urbanism. *Antipode*, 48(5), 1206-1227. doi:10.1111/anti.12243
- Diani, M. (1992). The Concept of Social Movement. *The Sociological Review*, 40(1), 1-25. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb02943.x
- Diani, M. (2013). Organizational Fields and Social Movement Dynamics. In *The Future of Social Movement Research*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Diani, M. (2015). *The Cement of Civil Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Diani, M., & Kousis, M. (2014). The Duality of Claims and Events: The Greek Campaign against the Troika's Memoranda and Austerity, 2010-2012. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 19(4), 387-404. doi:10.17813/mai.19.4.d865w28177575673
- Dikeç, M. (2017). *Urban Rage: The Revolt of the Excluded*: Yale University Press.
- Dinerstein, A. C. (2015). *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America : The Art of Organising Hope*.
- Earl, J. (2004). The Cultural Consequences of Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Pbk ed., pp. xvii, 754). Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell.
- Economou, C. (2012). The Performance of the Greek Healthcare System and the Economic Adjustment Programme: "Economic Crisis" Versus "System-Specific Deficits" Driven Reform. *Int J Soc Political Theory*, 2, 33-68.
- Economou, C., Kaitelidou, D., Kentikelenis, A., Maresso, A., & Sissouras, A. (2015). The Impact of the Crisis on the Health System and Health in Greece. In *Economic Crisis, Health Systems and Health in Europe: Country Experience [Internet]*: European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.
- Esteves, A. M. (2017). Radical Environmentalism and "Commoning": Synergies between Ecosystem Regeneration and Social Governance at Tamera Ecovillage, Portugal. *Antipode*, 49(2), 357-376.
- Eurogroup. (2015). Eurogroup, 11 February 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eurogroup/2015/02/11/> Last Accessed:10/03 2020

- European Commission. (2010). *The Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece*, European Economy Occasional Papers No. 61. Retrieved from: Brussels: https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2010/pdf/ocp61_en.pdf Last
- European Commission. (2012). *The Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece*, European Economy Occasional Papers No. 94. Retrieved from: Brussels: https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp94_en.pdf Last
- European Commission. (2014-2020). Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (Fead). Retrieved from: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089> Last
- European Commission. (2016). Structural Reform Support Service. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support-service_en Last Accessed: 18/12/ 2019
- Eurostat. (2018). General Government Gross Debt - Annual Data. Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&code=teina225> Last Accessed: 20 August 2019
- Evans, B., & Reid, J. (2015). Exhausted by Resilience: Response to the Commentaries. *Resilience*, 3(2), 154-159. doi:10.1080/21693293.2015.1022991
- Fattori, T. (2011). Fluid Democracy: The Italian Water Revolution. *Transform! Magazine*, 9.
- Featherstone, D. (2008). *Resistance, Space and Political Identities : The Making of Counter-Global Networks*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Federici, S. (2011). Feminism and the Politics of the Commons. 14.
- Federici, S. (2018). *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. Oakland, CA PM Press.
- Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global Shadows : Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham N.C. ; London: Duke University Press.
- Fernández-Savater, A., Flesher Fominaya, C., Carvalho, L., Çiğdem, Elsadda, H., El-Tamami, W., . . . Stavrides, S. (2017). Life after the Squares: Reflections on the Consequences of the Occupy Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(1), 119-151. doi:10.1080/14742837.2016.1244478
- Flesher Fominaya, C. (2015). Redefining the Crisis/Redefining Democracy: Mobilising for the Right to Housing in Spain's PAH Movement. *South European Society and Politics*, 20(4), 465-485. doi:10.1080/13608746.2015.1058216
- Flesher Fominaya, C. (2017). European Anti-Austerity and Pro-Democracy Protests in the Wake of the Global Financial Crisis. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(1), 1-20. doi:10.1080/14742837.2016.1256193
- Flesher Fominaya, C., & Hayes, G. (Eds.). (2017). *Special Issue: Resisting Austerity: Collective Action in Europe in the Wake of the Global Financial Crisis*. *Social Movements Studies Journal* (Vol. 16): Routledge.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*: Cambridge university press.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Font, J., Della Porta, D., & Sintomer, Y. (2014). *Participatory Democracy in Southern Europe : Causes, Characteristics and Consequences*. London ; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Forno, F., & Graziano, P. (2019). From Global to Glocal. Sustainable Community Movement Organisations (Scmos) in Times of Crisis. *European Societies*, 21(5), 729-752. doi:10.1080/14616696.2019.1616793
- Forno, F., & Graziano, P. R. (2014). Sustainable Community Movement Organisations. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 14(2), 139-157.

- Foster, E. A., Kerr, P., & Byrne, C. (2014). Rolling Back to Roll Forward: Depoliticisation and the Extension of Government. *Policy & Politics*, 42(2), 225-241.
doi:10.1332/030557312X655945
- Foucault, M. (1997). *Ethics : Subjectivity and Truth* (P. Rabinow Ed.). New York: New Press;.
- Fraser, A., Murphy, E., & Kelly, S. (2013). Deepening Neoliberalism Via Austerity and 'Reform': The Case of Ireland. *Human Geography*, 6, 38-53.
- Fumagalli, A., Gobetti, S., Morini, C., Serino, R., Allegri, G., Santini, L., . . . Cvijanovic, V. (2017). *Pie News—Poverty, Income, and Employment News (H2020-Ict-2015)*. Retrieved from: Trento: https://pieproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PIE_D2.1.pdf Last Accessed:12/04/2020
- Gamble, A. (1979). The Free Economy and the Strong State. *Socialist Register*, 16(16).
- García-Lamarca, M. (2017). From Occupying Plazas to Recuperating Housing: Insurgent Practices in Spain. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(1), 37-53. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12386
- Geertz, C. (1974). "From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 28(1), 26-45. doi:10.2307/3822971
- Gerbaudo, P. (2017). The Indignant Citizen: Anti-Austerity Movements in Southern Europe and the Anti-Oligarchic Reclaiming of Citizenship. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(1), 36-50. doi:10.1080/14742837.2016.1194749
- Gibson-Graham. (2008). Diverse Economies: Performative Practices For other Worlds'. *Progress in human geography*, 32(5), 613-632.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., Dombroski, K., Healy, S., & Miller, E. (2018). "Cultivating Community Economies". An Essay for the Next System Project. Retrieved from: <https://thenextsystem.org/cultivating-community-economies> Last Accessed:28 April 2020
- Giovanopoulos, C., & Mitropoulos, D. (2011). *Δημοκρατία under Construction: Από Τους Δρόμους Στις Πλατείες [Democracy under Construction: From Streets to Squares]* Athens: A/synexeia.
- Giugni, M. (2008). Political, Biographical, and Cultural Consequences of Social Movements. *Sociology Compass*, 2(5), 1582-1600. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00152.x
- Giugni, M. (2013). Biographical Consequences of Activism. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, P. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Giugni, M., McAdam, D., & Tilly, C. (1999). *How Social Movements Matter*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press.
- Glynos, J. (2003). Radical Democratic Ethos, or, What Is an Authentic Political Act? *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2(2), 187-208.
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. (2019). The Retroductive Cycle: The Research Process in Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis. In T. Marttila (Ed.), *Discourse, Culture and Organization: Inquiries into Relational Structures of Power. Postdisciplinary Studies in Discourse* (pp. 105-125). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Glynos, J., Howarth, D., Norval, A., & Speed, E. (2009). *Discourse Analysis: Varieties and Methods*. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review paper. UK.
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. R. (2007). *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Goodin, R. E., & Tilly, C. (2006). It Depends. In R. E. Goodin & C. Tilly (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (pp. xii, 869 p.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell-Smith Eds.). New York: International.

- Grasseni, C. (2014a). Food Activism in Italy as an Anthropology of Direct Democracy. *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 23(1), 77-98.
- Grasseni, C. (2014b). Seeds of Trust. Italy's Gruppi Di Acquisto Solidale (Solidarity Purchase Groups). *Journal of Political Ecology*, 21(1), 178-192.
- Griggs, S., & Howarth, D. (2002). An Alliance of Interest and Identity? Explaining the Campaign against Manchester Airport's Second Runway. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 7(1), 43-58. doi:10.17813/mai.7.1.h0462v2m54554864
- Griggs, S., & Howarth, D. (2008). Populism, Localism and Environmental Politics: The Logic and Rhetoric of the Stop Stansted Expansion Campaign. *Planning Theory*, 7(2), 123-144. doi:10.1177/1473095208090431
- GSEVEE. (2013). Small Enterprises in the Forefront Retrieved from: <https://www.eea.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/gsevee-oi-mnimoniakes-politikes-einai-adiexodes-2.pdf>
Last Accessed:20 August 2019
- Gudeman, S. F. (2001). *The Anthropology of Economy: Community, Market, and Culture*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Hadjimichalis, C. (2013). From Streets and Squares to Radical Political Emancipation? Resistance Lessons from Athens During the Crisis. *Human Geography*, 6(2), 116-136.
- Hage, G. (2015). *Alter-Politics: Critical Anthropology and the Radical Imagination*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing.
- Hall, S. (1988). *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. London: Verso.
- Hall, S. (2011). The Neo-Liberal Revolution. *Cultural Studies*, 25(6), 705-728. doi:10.1080/09502386.2011.619886
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2004). *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2009). *Commonwealth*: Harvard University Press.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2012). *Declaration*. New York: Argo-Navis Author Services.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2019). Empire, Twenty Years On. *New Left Review*, NOV/DEC 2019(120).
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2007). Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 610, 22-44.
- Haunss, S., & Leach, D. K. (2007). Social Movement Scenes: Infrastructures of Opposition in Civil Society. In D. Purdue (Ed.), *Civil Societies and Social Movements* (pp. 85-101). Oxon: Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science.
- Hay, C. (2007). *Why We Hate Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Herzfeld, M. (2016). The Hypocrisy of European Moralism: Greece and the Politics of Cultural Aggression – Part 1. *Anthropology Today*, 32(1), 10-13. doi:10.1111/1467-8322.12224
- Holloway, J. (2005). *Change the World without Taking Power* (New ed.). London: Pluto Press.
- Howarth, D. (2005). Applying Discourse Theory: The Method of Articulation. In *Discourse Theory in European Politics* (pp. 316-349): Springer.
- Howarth, D. (2006). Space, Subjectivity, and Politics. *Alternatives*, 31(2), 105-134. doi:10.1177/030437540603100201
- Howarth, D. (2018). Marx, Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Negotiating an Ambiguous Legacy. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(4), 377-389. doi:10.1080/17405904.2018.1457550
- Howarth, D., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2000). Introducing Discourse Theory and Political Analysis. In D. Howarth, A. Norval, & Y. Stavrakakis (Eds.), *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis. Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Howarth, D. R. (2000). *Discourse*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Howarth, D. R. (2013). *Poststructuralism and after [: Structure, Subjectivity and Power*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Howarth, D. R., & Torfing, J. (2005). *Discourse Theory in European Politics : Identity, Policy and Governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ILOSTAT. (2019). Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled Ilo Estimate). Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=GR> Last Accessed: 20 August 2019
- Jasper, J. M., & Poulsen, J. D. (1995). Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests. *Social Problems*, 42(4), 493-512. doi:10.2307/3097043
- Jeffrey, A., McFarlane, C., & Vasudevan, A. (2012). Rethinking Enclosure: Space, Subjectivity and the Commons. *Antipode*, 44(4), 1247-1267.
- Jenkins, J. C. (1983). Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9(1), 527-553.
- Jessop, B. (2016). The Heartlands of Neoliberalism and the Rise of the Austerity State. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *Handbook of Neoliberalism* (pp. 410-421). New York: Routledge.
- Jones, G. (2012). "Grexit" Could Spark Global Economic Crisis: German Think Tank. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece-germany-thinktank/grexit-could-spark-global-economic-crisis-german-think-tank-idUSBRE89GOPE20121017> Last Accessed: 24.07 2019
- Kaika, M., & Karaliotas, L. (2014). The Spatialization of Democratic Politics: Insights from Indignant Squares. *European Urban and Regional Studies*. doi:10.1177/0969776414528928
- Kaika, M., & Karaliotas, L. (2016). The Spatialization of Democratic Politics: Insights from Indignant Squares. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(4), 556-570. doi:doi:10.1177/0969776414528928
- Karaliotas, L. (2017). Staging Equality in Greek Squares: Hybrid Spaces of Political Subjectification. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(1), 54-69. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12385
- Karanikolos, M., Mladovsky, P., Cylus, J., Thomson, S., Basu, S., Stuckler, D., . . . McKee, M. (2013). Financial Crisis, Austerity, and Health in Europe. *The Lancet*, 381(9874), 1323-1331.
- Katsambekis, G. (2015). The Rise of the Greek Radical Left to Power: Notes on Syriza's Discourse and Strategy. *Linea Sur*, 9, 152-161.
- Keller, R. (2012). *Doing Discourse Research*. London: Sage.
- Kioupkiolis, A. (2014). *For the Commons of Freedom* Athens: Exarcheia Publications.
- Kioupkiolis, A. (2017). Common Democracy. Political Representation Beyond Representative Democracy. *Democratic Theory*, 4(1), 35-58. doi:10.3167/dt.2017.040103
- Kioupkiolis, A. (2018). Commoning the Political, Politicizing the Common: Community and the Political in Jean-Luc Nancy, Roberto Esposito and Giorgio Agamben. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 17(3), 283-305.
- Kioupkiolis, A., & Karyotis, T. (2015). Self-Managing the Commons in Contemporary Greece. In D. Azzellini (Ed.), *An Alternative Labour History* (pp. 298-328). London: Zed Books.
- Kioupkiolis, A., & Katsambekis, G. (2014). *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today*. Farnham, England: Ashgate.,
- Kioupkiolis, A., & Katsambekis, G. (2018). Radical Left Populism from the Margins to the Mainstream: A Comparison of Syriza and Podemos. In *Podemos and the New Political Cycle* (pp. 201-226): Springer.

- Klandermans, B., & Oegema, D. (1987). Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers: Steps Towards Participation in Social Movements. *American Sociological Review*, 52(4), 519-531. doi:10.2307/2095297
- Knight, D. M., & Stewart, C. (2016). Ethnographies of Austerity: Temporality, Crisis and Affect in Southern Europe. *History and anthropology*, 27(1), 1-18. doi:10.1080/02757206.2015.1114480
- Kokkinidis, G. (2015). Spaces of Possibilities: Workers' Self-Management in Greece. *Organization*, 22(6), 847-871. doi:10.1177/1350508414521098
- Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in Time and Space: The Evolution of Waves of Contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. xvii, 754 p.). Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub.
- Kotronaki, L., & Christou, S. (2019). (De-) Politicization Trajectories in an Anti-Austerity Contentious Cycle. Social Clinics-Pharmacies Solidarity Structures in Greece. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 12(2), 325-352.
- Kotsaka, T. (2016). The Greek Water Referendum and the Distinction between Public and Common Goods. Retrieved from: <https://www.transform-network.net/en/publications/yearbook/overview/article/yearbook-2016/the-greek-water-referendum-and-the-distinction-between-public-and-common-goods/> Last Accessed:12/04/ 2020
- Koukiadaki, A., & Kretsos, L. (2012). Opening Pandora's Box: The Sovereign Debt Crisis and Labour Market Regulation in Greece. *Industrial Law Journal*, 41(3), 276-304. doi:10.1093/indlaw/dws031
- Kousis, M. (2014). The Transnational Dimension of the Greek Protest Campaign against Troika Memoranda and Austerity Policies, 2010–2012. In D. Della Porta & A. Mattoni (Eds.), *Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis* (pp. 137-170). Colchester: ECPR.
- Kousis, M., Kalogeraki, S., & Cristancho, C. (2018). Alternative Action Organizations During Hard Economic Times: A Comparative European Perspective. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(6), 733-738. doi:10.1177/0002764218768845
- Kousis, M., Kalogeraki, S., Papadaki, M., Loukakis, A., & Velonaki, M. (2018). Confronting Austerity in Greece: Alternative Forms of Resilience and Solidarity Initiatives by Citizen Groups. In J. Roose, M. Sommer, & F. Scholl (Eds.), *Europas Zivilgesellschaft in Der Wirtschafts-Und Finanzkrise* (pp. 77-99). Berlin: Springer VS.
- Kousis, M., & Kanellopoulos, K. (2013). *The Impact of the Greek Crisis on the Repertoire of Contentious and Conventional Politics, 2010-2012*. Paper presented at the 1st Midterm International Conference of the 'Disaster, Conflict and Social Crisis Research Network' of the European Sociological Association Last
- Kousis, M., & Paschou, M. (2017). Alternative Forms of Resilience. A Typology of Approaches for the Study of Citizen Collective Responses in Hard Economic Times. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 10(1), 136-168.
- Koutroukis, T., & Roukanas, S. (2016). Social Dialogue in the Era of Memoranda: The Consequences of Austerity and Deregulation Measures on the Greek Social Partnership Process. In A. Karasavoglou, Z. Arandjelović, S. Marinković, & P. Polychronidou (Eds.), *The First Decade of Living with the Global Crisis: Economic and Social Developments in the Balkans and Eastern Europe* (pp. 73-82). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Kouzis, G. (2018). Labour under Attack During the Period of Crisis and Austerity. In P. Sotiris (Ed.), *Crisis, Movement, Strategy: The Greek Experience* (pp. 119-130). Leiden; Boston;: BRILL.
- Kriesi, H. (1995). *New Social Movements in Western Europe : A Comparative Analysis*. London: UCL Press.

- Kriesi, H. (1996). The Organizational Structure of New Social Movements in a Political Context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laclau, E. (1990a). *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (J. Barnes Ed.). London ; New York: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (1990b). *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time / Ernesto Laclau*. London ; New York: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (1996). *Emancipation(S)*. London: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2005a). The Future of Radical Democracy. In L. Tønder & L. Thomassen (Eds.), *Radical Democracy : Politics between Abundance and Lack* (pp. ix, 268 p.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Laclau, E. (2005b). *On Populist Reason*. London ; New York: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2005c). Populism: What's in a Name. In F. Panizza (Ed.), *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy* (pp. 358 p.). London: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2014). *The Rhetorical Foundations of Society*. London ; Brooklyn, NY: Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy : Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2001). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Zac, L. (1994). Minding the Gap: The Subject of Politics. In E. Laclau (Ed.), *The Making of Political Identities* London: Verso.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, P., Nancy, J.-L., Sparks, S., & ebrary Inc. (1997). *Retreating the Political* Warwick studies in European philosophy.
- Leach, D. K., & Haunss, S. (2009). Scenes and Social Movements. In H. Johnston (Ed.), *Culture, Social Movements, and Protest*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Lefort, C. (1994). Machiavelli: History, Politics, Discourse. In D. Carrol (Ed.), *The States of 'Theory' : History, Art, and Critical Discourse*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leventi, C., & Matsaganis, M. (2016). Estimating the Distributional Impact of the Greek Crisis (2009-2014). *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1787/5jlv2jl6c9f3-en>
- Lichterhan, P. (2013). Ethnography and Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, P. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Chichester;Malden: Wiley-Blackwell
- Lichterhan, P. (2017). Interpretive Reflexivity in Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 18(1), 35-45.
doi:10.1177/1466138115592418
- Linebaugh, P. (2008). *The Magna Carta Manifesto : Liberties and Commons for All*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LIVEWHAT. (2016). *Integrated Report on Alternative Forms of Resilience in Times of Crises (Deliverable: 6.4)*. Retrieved from: https://www.unige.ch/livewhat/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LIVEWHAT_D6.4.pdf
- Lois-González, R. C., & Piñeira-Mantiñán, M. J. (2015). The Revival of Urban Social and Neighbourhood Movements in Spain: A Geographical Characterization. *DIE ERDE: Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin*, 146(2-3). doi:10.12854/erde-146-11
- Luhtakallio, E. (2012). *Practicing Democracy : Local Activism and Politics in France and Finland*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Malamidis, H. (2018). The Passage from Hierarchy to Horizontality. *Zeitschrift für Kultur-und Kollektivwissenschaft*, 4(1), 23-52.
- Malamidis, H. (2020). *Social Movements and Solidarity Structures in Crisis-Ridden Greece*: Amsterdam University Press.
- Marchart, O. (2007). *Post-Foundational Political Thought : Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Mattoni, A. (2014). The Potentials of Grounded Theory in the Study of Social Movements. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* (pp. 21-42). Oxford: OUP.
- Mattoni, A., & Vogiatzoglou, M. (2014). Italy and Greece, before and after the Crisis: Between Mobilization and Resistance against Precarity. *Quaderni. Communication, technologies, pouvoir*(84), 57-71.
- McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. J. (2001). It's About Time: Temporality in the Study of Social Movements and Revolutions In *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory. *American journal of sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241.
- MCCH. (2012). Donation to Public Hospitals. In. Athens: MCCH.
- MCCH. (2013a). Mcch's Contribution in the Creation of a European Network for Free and Universal Access to Health [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.mkiellinikou.org/blog/2013/01/10/%CF%83%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%B2%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BC%CE%BA%CE%B9%CE%B5-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%89%CF%80/> Last
- MCCH. (2013b). Shipment to Lavrio Refugee Center. In. Athens: MCCH.
- MCCH. (2014). Medical Support Shipment to the People of Palestine in Gaza Strip. In. Athens: MCCH.
- MCCH. (2015a). About the Clinic. Retrieved from: <https://www.mkiellinikou.org/en/presentation-of-clinic/> Last Accessed:5 November 2019
- MCCH. (2015b). Another Donation to the General Hospital-Health Center of Karistos. In. Athens: MCCH.
- MCCH. (2015c). Solidarity Shipment to the Kurds of Kobane. In. Athens: MCCH.
- MCCH. (2019). Monthly Bulletin. Retrieved from: <http://www.mkiellinikou.org/%CE%BC%CE%B7%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%AF%CE%BF-%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%81%CF%89%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF-%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%BB%CF%84%CE%AF%CE%BF/> Last Accessed:15 January 2020
- Melucci, A. (1996). *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Meyer, D. S. (2004). Protest and Political Opportunities. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 30, 125-145.
- Meyer, D. S. (2007). *The Politics of Protest : Social Movements in America*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, E. (2005). *Solidarity Economics: Building Other Economies from the Bottom-up and the inside-Out*. Greene, ME: JED Collective.
- Miller, E. (2010). Solidarity Economy: Key Concepts and Issues. *Solidarity economy I: Building alternatives for people and planet*, 25-41.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the Political*. London: Routledge.
- Mouffe, C. (2018). *For a Left Populism*. London: Verso Books.
- Nancy, J.-L. (1991). *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press.
- Nancy, J.-L. (2010). Communism, the Word. In C. Douzinas & S. Zizek (Eds.), *The Idea of Communism* (pp. x, 230 p.). London ; New York, NY: Verso.
- Neeson, J. M. (1996). *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700–1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ostrom, E. (1985). *The Rudiments of a Revised Theory of the Origins, Survival, and Performance of Institutions for Collective Action*. Paper presented at the Bloomington, Indiana: Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis. Indiana University Last
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2008). Tragedy of the Commons. *The new palgrave dictionary of economics*, 2.
- Palonen, K. (2003a). Four Times of Politics: Policy, Polity, Politicking, and Politicization. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 28(2), 171-186.
- Palonen, K. (2003b). Four Times of Politics: Policy, Polity, Politicking, and Politicization. *Alternatives*, 28(2), 171-186.
- Papadaki, M., & Kalogeraki, S. (2018). Exploring Social and Solidarity Economy (Sse) During the Greek Economic Crisis. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 11(1), 38-69.
- Pechtelidis, Y., & Kioupiolis, A. (2020). Education as Commons, Children as Commoners: The Case Study of the Little Tree Community. *Democracy and Education*, 28(1), 5.
- Peck, J. (2012). Austerity Urbanism. *City*, 16(6), 626-655.
doi:10.1080/13604813.2012.734071
- Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2012). Reanimating Neoliberalism: Process Geographies of Neoliberalisation. *Social Anthropology*, 20(2), 177-185. doi:10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00194.x
- Petmesidou, M. (2013). Is the Crisis a Watershed Moment for the Greek Welfare State? The Chances for Modernization Amidst an Ambivalent Eu Record on 'Social Europe'. In *The Greek Crisis and European Modernity* (pp. 178-207): Springer.
- Petmesidou, M., & Guillén, A. M. (2017). *Economic Crisis and Austerity in Southern Europe: Threat or Opportunity for a Sustainable Welfare State*: Routledge.
- Petmesidou, M., Pavolini, E., & Guillén, A. M. (2014). South European Healthcare Systems under Harsh Austerity: A Progress–Regression Mix? *South European Society and Politics*, 19(3), 331-352. doi:10.1080/13608746.2014.949994
- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1977). *Poor People's Movements : Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Pop, V. (2011). Merkel under Fire for 'Lazy Greeks' Comment. Retrieved from: <https://euobserver.com/political/32363> Last Accessed:10/05/ 2019
- Prentoulis, M., & Thomassen, L. (2013). Political Theory in the Square: Protest, Representation and Subjectification. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 12(3), 166-184. doi:10.1057/cpt.2012.26
- Purcell, M. (2006). Urban Democracy and the Local Trap. *Urban Studies*, 43(11), 1921-1941. doi:10.1080/00420980600897826
- Rakopoulos, T. (2015a). Solidarity Economy in Contemporary Greece: 'Movementality', Economic Democracy and Social Reproduction During Crisis. In K. Hart (Ed.), *Economy for and against Democracy* (1st ed.). London: Berghahn
- Rakopoulos, T. (2015b). *Solidarity's Tensions: Informality, Sociality, and the Greek Crisis* (Vol. 59).
- Rakopoulos, T. (2016). The Other Side of the Crisis: Solidarity Networks in Greece. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 24(2), 142-151.
- Rancière, J. (1992). Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization. *October*, 61, 58-64. doi:10.2307/778785
- Rancière, J. (1999). *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*: U of Minnesota Press.
- Rancière, J. (2009). Does Democracy Mean Something In J. Rancière & S. Corcoran (Eds.), *Dissensus : On Politics and Aesthetics* (pp. vi, 230 p.). London: Continuum.
- Rancière, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London: Continuum.
- Rancière, J. (2011). The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics. In P. Bauman & R. Stamp (Eds.), *Reading Rancière* (pp. 1-17). London: Continuum.

- Roggero, G. (2010). Five Theses on the Common. *Rethinking Marxism*, 22(3), 357-373.
- Romanos, E. (2014). Evictions, Petitions and Escraches: Contentious Housing in Austerity Spain. *Social Movement Studies*, 13(2), 296-302.
- Rossi, V., & Aguilera, R. D. (2010). *No Painless Solution to Greece's Debt Crisis*. Retrieved from: London: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Economics/0210pp_greece.pdfLast
- Roussos, K. (2019). Grassroots Collective Action within and Beyond Institutional and State Solutions. *Social Movement Studies*, 18(3), 265-283. doi:10.1080/14742837.2018.1562330
- Roussos, K., Vragoteris, V., & Malamidis, H. (2018). People's Infrastructures: The Case of Recuperated Factory of Viome. Retrieved from: <http://new-pretender.com/2018/10/08/peoples-infrastructures-the-case-of-viome/> Last Accessed:10 February 2019
- Rozakou, K. (2016). Socialities of Solidarity: Revisiting the Gift Taboo in Times of Crises. *Social Anthropology*, 24(2), 185-199.
- Rüdiger, W., & Karyotis, G. (2013). Beyond the Usual Suspects? New Participants in Anti-Austerity Protests in Greece. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 18(3), 313-330.
- Russell, B. (2019). Beyond the Local Trap: New Municipalism and the Rise of the Fearless Cities. *Antipode*, 51(3), 989-1010. doi:10.1111/anti.12520
- Santos, P., Rocha, S., Nolasco, M., Avelar, D., Albuquerque, C., & Penha-Lopes, G. (2015). *Iniciativas De Experimentação Socioecológica: Guia De Práticas De Transformação*. Retrieved from: Lisbon: Last
- Sergi, V., & Vogiatzoglou, M. (2013). Think Globally, Act Locally? Symbolic Memory and Global Repertoires in the Tunisian Uprising and the Greek Anti-Austerity Mobilizations. In C. Flesher Fominaya & C. Laurence (Eds.), *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest* (pp. 220-235). London: Routledge.
- Shapiro, I. (2002). Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do About It. *Political theory*, 30(4), 596-619.
- Simou, E., & Koutsogeorgou, E. (2014). Effects of the Economic Crisis on Health and Healthcare in Greece in the Literature from 2009 to 2013: A Systematic Review. *Health Policy*, 115(2-3), 111-119.
- Sitrin, M., & Azzellini, D. (2014a). *They Can't Represent Us!* London: Verso Books.
- Sitrin, M., & Azzellini, D. (2014b). *They Can't Represent Us! : Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy*. London: Verso Books.
- Snow, D., Rochford Jr, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review*, 464-481.
- Snow, D. A. (2013a). Case Studies and Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, P. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Snow, D. A. (2013b). Social Movements. In D. d. P. David A. Snow, Bert Klandermans, Doug McAdam (Ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Solidarity for All. (2014). Building Hope against Fear and Devastation. In (pp. 38). Athens: Solidarity for All.
- Spourdalakis, M. (2013). Left Strategy in the Greek Cauldron: Explaining Syriza's Success. *Socialist Register*, 49, 98-119.

- SSCs & Pharmacies. (2015). Social Solidarity Clinics and Pharmacies: Who We Are. Retrieved from: <http://www.mkiellinikou.org/blog/2015/10/28/kia-2/> Last Accessed:5 November 2019
- SSCs & Pharmacies of Attica and Korinthos. (2015). Meeting with the Minister of Health [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.mkiellinikou.org/blog/2015/03/05/synanthsh/> Last
- SSCs-Announcement. (2012). Social Solidarity Clinics: Spaces of Solidarity and Overthrow Retrieved from: http://mki-ellinikou.blogspot.com/2012/04/blog-post_29.html Last Accessed:5 November 2019
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2003). Re-Activating the Democratic Revolution: The Politics of Transformation Beyond Reoccupation and Conformism. *Parallax*, 9(2), 56-71. doi:10.1080/1353464032000065008
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2014). Hegemony or Post-Hegemony? Discourse, Representation and the Revenge (S) of the Real. *Radical democracy and Collective Movements Today: The biopolitics of the multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 111-132.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2015). Populism in Power: Syriza's Challenge to Europe. *Juncture*, 21(4), 273-280.
- Stavrakakis, Y., & Katsambekis, G. (2014). Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of Syriza. *Journal of political ideologies*, 19(2), 119-142.
- Stavrakakis, Y., & Katsambekis, G. (2019). The Populism/Anti-Populism Frontier and Its Mediation in Crisis-Ridden Greece: From Discursive Divide to Emerging Cleavage? *European political science*, 18(1), 37-52.
- Stekelenburg, J. v., Walgrave, S., Klandermans, B., & Verhulst, J. (2012). Contextualizing Contestation: Framework, Design, and Data. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 17(3), 249-262. doi:10.17813/mai.17.3.a4418x2q772153x2
- Stuckler, D., & McKee, M. (2012). There Is an Alternative: Public Health Professionals Must Not Remain Silent at a Time of Financial Crisis. *European Journal of Public Health*, 22(1), 2-3. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckr189
- Sullivan, H., & Skelcher, C. (2002). *Working across Boundaries : Collaboration in Public Services*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Tarrow, S. (1998). *Power in Movement : Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2nd ed ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in Movement : Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Teloni, D.-D., & Adam, S. (2018). Solidarity Clinics and Social Work in the Era of Crisis in Greece. *International Social Work*, 61(6), 794-808. doi:10.1177/0020872816660604
- Theodore, N., Peck, J., & Brenner, N. (2011). Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets. *The new Blackwell companion to the city*, 1625.
- Theodoropoulou, S. (2016). National Social and Labour Market Policy Reforms in the Shadow of Eu Bailout Conditionality: The Cases of Greece and Portugal. In *The Sovereign Debt Crisis, the Eu and Welfare State Reform* (pp. 95-130): Springer.
- Theodossopoulos, D. (2014). The Ambivalence of Anti-Austerity Indignation in Greece: Resistance, Hegemony and Complicity. *History and anthropology*, 25(4), 488-506. doi:10.1080/02757206.2014.917086
- Tilly, C. (1999). From Interactions to Outcomes in Social Movements. In M. Giugni, D. McAdam, & C. Tilly (Eds.), *How Social Movements Matter* (pp. 253-270). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tilly, C. (2002). *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2007). *Contentious Politics*. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers.
- Tsiftoglou, A. (2019). *Greece after the Memoranda: A Constitutional Retrospective*. Retrieved from: London: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100400/1/GreeSE_No132.pdfLast

- Vaiou, D., & Kalandides, A. (2016). Practices of Collective Action and Solidarity: Reconfigurations of the Public Space in Crisis-Ridden Athens, Greece. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 31(3), 457-470. doi:10.1007/s10901-015-9468-z
- Vaiou, D., & Kalandides, A. (2017). Practices of Solidarity in Athens: Reconfigurations of Public Space and Urban Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 21(4), 440-454. doi:10.1080/13621025.2017.1307605
- Varvarousis, A., & Kallis, G. (2017). Commoning against the Crisis. In M. Castells (Ed.), *Another Economy Is Possible* (pp. 128-159). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Vassalos, Y. (2018). Consolidation of Authoritarian Rule in the Eu. In *Crisis, Movement, Strategy: The Greek Experience* (pp. 87-118). Leiden: Brill.
- Vasudevan, A., McFarlane, C., & Jeffrey, A. (2008). Spaces of Enclosure. *Geoforum*, 39(5), 1641-1646. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.03.001>
- Velegrakis, G., & Frezouli, E. (2016). *Environmental Conflicts and Social Movements – Twelve Case Studies from Greece*. Retrieved from: Athens: Last
- Velicu, I., & García-López, G. (2018). Thinking the Commons through Ostrom and Butler: Boundedness and Vulnerability. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 35(6), 55-73. doi:10.1177/0263276418757315
- Venizelos, G., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2020). Left-Populism Is Down but Not Out. Retrieved from: <https://jacobinmag.com/2020/03/left-populism-political-strategy-class-power> Last Accessed:10/06 2020
- Vercellone, C. (2010). The Crisis of the Law of Value and the Becoming-Rent of Profit. In S. M. Andrea Fumagalli (Ed.), *Crisis in the Global Economy : Financial Markets, Social Struggles, and New Political Scenarios* (pp. 85-118): Semiotext(e), The MIT Press.
- VIOME-OSI. (2013). Announcement of the Open Solidarity Initiative-Viome Opens and Operates in the Hands of the Workers! Retrieved from: http://biom-metal.blogspot.com/2013/01/blog-post_8563.html Last Accessed:23 August 2019
- VIOME-WU. (2013). Announcement of the Viome Worker's Union for the Reopening of the Factory. Retrieved from: <http://biom-metal.blogspot.com/2013/01/1.html> Last Accessed:23 August 2019
- Walgrave, S. (2013). Changing Mobilization of Individual Activists? In J. Van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The Future of Social Movement Research: Dynamics, Mechanisms, and Processes* (pp. 205-215). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Warner, J. (2010). Eurozone'pigs'are Leading Us All to Slaughter. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/comment/jeremy-warner/7168631/Eurozone-pigs-are-leading-us-all-to-slaughter.html> Last Accessed:10/05/ 2019
- Warren, M. (1992). Democratic Theory and Self-Transformation. *The American Political Science Review*, 86(1), 8-23. doi:10.2307/1964012
- Yates, L. (2015). Rethinking Prefiguration: Alternatives, Micropolitics and Goals in Social Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 14(1), 1-21.
- Yeasmin, S., & Rahman, K. F. (2012). Triangulation Research Method as the Tool of Social Science Research. *BUP journal*, 1(1), 154-163.
- Zaimakis, Y. (2018). Autonomy, Degrowth and Prefigurative Politics: Voices of Solidarity Economy Activists Amid Economic Crisis in Greece. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 11(1), 95-120.
- Zamponi, L. (2012). 'Why Don't Italians Occupy?' Hypotheses on a Failed Mobilisation. *Social Movement Studies*, 11(3-4), 416-426. doi:10.1080/14742837.2012.708833

Appendix

Interview Guide- Grassroots Alternatives

Topics	Open questions	Further questions, for clarification when they are not providing much information
A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND	Tell me about your daily life/circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your current living circumstances? • What about your work/unemployment/pension situation? • What is your family situation? (about partner, children, siblings, parents) • What is your housing situation? (e.g. sharing apartment, own/rent, with parents)
B. THE PROJECT	Tell me how your project started (history) and why it was established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did it start? • Which were the main reasons for the formation of your group? • Was there any source of inspiration? (similar projects in Greece or elsewhere) • What is its legal status? • Number of members? • How do you recruit new members? • Did it start as part of a political or other organized group/collectivity? • For how long have you been in this position? • How did you become involved in the project? • Are you familiar with the terms <i>commons</i> and <i>commoning</i>?
C. ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT AND ORGANIZATION	Tell me some background on the project, your involvement and your perceptions on its impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it to you? (e.g. a temporary solution or a more longstanding alternative) • How do you take the most important decisions in the every-day practice of your group? (Do members of your group regularly meet in an assembly / open meeting in order to make decisions? Who proposes the

		<p>agenda? How frequently are such assemblies held? Who takes decisions in these assemblies? Does your group have an executive committee?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your main activities? • Do you have standard shifts (what about working hours)? • What changes for the people who are involved in the project? • (How) is your group enforcing specific socio-political values? Which initiatives does it use? • Do you believe that your organization meet social needs?
D. EFFECTS OF AUSTERITY/ CRISIS, DEPRIVATION/SOCIAL EXCLUSION	Tell me what has been the effect, if any, of social and economic crisis, austerity on your living conditions, general wellbeing and employment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you believe have been the impacts of austerity on your living conditions and employment circumstances? And the living conditions and employment circumstances of your community? • Has it affected your wellbeing (general and mental health)?(scale answer) • How important was the role of the crisis and austerity in the formation of your project? • Has austerity affected your engagement in such activities (indirectly or directly)? (scale answer) • Has austerity affected others engagement in your project's activities? (scale answer)
E. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL VIEWS	Tell me something about your social and political views in this context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your participation in this project motivated by political or social concerns? How important are the services/resources/aid provided for people in need? • Does your project as a whole consider itself to be part of a bigger movement? • Have you participated in protest events or other political actions during the crisis? • Does your project have regular contacts or collaboration with other grassroots actors (campaigns, networks) in the last years? Which ones (name five)?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your group relate to public institutions at different territorial (local and national) levels? • Is there a shared perception in your group that the cooperation between commoning/solidarity networks and public institutions can improve the quality of policy-making in the fields of solidarity economy and social state? • Which of the above collaborations have been the most important ones in the last years and why?
F. OVERALL REFLECTION/EVALUATION	To finish, I would like to ask your opinion and thoughts about the work/alternative repertoires of this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your project's difference in comparison to more 'mainstream' organizations/projects engaging with similar activities? • Which are you clients/beneficiaries? (wider publics, other solidarity projects, activists etc.) • Do they understand your difference with other more 'mainstream' organizations/projects? • To what extend do you believe that your project's activities contribute to the everyday lives of its members (examples)? • To what extend do you believe that your project's activities contribute to the everyday lives of the broader/local community (examples)? • Thinking in general about your organization and the aims you have, how would you evaluate your organization's effectiveness? Please describe.
G. SUGGESTIONS	Any further suggestions and thoughts would be appreciated	Is there anything else related to the issues covered during our conversation that you would like to add?

Interview Guide-Aganaktismenoi

Topics	Open questions	Further questions, for clarification when they are not providing much information
A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND	Tell me about your daily life/circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your current living circumstances? • What about your work/unemployment/pension situation? • What is your family situation? (about partner, children, siblings, parents) • What is your housing situation? (e.g. sharing apartment, own/rent, with parents)
B. PARTICIPATION	Tell me about your decision to participate at the squares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What made you to first go to the square? • How did you learn about it? • Was your participation motivated by social or political concerns? (examples) • What was it to you to participate in Aganaktismenoi, and how do you perceive it today? • Have you felt as a member of coherent movement? What about common demands, values, solidarity?
C. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL VIEWS	Tell me something about your political and social views in this context (before, during and after the squares)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you say that you had a specific political orientation/views? • Has your participation in Aganaktismenoi affected your political orientation/views? (scale answer) In what ways? • Are you a member of a political party or organization? (before/after) • Do you vote? (before/after) • Have you participated in protest events or other political actions before and after the squares? • To what extend do you believe that Aganaktismenoi was an autonomous movement (scale answer) • To what extend do you believe that the exclusion of the formal presence of parties has affected your participation? (scale answer) In what sense?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extend do you think that such exclusion played a role in the overall participation and repertoires of the movements? (scale answer) • To what extend do you believe that Aganaktismenoi had an impact on the central political scene? • To what extend do you agree with journalists and politicians who say that the squares have bred violence and fascism? • To what extend do you believe that the movement gave space to far-right groupings and particularly Golden Dawn?
D. PRACTICES, REPERTOIRES, ORGANIZATION, DEMANDS	Tell me something about the organization of the activities and life at the square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you participate in the ‘lower’ or ‘upper’ square? Why? • Did you participate in the assemblies? • Have you been a member of a thematic group? • Could you name some of the most important daily activities at the square? • Could you name some moments or critical points that characterized the movements? • How would you summarize the main demands of the movement? • What were the main problems, difficulties or even deadlocks that Aganaktismenoi have faced? • What have been the main achievements of Aganaktismenoi?
G. SUGGESTIONS	Any further suggestions and thoughts would be appreciated	Is there anything else related to the issues covered during our conversation that you would like to add?

Questionnaire: Mobilization for Democracy and Against Austerity

i. Age:

ii. Gender:

1. Are you a member of a political party or organization?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2. For which party did you vote in each of the elections in the table below?

ELECTIONS	2009	2012 (MAY)	2012 (JUNE)	2014 EU ELECTIONS	2015
SYRIZA					
NEA DIMOKRATIA					
KKE					
PASOK					
LAOS					
GOLDEN DAWN					
POTAMI					
DIMAR					
ANEL					
OIKOLOGOI PRASINOI					
ANTARSYA					
EPAM					
NON/OTHER					

3. Have you participated in the Aganaktismenoi mobilizations of 2011 on a regular basis (more than 7 times)?

YES ☐ NO ☐

4. If you answer was yes in the above question, to what extend do you think that your participation had an effect on your political views/orientation?

Not At All	Not Really	Undecided	Somewhat	Very Much

5. Independently of whether you participated or not in the Aganaktismenoi mobilizations, to what extent do you believe that Aganaktismenoi had an impact on the general political environment of the period:

Not At All	Not Really	Undecided	Somewhat	Very Much

6. Have you ever participated in popular assemblies in your neighbourhood or elsewhere during the crisis:

YES ☐ NO ☐

7. Have you participated in the organization and/or activities of self-organized ventures during the crisis? (e.g. solidarity networks, social clinics and pharmacies, social food-banks, time-banks, etc.)

YES ☐ NO ☐

8. Independently of whether you have ever participated or not to any of the activities described in the above question, how important do you consider citizens' direct participation in grassroots politics and self-organized ventures?

Not At All	Not Really	Undecided	Somewhat	Very Much

9. Do you believe that citizens should have the opportunity to decide directly about issues that immediately affect their lives? (e.g. referenda)

YES ☐ NO ☐

10. Do you believe that Syriza's links with social struggles of the previous years led to an increase of its voting influence?

YES ☐ NO ☐

11. If the country's creditors deny or block any further negotiations of the bailout agreements and debt, do you think that the Greek government should move towards a breach of relations with EU?

YES ☐ NO ☐