RAGE AND PROTEST: THE CASE OF THE GREEK INDIGNANT MOVEMENT

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Abstract

In 2011 numerous 'Occupy' and anti-austerity protests took place across Europe and the United States. Passionate indignation at the failure of political elites became a mobilizing force against formal political institutions. In Greece a mass movement known as the Aganaktismeni (the Indignant) became the main agent of social resistance to the memorandum signed by the Greek government, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. The Greek movement did not take the form of a social movement sharing a collective identity. Left-wing protestors played a prominent role. Protestors embracing right-wing populist frames also participated actively in collective mobilizations, while segments of the extreme right attempted to manipulate rage to their advantage. During the Greek Indignant movement civil society remained a terrain contested by conflicting political forces. This unique feature of the Greek movement posed a completely different challenge to the principles of diversity and inclusiveness than the one debated within the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy protests. Furthermore, it illustrates that rage and indignation may spark dissimilar forms of political contention. Hence, rage and indignation do not merely motivate 'passive citizens' to participate in collective protest. They are linked to cognitive frames and individual preferences, which influence protestors' claims and mobilizations' political outcomes. Accordingly, advances in democratization and inclusive citizenship are only one of the possible outcomes of mobilizations prompted by rage and indignation.

Keywords

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In 2011 in Greece, a mass movement known as the Aganaktismeni (the Indignant) became the main agent of social resistance to the memorandum signed by the Greek government, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. It succeeded in transforming public squares into the primary locus of political mobilization across the country. The Greek movement shared many attributes with the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy protests across the U.S.A. In all three cases protestors mobilized against official political institutions, challenged financial capitalism, espoused the principle of solidarity and, finally, established encampments in public spaces, demanding change and experimenting with direct democracy. However, these various mobilizations cannot be subsumed into one single category, since there were significant variations in regard to the prevailing frames, the presence of collective identities, political priorities and protest tactics.[1] Accordingly, the Greek movement, unlike the other cases, did not take the form of a social movement sharing a collective identity. Left-wing protestors played a prominent role. Protestors embracing right-wing populist frames also participated actively in collective mobilizations, while segments of the extreme right attempted to manipulate rage to their advantage. This unique feature of the Greek movement posed a completely different challenge to the principles of diversity and inclusiveness than the one debated within the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy protests. Furthermore, it illustrates that rage and indignation are not simply means of mobilizing erstwhile 'passive citizens'. Embedded in them are cognitive evaluations and diagnostic frames that influence protestors' claims and collective mobilizations' political outcomes. Thus, advances in democratization and inclusive citizenship are only one of the possible outcomes of mobilizations prompted by rage and indignation.

The research method employed in analyzing the Greek Indignant movement has been participant observation throughout collective mobilizations in Syntagma Square (May – July 2011). Observation of "…action as the action is happening…" provided a crucial insight in regard to the diversity, symbolic boundaries and emotional aspects of the Greek Indignant movement (Lichterman, 1998: 401). My observer position shifted multiple times along the insider-outsider continuum, due to the heterogeneous (often conflicting) political forces that joined collective mobilizations in Syntagma Square.[2] While being both a participant and observer in collective mobilizations and proceedings in the lower level of Syntagma Square, my observer position shifted to an 'outsider' whenever activists and protestors in the upper level of the Square were observed. Additional information for the following analysis has been provided by primary (e.g. pamphlets, social media) and secondary sources.

The Greek movement took place amid a global economic crisis and the proliferation of Occupy protests around the world. This article, however, focuses on the national context, shedding light on the domestic factors that have facilitated the coexistence of conflicting political forces. The structure of the article proceeds as follows. First, an account of the time sequence of major protest events before and during the Greek movement is given. Next, the mass experiment in direct democracy that took place in Syntagma's lower square is presented. The article explores the symbolic boundaries and the inclusiveness of this 'free enclave'. The analysis then proceeds with an account of the socio-political profile of protestors. Subsequently, it delves into the underlying conditions that have facilitated the participation of conflicting political forces in collective mobilizations. The next section provides a brief summary of the extreme's right position vis-à-vis the Indignant movement and its endeavour to manipulate rage to its advantage.

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1   Occupy protests across the United States sparked a debate, whether they were long-term social movements or short-lived protests. According to Craig Calhoun (2013) these protests were rather moments than movements.

2   For an analysis of the insider-outsider continuum in participant observation see Uldam and McCurdy (2013).

Then the relation between protestors' emotions of rage and indignation and their cognitive and moral appraisal of the social order is elaborated. Thus indignation is linked to the protestors' diverse diagnostic frames. The article concludes by summarizing why rage and indignation are not necessarily linked to democratic political outcomes.

The Greek Indignant Movement

The 2008 financial crisis following the collapse of Lehman Brothers found the Greek economy struggling with a huge and mounting public debt and deficit. In the parliamentary elections of 4 October 2009, the socialist party (*PASOK*) won power. By April 2010 the country had lost access to credit markets. On 23 April the prime minister announced the government's request of a financial bailout from the EU and the IMF in order to avoid an official declaration of default. A memorandum was agreed between the so-called "troika" of foreign lenders (the European Central Bank, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund) and the Greek government, on a series of economic and financial policies. The Greek government's implementation of the memorandum has been monitored on a regular basis by troika representatives. Whenever the set objectives have not been met, the Greek government has announced new austerity packages, since meeting the terms of the foreign lenders has been a precondition for securing the next installment by the troika. Thus, following the initial memorandum, the Greek government has repeatedly announced new austerity measures.

The first mobilizations against austerity policies took place in February 2010. Throughout 2010 multiple strikes in the public and private sectors and mass rallies took place across Greece. The high level of participation and the broad geographical spread of collective mobilizations were remarkable. Protest events in 2010 revealed some new elements in comparison to previous episodes of mobilization (Psimitis, 2011). The heterogeneity of the protestors' social, economic and political identities was unprecedented. Protestors expressed their anger not only at the government's austerity policies, but also at official political institutions. Slogans appeared portraying the Parliament as the personification of a corrupt and bankrupt political system (e.g. 'Burn, burn this brothel, the Parliament' became a popular slogan). Furthermore, in the mobilizations of 2010, isolated incidents of aggressive actions were recorded (e.g. during the demonstrations a former Speaker of the Greek Parliament as well as the president of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) were physically attacked). Verbal and physical attacks on politicians subsequently became a recurrent pattern. Finally, new collectivities (such as citizens' initiatives, new grassroots associations in conflict with the two established trade union confederations GSEE and ADEDY, the movement 'I Won't Pay') became actively involved, staging multiple protest events. Even though rallies in 2010 manifested a shift in the political culture of contention, they still reproduced traditional political divisions. Thus the rallies were spatially fragmented into three diverse blocks: the two main trade-union confederations, the leftwing party *Syriza* and the extra-parliamentary Left, and the Greek Communist Party. This fragmentation, which was highly criticized by many protestors, would later be overcome, when public squares became the primary sites of political mobilization, leading to the fusion of diverse political forces.[3]

In November 2010 the government unveiled the final draft of the following year's budget. According to the finance minister, the government's goal was to narrow the budget gap by 5

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3   The major trade unions joined the mobilizations in the squares. The Greek Communist Party, on the other hand, continued to stage protests separately.

billion euros in 2011.[4] The continuous announcement by the government of new draconian austerity measures, despite its promises that the country would quickly recover from the crisis, the further contraction of the economy, the sharp rise in unemployment and the rise in public debt increased fears within Greek society that the country was caught in a vicious cycle of debt and recession. Thus, the initial perception of the economic crisis as a limited transitional phase that would finally lead to the normalization of economic and social life was completely negated. The ongoing austerity policies affected not only the working class, but also the middle-income strata. Wages and pensions across the public and private sector were slashed, while at the same time taxes were raised and new taxes were introduced. The government's spending cuts led also to the abrupt dismantling of the welfare state. Thus in 2011 the rapid disintegration of the social fabric became visible. A new generation of homeless poor appeared on the urban landscape (Kaika, 2012).[5] This collective experience of society's rapid disintegration intensified existing emotions of anger and rage. Hence in 2010 a significant cognitive and emotional shift took place in Greek society, affecting the goals and tactics of subsequent collective protest. Accordingly, mobilizations in 2011 escalated, becoming more confrontational than those of 2010.

Within this context, the first endeavor to occupy Syntagma Square (the capital's central square) took place on 23 February 2011. Forceful police action and the limited number of participants rendered the attempt unsuccessful. On 15 May 2011, the Spanish Indignados occupied the squares Puerta del Sol in Madrid and Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona. In late May 2011 multiple calls-outs appeared on social media (especially on Facebook) calling on people to protest peacefully, without holding any party flags or banners, on 25 May 2011. The calls-out appeared following Greek media stories that Spanish protestors in Plaza del Sol held banners with the sarcastic slogan "Silence or we will awaken the Greeks!" (Korizi and Vradis, 2012: 237).[6] The calls were highly successful. On 25 May people protested in central squares in over 38 cities across Greece ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011).[7] In Athens, following a massive rally, a group of protestors decided to remain in Syntagma Square overnight, occupying the square. Participants in the occupation of Syntagma Square took inspiration from the Arab Spring (especially the sustained occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo) and the Spanish Indignados Movement. This initial occupation of Syntagma Square turned into a long-term encampment that played a leading role in collective mobilizations all over Greece.

Occupation is not a new tactic in the Greek repertoire of contentious politics. Occupation of private and public buildings (e.g. ministries, universities, factories, schools, town-halls and highways) has been a common practice in multiple episodes of protest. Squatting also proliferated following the large scale riots of December 2008. Still, the encampment of Syntagma Square was an innovative political strategy, since protestors took full advantage of the symbolism and location of the specific space. The encampment in the capital's central square provided an open space where citizens from all over the city could assemble. The strategic location of Syntagma Square directly opposite the Greek Parliament intensified the symbolic challenge that collective protest posed to political decisions taken within the Parliament building, while at the same time the image of the Parliament provided a specific and tangible target for protestors in the square.

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4   "Greece promises to meet bailout targets". (2010). Retrieved December 20, 2013, from http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/11/19/feature-01

5   In Athens and Thessaloniki (the second biggest city in Greece) 20,000 people received free meals in 2011 (Ritzaleou, 2011).

6   These stories proved to be false ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011).

7   The earlier multiple episodes of protest contributed to the effective mobilization.

Furthermore, the occupation provided "a center" and a "more cohesive identity" for the diverse political forces that mobilized (Calhoun, 2013: 29-30).

On Friday 27 May the first popular assembly took place in Syntagma Square. It passed a resolution calling on citizens to fight for direct democracy and the principles of 'Equality-Justice-Dignity'. The resolution defined the goals of the movement as follows: "…We will not leave the squares until those who brought us here, go away: Governments, Troika, Banks, Memoranda and all those who exploit us. We send them the message that the debt is not ours. DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOW! EQUALITY – JUSTICE- DIGNITY" ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011: 280). As the resolution illustrates, protestors distanced themselves from the Spanish Indignados' call for 'Real Democracy Now'. Instead, protestors called for 'Direct Democracy Now', emphasizing thereby that their claims were incompatible with the official institutions of representative democracy (Gourgouris, 2011). On 29 May, the day of the first pan-European appeal by Indignados, people gathered and protested in 55 cities across Greece. The number of people participating in the encampment in Syntagma Square multiplied. Working groups were formed and assemblies on specific subjects (e.g. unemployment, education, economic crisis) were established. On 31 May, the popular assembly included in its proposals the establishment of organizational links between protestors in the upper and lower levels of Syntagma Square ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011). This proposal addressed one of the distinctive elements of the Greek movement, which was the coexistence of conflicting political forces, united by their common opposition to the memorandum and official political institutions.

The Greek Indignant movement was not a representative case of a social movement sharing a collective identity. According to Taylor and Whittier, collective identity refers to a shared definition of a group, founded on members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity (Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Thus, a "sense of we-ness…is an essential component of collective identity" (Owens et al, 2010: 490; Smithey, 2009; Drury et al, 2003). This "we-ness" may derive from identities, preceding collective protest or identities constructed in and through collective protest (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Even though heterogeneity and internal divisions exist in social movements, collective identity presupposes feelings of solidarity, since it refers to a shared "…cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institutions" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285). In the case of the Greek Indignant movement, the protestors' common oppositional consciousness provided the basis for collective mobilization. However, the prevailing symbolic resources of protestors were often in direct conflict. Thus protestors did not always identify positively with each other because of their conflicting norms and values. Accordingly, rather than sharing feelings of solidarity, the protestors shared a sense of mutual dependence, (e.g. the greater the participation in collective mobilizations, the stronger the political impact of the Indignant movement).

The presence of conflicting political forces became more apparent in Syntagma Square, where ideological divisions also took the form of a spatial divide. Syntagma Square is not a single physical space, since it consists of two separate squares on two different levels (the upper and the lower level). These two levels are connected by a flight of stairs. Thus, the stairs became an invisible dividing line between the activists at the top of the square and the ones at the bottom. During the day demonstrators usually passed through both squares, thereby merging the two squares. Following the first month of mobilizations however, demonstrators in each square assumed more uniform attributes, leading to two quite distinct blocs. In the upper square, protestors expressed mainly feelings of rage "with rough tactics of anger" (Leontidou, 2012: 306). Thus in the upper square the dominant method of protest took the form of collective verbal abuse of the Parliament and the political parties (Sotirakopoulos, 2011). For this bloc it

was not simply an issue of social injustice. It was primarily an issue of national treason and the necessity of imposing punishment (e.g. slogans like Traitors/Sell-outs, the country will never die, Take the traitors to Goudi (meaning execute the traitors) were written on banners and chanted ("Συνθήματα", 2011; Fragoudaki, 2013; Tsaliki, 2012). Demonstrators protested holding Greek flags, while portraying foreign lenders, Parliament, parties and politicians as dangerous forces that had led to the humiliation of the Greek nation. Since all politicians were portrayed as corrupt or traitors, anti-political populism prevailed in this bloc. In the discourse of the upper square the enemy was "…externalized/reified into a… ontological entity…, whose annihilation would restore balance and justice" (Žižek, 2006). This anti-political populism merged with strong nationalism and "culturally defensive themes" (Tsatsanis, 2011: 15). For instance, references were made to the glorious past of the Greek nation (e.g. flyers and posters recalled the heroes of the Greek war of independence against the Ottoman Empire in 1821) (Sotirakopoulos and Sotiropoulos, 2013). Furthermore, protestors' demands for direct, unmediated forms of popular sovereignty (such as referenda) often expressed their belief in the unified will of the Greek 'people'. For protestors this homogeneous body would render any genuinely representative government strong enough to defend the national interests and restore the country's lost pride. Thus claims for genuine democracy entailed often demands for a stronger and more effective state. The presence of strong nationalistic and populist frames in the upper square transformed the square into a public space occupied exclusively by Greek protestors. Even though activists in the upper square identified themselves as democrats protesting against the existing crisis of representation, the prevailing narratives constructed a political space that enabled the intrusion of extreme-right political forces.[8]

The encampment dominated the lower square.[9] Protestors experimented with direct democracy, adopting horizontal decision-making and holding open popular assemblies. Protestors used cosmopolitan terminology, underlining the significance of international solidarity. Social media were extensively used to coordinate mobilizations with protestors in Tunisia, Egypt, and Spain. Activists in the lower square had generally had experience in the global justice movement, the anti-war movement and the World Social Forum. There was general agreement among activists on the non-violent identity of the movement and the need to safeguard this identity. Protestors wished to demonstrate that collective self-rule is feasible.[10] Two political parties of the Left played a prominent role in the lower square. These were the leftwing party *Syriza* and the extra-parliamentary leftwing party *Antarsya*. Both parties functioned at that time as umbrella organizations, consisting of multiple and diverse political organizations. Other political groups on the extra-parliamentary left and the anti-authoritarian/anarchist spectrum also engaged actively in mobilizations in the lower square (Rokamadour, 2011/2013). In the lower square divisions stemming from long-standing ideological conflicts within the left-spectrum (e.g. 'reformers' vs. 'radicals') came to the foreground.[11] Some activists prioritized bringing down the government

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8   For the self-positioning of activists in the upper square see Georgiadou et al (2013).

9   In the Greek Indignant Movement, as in other Occupy protests, there was an 'inner' (e.g. core activists) and an 'outer' movement (e.g. occasional demonstrators participating in collective mobilizations). The identities of the 'inner' and the 'outer' movements often diverged, but the encampment provided the space where the two movements actually merged (Gitlin, 2013).

10   On 28 and 29 June 2011 violent clashes took place among small groups of protestors and the police. These events were denounced by many participants in the Indignant movement. 'Greece protest against austerity package turns violent', (2011), Retrieved December 20, 2013, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13935400

11   For similar divisions within the Portuguese mobilizations since 2011 see Baumgarten (2013).

and prompting national elections while others aimed to consolidate a strong anti-capitalist, anti-systemic movement (Makridis and Pagiatsos, 2011). Similarly, divisions were recorded in regard to Greece's participation in the Eurozone or the EU. Nationalism was another element generating friction between activists. Some political forces in the lower square embraced the notion of nationalism as the only means of resisting the implementation of policies decided at the European level.

In the Greek Indignant movement as a whole, the aspiration of creating "a European political space" in which to contest austerity policies remained secondary (Pianta, 2013: 155). Contention retreated to the national level, even though there was extensive networking between activists in Occupy protests globally.[12] By contrast with those in Syntagma Square, similarly incompatible blocs in other squares across Greece shared the same physical space. Even though divisions were clear, there was no direct confrontation (Leontidou, 2012; Stavrou, 2011).

Mobilizations multiplied during June. Participation was impressive, revealing the government's increasing loss of political legitimacy. Expectations in regard to the political potential of the movement rose. The largest protest took place in Syntagma Square on 5 June. Approximately half a million demonstrators took part. More than 10,000 demonstrators participated in the popular assembly ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011). The internet was used to communicate directly with the popular assembly in Puerta del Sol in Madrid. Massive protests took place also in cities all over Greece. On 15 June, the day of a general strike, protestors tried to encircle the Parliament. Police responded with violence and indiscriminate use of tear gas and flash grenades. The mobilizations that had the strongest influence on the future trajectory of the movement were those on the 28 and 29 June. On those two days a new package of austerity measures (the Mid-Term Memorandum) was to be presented to Parliament for ratification. The labour unions called for a national strike on both days. Activists in the movement decided to surround the Parliament, prevent deputies from entering and put strong pressure on deputies within the Parliament to vote against the new measures. Participation in these mobilizations exceeded initial expectations. Most demonstrators were convinced that deputies would be reluctant to vote in favor of the austerity measures due to the sustained episodes of popular protest and large-scale mobilizations. However, the measures were ratified and the police responded to the collective mobilizations with extreme violence. They brutally beat demonstrators, journalists, passers-by and patients at the first-aid station in Syntagma Square. Amnesty International condemned the police violence (Amnesty International, 2011). Demonstrators chanted "it is a junta, it will end". Protest continued throughout the following weeks, but participation gradually declined. The ratification of the new austerity measures shattered many protestors' belief in the political potential of the movement. As Claus Offe underlines: "In order to become active in the public sphere you need … a reasonable certainty that there is some agency 'out there' that will actually 'listen' to …and be able to make a difference in response to what you have to say … In other words, you need a measure of basic confidence in the responsiveness of democratic institutions, such as parties, parliaments, and governments." (Offe, 2009: 12-13). Sissi Korizi reflecting on her participation in the movement argues: "I went to the square with the conviction that after a few days of protest our government, or at least the other parliamentary parties, would listen to

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12 The primary national orientation of the Greek Indignant movement corresponds to the findings of the research conducted by Mary Kaldor, Sabine Selchow, Sean Deel, and Tamsin Murray Leach on 'subterranean politics' in 2011 and 2012. According to the findings, Europe was "… 'invisible' in current public displays of subterranean politics…it does not play a relevant role in the debates and the protests…studied. In the few instances in which it is 'visible', it tends to be regarded as part of the problem as much as part of the solution." Kaldor el al (2012: 18).

popular indignation. That they would respect our demands …" (Korizi and Vradis, 2012: 241). The majority of demonstrators took an extremely negative view of representative democracy as a practical political project. However, like Sissi Korizi, they continued to take a positive view of representative democracy as a model of constitutional government. Therefore, they addressed their demands to the Parliament. Hence demonstrators questioned the legitimacy of existing political institutions, but did not withdraw their consent from representative democracy.[13] As one militant activist vividly expressed it: "Our big illusion was that we believed that we had suddenly persuaded hundreds of thousands of people to reject democracy that they were ready to go to the 'next step' […]. They [the protesters] cursed the politicians, all politicians indiscriminately, yet they remained in front of the Parliament all day, as if they were expecting something from their representatives. Their claim was addressed exactly to the people they were shouting against. This we did not see at that point." (Sergi and Vogiatzoglou, 2013: 232).

On 3 July a resolution by the popular assembly posed two central questions: "What do we do now?" and "How do we do it?" ("Συνοπτικό Χρονικό", 2011: 297). Disappointment and self-reflection was also evident in subsequent resolutions passed by the popular assemblies. On 30 July the police dismantled the encampment. Mobilizations continued throughout September and October, taking the traditional form of strikes and demonstrations as well as the occupation of public buildings. However the 2012 protests were smaller, less vociferous and more sector-fragmented, even though the scale of unemployment and economic deprivation increased sharply. On the other hand, grassroots activism was strengthened. Many protestors ceased to expect that change would come from above (e.g. government, Parliament) and became actively involved in multiple social solidarity networks at the local level.[14] Furthermore, the Greek Indignant movement had a strong impact on the existing party system. It reinforced political changes that altered the established political landscape.

In late October 2011 Prime Minister George Papandreou announced that Greece would hold a referendum on the EU bailout agreement for the country. This unexpected declaration triggered a fierce reaction from the European Union and Greek oppositional parties as well as from members of the socialist party. Moreover, it led to widespread public outrage in Greek society. Since all previous decisions had been taken behind closed doors, consistently ignoring lasting, large-scale protests, the sudden referendum plan was perceived as a strategic move by George Papandreou to regain political legitimacy and avoid calling early elections. In November 2011, Prime Minister George Papandreou resigned following the formation of an interim three-party coalition government, which consisted of *PASOK* (socialist party), *New Democracy* (conservative party) and the *LAOS* (far right party).[15] The two national elections that followed in May and June 2012 brought radical changes, leading to the collapse of the traditional two-party system. In its place a polarized multi-party system emerged. In both elections *New Democracy* won a majority with a small lead over the leftwing party *Syriza* (18.85% of the vote in May 2012

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13 For the distinction between legitimacy and consent see Burawoy (1989).

14 Ishkanian, Glasius, and Ali (2013: 10) state in their research that "In Athens, after Syntagma Square, there has been emphasis on a solidarity economy including food parcels, social pharmacies, electricity reconnection, direct selling by farmers to consumers, community self-help centers, etc."

15 LAOS (People's Orthodox Rally) was founded in 2000 by a former legislator of the conservative party (George Karatzaferis). The party "…has championed the radical right-wing principle of "national priority"" (Georgiadou, 2013: 83) and has called for "…the protection of the Nation, the Genus, the Faith" and the expulsion of illegal immigrants (Ellinas, 2013: 4). The party gradually softened its extreme positions. The participation of LAOS in the interim coalition government and the sudden rise of the Golden Dawn led to the former party's demise. In the elections of 2012 LAOS failed to get any seats in Parliament.

and 29.66% in June 2012). *Syriza,* which had gained 4.59% in the national elections of 2009, consolidated its position as the main opposition party (winning 16.79% of the vote in May 2012 and 26.89% in June 2012). The new parties *Democratic Left* (centre-left), the *Independent Greeks* (right-wing populist) as well as the neo-Nazi party *Golden Dawn* all entered Parliament.[16]

Square Encampment - Direct Democracy

During the Greek movement the largest mass experiment in direct democracy took place in Syntagma's lower square. In the lower square, multiple working groups were established to support and sustain collective mobilizations (e.g. a nursery, a food and beverage rationing group, a media group, a cleaning team, an artistic team). The working groups operated horizontally according to the principles of grassroots democracy. Open discussions about the state of the economy and the possibility of alternative economic policies were held, enabling citizens to voice their opinion and concerns. This participatory ethos also guided the proceedings of the popular assemblies, the main decision-making body of the movement. Every evening at 21:00 a popular assembly was held (Tsaliki, 2012). The selection of speakers was random. Numbers were allocated randomly to participants and lots were drawn to determine the order of speakers on the podium (Leontidou, 2012). Every day, approximately a hundred people expressed their opinions. The encampment, however, was not simply a defensive 'free enclave', where the existing order could be contested and participatory democracy enacted. Activists in the encampment looked beyond the occupied square towards achieving a broader transformation of social relations. Therefore links were established with other actors (e.g. neighborhood assemblies) to further mobilizations and contestation.

The encampment constructed an alternative public realm in which people interacted, debated, got informed and expressed feelings. As well as articulating opinions, the participants shared their feelings of anger, confusion and anxiety. Social interaction among strangers was a common pattern. Since in the Greek context problems like poverty, unemployment and private debt were experienced by numerous and diverse social groups, they were openly discussed and debated. Thus individual experiences were stripped of any moralistic discourse, individual deficiency or failure and were transformed into shared social experience. Moreover, impoverished individuals living on the margin of society or belonging to the underclass (e.g. drug addicts, homeless) found an open space to engage with broader collectivities or to voice their concerns. Syntagma Square provided a space of solidarity within a society overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and anger.

Nevertheless, the Greek Indignant movement differed from the Indignados and Occupy movements in regard to inclusiveness. In the latter two movements, political activism was coupled with an aspiration to create spaces open to diversity. Both movements were representative of the new action paradigm that has emerged with the alter-globalization movement. "Recognition of the difference of each person", "rejection of delegation" and "fluidarity" are core elements of this new paradigm (Mcdonald, 2002: 116-117). Hence, the movements acknowledged the existence of

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16   The neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was founded in 1983, but remained inactive for many years. It became active in the early 90s during Greece's dispute with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over the latter's name. Golden Dawn supports National Socialism and speaks in the name of the biological superiority of the Greek race. The party also openly endorses the country's 1967-1974 military dictatorship (Ellinas, 2013; Georgiadou, 2013). Golden Dawn has been involved in hundreds of violent attacks against immigrants, left-wing activists, Roma and homosexuals. The party has taken a stand against the bailout agreement. In September 2013 a young anti-fascist musician, Pavlos Fyssas, was stabbed to death by a Golden Dawn supporter. In late September the leader of Golden Dawn and party officials were arrested on charges of forming a criminal organization. In October 2014 opinion polls still put the party in third place behind the conservative party *New Democracy* and left-wing opposition party *Syriza.*

multiple counterpublics within the broader movement and encouraged the articulation of counter-discourses by participants with different identities or interests (Asen, 2000). For instance, the 15M Movement in Spain persistently focused attention on developing structures and tactics that would give voice to the excluded (Hughes, 2011). Likewise, in Occupy Boston an anti-oppression workshop was established and the strategy of extensive networking with groups outside Occupy Boston (community-based groups or groups of the traditionally marginalized) was adopted (Juris et al, 2012). In the Greek context, however, the open character of the movement should not be overestimated. Syntagma Square was a site of confrontation within a highly polarized society. Demonstrators did not simply voice their opposition to austerity policies. They struggled to bring down the government and repeal the memorandum. For protestors, the movement's outcome would determine their personal lives and the country's future. Hence, priority was given to immediate political confrontation with the government. Moreover, the 15-M movement's strict codes to ensure civility were incompatible with the polarization of Greek society and public rage against elected politicians (Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2012). In the Greek context, heterogeneity of opinions existed in popular assemblies, but only in regard to issues debated within the anti-memorandum bloc (e.g. to stay in or leave the euro zone). People who were ambivalent about the memorandum would not find an open space to debate. Individuals who had links with the conservative or socialist party were not welcome (Tsaliki, 2012).

Social movements draw symbolic boundaries, identifying who is ("us") and is not ("them") a member of the movement (Owens et al, 2010). Social movements also identify opponents. The development of an oppositional identity is a vital precondition for collective action (Kern, 2013; Morris, 1999). However, the distinctive element in the case of the Greek movement was that its boundaries were rigid and flexible at the same time. They were rigid in regard to political forces that supported or did not actively oppose the Memorandum, while they were flexible in regard to other ideological opponents (e.g. forces of the populist right and staunch nationalists). Thus, in the Greek context opposition to the Memorandum and lack of any affiliation to official political institutions became the dominant dividing line, defining opponents and protestors' stand vis-à-vis other protestors.

Socio-political Profile of Protestors

The grievances that mobilized diverse groups and individuals included anger with the government's austerity policies, foreign lenders, banks, political parties, economic elites, corruption and increasing inequalities, Hence, in the case of the Greek movement, as in the other Occupy protests around the world, neo-liberalism and the power of global financial capital, the prescription of national policies by international organisations (e.g. the EU, the IMF), the crisis in political representation and finally corruption were major causes of protest. Demonstrators belonged to a broad range of social strata, age groups and political affiliations. According to a poll conducted during collective protest in Syntagma Square in June 2011, 23.8% of protestors were private employees, 14.6% were pensioners, 13.7% were public servants, 13.7% were unemployed, 13.2% were self-employed and 12.9% were university students (Chiotis, 2011). An academic project co-coordinated by Vasiliki Georgiadou found that most participants held bachelor's degrees (60%), while a small minority had a post-graduate degree (8%). The majority of protestors were aged 25-34 (25.3%) and 35-49 (27.4%) (Kollia, 2012). At the national level, the social profile of protestors differed in some respects from the profile of protestors in Syntagma Square (e.g. older age cohorts and protestors with secondary education were more numerous at the national level) (Public Issue, 2011). As for the political profile of protestors, 43% of left-

aligned and 36% of right aligned citizens became involved in the Indignant movement across Greece. In addition, 38% of those who described themselves as having 'no ideology' engaged in collective mobilizations (Public Issue, *ibid.*).

In conclusion, collective mobilizations in Syntagma Square represented a broad social and inter-generational alliance. This alliance was firmly grounded in material conditions, since austerity measures affected the greater part of Greek society. The heterogeneous social and political composition of the Indignant movement influenced the movement's narrative to a certain extent (e.g. class-discourse remained marginal within the Greek movement, despite the sharp rise of class polarization in Greek society).[17] In the Greek case, as in other Occupy protests, a collective subject (e.g. the Indignant) was constituted. The social origins and locations of protestors played a significant role in this process. However, the new subject was primarily the outcome of collective mobilization and prevailing narratives.

The remarkable coexistence of oppositional political forces in the Greek Indignant movement would not have been possible without significant prior shifts in Greek political culture, which illustrate rigorous questioning of post-1974 representative democracy and the rise of new political cleavages in the Greek party system.

Post-Junta Democracy in Question/ Political Cleavages

Many activists in the Indignant movement had ambivalent attitudes towards the past and its political legacy.[18] This was evident in regard to the Polytechneio uprising and the subsequent post-junta period**.** Since the restoration of democracy in 1974, the students' uprising against the junta at the National Technical University of Athens (Polytechneio) in 1973 has been one of the most prominent political symbols of popular struggles for democracy. In the Greek Indignant movement, protestors accused the existing political regime of being a phony democracy, violating citizens' rights. Thus protestors' slogans linked the Indignant movement to the Polytechneio uprising. A popular slogan was "Bread, Education, Liberty: The junta did not end in 1973".[19] The slogan emphasizes historical continuity (between the Polytechneio uprising and the Indignant movement) in order to motivate citizens to reclaim democracy and citizenship in contemporary Greek society. However, it dismisses the whole post-junta era, which has been the longest period of democratic stability in Greece's modern history. In the narratives of the Indignant movement 'democracy' was often a reference detached from any actual historical experience. Being detached from history and claimed by conflicting political forces, 'democracy' gradually became a "floating signifier" (Laclau 2005: 43). For instance, the slogan "Bread, Education, Liberty; the junta did not end in 1973", which portrays the existing political regime as a junta, was initially chanted by left-wing student unions in response to the nationalistic slogans that dominated the upper square. However, it was also embraced by demonstrators in the upper and became extremely popular. The result was that it was chanted by all demonstrators, attaching different meanings to it (Stavrou, 2012).

The shift in political attitudes towards the recent past reflects broader changes in Greek

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17   The national elections of June 2012 were marked by an exceptionally high level of class polarization. Συνέντευξη με τον Ηλία Νικολακόπουλο. (2012). Retrieved December 20, 2013, from http://www.epohi.gr/portal/politiki/11256-2012-11-05-03-14-55

18   For a detailed analysis of the relationship between the events in December 2008 and the historical past see Kornetis (2010).

19   The slogan "Bread, Education, Liberty" was a prominent slogan in the Polytechneio uprising.

political culture and widespread anger with the two party system of the post-junta era. Since the fall of the junta there has been exclusive two-party control of the government (by *New Democracy* or *PASOK*), due to the prevailing left-right cleavage. However, in the May and June 2012 national elections the influence of the traditional left-right cleavage subsided, while a new cleavage emerged between pro-Memorandum and anti-Memorandum political forces.[20] This new cleavage cut across the left-right cleavage, leading to a process of massive re-alignment (e.g. the right-wing populist *Independent Greeks* took a clear stand against the Memorandum. On the other hand, the centre-left *Democratic Left* party, even though critical of the Memorandum, participated in the subsequent pro-Memorandum coalition government). The Indignant movement both incorporated and reinforced the political changes that were subsequently recorded in the electoral results of May and June 2012. The movement comprised a plurality of diverse political groups belonging to the anti-Memorandum bloc. At the same time, the complex and sometimes contradictory influence of the two cleavages (e.g. left-right, pro-Memorandum – anti- Memorandum) was evident in the participation of ideologically opposed political forces in the Indignant movement.

During the economic and political crisis the rise of the extreme right became evident. The extreme right tried to capitalize on the waning legitimacy of official political institutions. Accordingly, sections of the extreme right tried to gain political leverage by supporting the Indignant movement.

The Extreme Right

The ongoing economic crisis and the devastating social impact of the austerity policies (including poverty, unemployment, urban decay, shrinking social services, and the rising incidence of suicide) have been the strongest factors feeding the rise of the extreme right. Other contributing factors have been the rise of authoritarian elements in the political regime (e.g. the weakening of parliamentary procedures and escalation of police violence and surveillance) and the gradual legitimation of the extreme right by a growing section of the party system and the mass media.[21] However, to understand the broad appeal of extreme-right frames in Greek society today, one must take into account not only existing problems in Greek society, but also pre-existing elements in Greek political culture. Since cultures encompass diverse and often conflicting elements, political actors select specific elements of a society's cultural repertoire (Zhao, 2010). The extreme right has merged elements such as the post-civil war perception of the Left as an internal enemy that must be eliminated (today the extreme right portrays immigrants as the primary internal enemy), the deep distrust of the West, anti-Semitism and nationalism with racism, anti-parliamentarism and authoritarianism.[22]

The extreme right perceived widespread public disaffection with representative democracy and political parties as a crucial opportunity to penetrate civil society by presenting itself as the only genuine anti-establishment force.[23] Thus the extreme right resorted to direct action (e.g.

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20   There were further divisions within the anti-Memorandum bloc.

21   For instance, the interim three-party coalition government that was formed in November 2011, included the extreme right party *LAOS*.

22   For the post-civil war perception of the Left as an internal enemy and the extreme right's contemporary portrayal of immigrants see Christopoulos (2013) and Pantazopoulos (2012).

23   Since the fall of the junta, several extreme-right political parties have participated in Greek national elections. Initially, these extreme-right groupings gave voice to traditional monarchists and supporters of the junta (Georgiadou, 2013). In the early 90s the extreme right embraced nationalism as the defining element of its ideology. The fight

every night the TV channel extra-3 called on listeners to join mobilizations in Syntagma Square, banners that appeared in Greek squares against global governance reproduced the extreme right's arguments that there is a global conspiracy involving bankers, political elites, Jews and masons to impose new secret forms of global governance, a bishop - who is known for his racist comments - sent a delegation of priests to the upper square). The extreme right also incorporated elements of the left-wing discourse on political dissent and direct democracy (e.g. extreme-right blog 'Social Insurrection', Facebook pages: 'United Fist – Direct Democracy Now', 'Indignant-Determined Greeks').[24] Thus, like other countermovements, the extreme right adopted elements of the tactics and rhetoric of the political forces it opposed.[25]

During the first days of collective mobilizations extreme-right groups tried to stage protests under their own banners in the upper square. This led to the reaction of left-wing activists, who expelled them from the square. Subsequently, there was no organized presence of extreme-right groups in the upper square. As the extreme right makes extensive use of social media to communicate its positions to the public, its blogs provide evidence of its internal divisions. Some extreme-right political forces distanced themselves from collective mobilizations in the squares. For instance, the Hellas-Orthodoxy blog, responding to criticism by 'patriots', who were participating in the Indignant movement, issued a statement accusing the movement of promoting 'global governance'.[26] Likewise the hellasxg blog accused the movement of staging a fake conflict; it fiercely attacked left-wing political forces and reminded 'patriots' that the enemy must be eliminated.[27] The blog 'Free Greeks' (*Eleftheri Ellines*), on the other hand, acknowledged that 'the movement' (e.g. extreme-right political forces) did not have a unified stand on collective mobilizations in the Greek squares.[28] Still, even those elements of the extreme right that denounced the mobilizations tried to capitalize on widespread public anger with austerity policies and political parties to promote their agenda (e.g. the blog hellasxg covered all verbal or physical attacks on politicians).[29]

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against what it termed illegal immigration became another prominent element of its agenda (Ellinas, 2013).

24   The extreme-right blog Κοινωνική Εξέγερση (Social Insurrection) cites Noam Chomsky, but at the same time it accuses politicians of national treason, demands their immediate punishment, adopts conspiracy theories and proposes the shutting down of all parties. See koinonikieksegersi.blogspot.com/, 'Ενωμένοι σα γροθιά – Άμεση Δημοκρατία τώρα' www.facebook.com/pages/--/200132563408452?ref=stream&hc_location=stream, 'Αγανακτισμένοι-Αποφασισμένοι Έλληνες' https://www.facebook.com/apofasismenoi

25   For instance in the U.S.A. white supremacists have appropriated slogans from the civil rights movement and have transformed them into demands for equal rights for whites (Blee and Creasap, 2010).

26   It argued that the ideological mentor of the Spanish Indignados, Stéphane Hessel, calls on citizens to abolish national frontiers in favour of global governance.–ΞΕΓΕΡΘΕΙΤΕ,ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΗΣΤΕ! ΕΓΚΑΤΑΛΕΙΨΤΕ ΤΑ ΕΘΝΙΚΑ ΣΥΝΟΡΑ ΓΙΑ ΜΙΑ ΠΑΓΚΟΣΜΙΑ ΔΙΑΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΗ. (2011). Retrieved December 20, 2013, from http://hellas-orthodoxy.blogspot.gr/2011/05/blog-post_1935.html

27   Αγανακτισμένοι Σχιζο-φρενείς Από Μια Στάλα!!!!!. (2011). Retrieved December 20, 2013, from www.hellasxg.blogspot.com/2011/07/blog-post_9355.html

28   During collective mobilizations in Syntagma Square extreme-right activists were observed co-operating with the police. Vradelis S. "Στην επιφάνεια οι σχέσεις «στοργής» ΕΛ.ΑΣ. – Χρυσής Αυγής. Ξύπνησε μνήμες η προνομιακή μεταχείριση των πέντε κουκουλοφόρων"_(2011-07-02), *Τα Νέα*. http://www.tanea.gr/ellada/article/?aid=4639406. «ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ» ΚΑΙ ΠΑΓΚΟΣΜΙΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ??? (2011). Retrieved December 20, 2013, from www.eleftheroiellines.blogspot.com/2011/05/blog-post_8443.html

29   See www.hellasxg.blogspot.com/

'The Indignant': Emotions and Cognition

The espousal of reactionary populist frames by many protestors in the upper square did not alarm all left-wing activists in the lower square. Many saw active engagement in collective mobilizations as the most important catalyst in raising and radicalizing political consciousness. Thus they treated prevailing frames in the upper square as the spontaneous, naïve expressions of individuals who had been secluded for years in their own private sphere and were, therefore, incapable of translating their rage into a political discourse.[30] Accordingly, they often viewed demonstrators in the upper square as having been devoid of any political identity prior to their active engagement in collective mobilizations. However, demonstrators in the upper square were not simply 'the Indignant' lacking any political identity. They were not blank slates upon which new identities could be inscribed. Emotions of rage and indignation include cognitive and moral appraisal of the social order. As Jasper states, "We need to recognize that feeling and thinking are parallel, interacting processes of evaluating and interacting with our worlds." (Jasper, 2011: 286). Protestors in both squares were motivated to join collective mobilizations by their moral outrage. They shared an injustice frame that labelled the acts of political authorities as unjust.[31] However, the normative priorities and value predispositions of participants were different. Thus passionate indignation was generated by cognitive evaluations concerning the violation of different moral values and principles. Accordingly, accusations of 'national treason' prevailed in the upper square, while accusations of 'social injustice' were predominant in the lower square. The protestors' different normative priorities led also to the adoption of diverse diagnostic frames in regard to the causes of the injustice and the actors responsible for it. In the populist frames in the upper square, the causes were attributed primarily to the political establishment. In the lower square, on the other hand, the causes were less personified, since they were linked to a systemic crisis. Thus rage and indignation were tied to different diagnostic frames and consequently to different claims. In brief, elements of the protestors' identity prior to mobilization were embedded in the frames they adopted and the claims they articulated while mobilizing. The protestors' emotions of rage were not independent of their political identities.

During the Greek Indignant movement, frames and oppositional frames competed in moulding the movement's collective identity. Even though there was repeated interaction between the diverse blocs of protestors, no superordinate identity was constructed through collective protest. Thus strong group identities continued to prevail.

"Democracy out of Rage"?[32]

The context in which the Greek Indignant movement emerged was favourable for social movement mobilization (e.g. the closure of the political regime, divisions within the elite, the emergence of new alliance structures and the waning legitimacy of official institutions). Moreover, the cognitive and emotional shifts that took place in Greek society played a significant role in the mobilization of diverse social and political forces. The Greek Indignant movement succeeded in transforming the occupied squares into the primary sites of political contestation across the country. It may have not succeeded in its immediate goals (e.g. of bringing down the

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30   See the analyses by Sergi and Vogiatzoglou (2013); Stavrou (2011).

31   For the role of injustice and diagnostic frames in the Spanish 15M movement see Perugorria and Tejerina (2013).

32   I have used a segment of the title of an article by Gourgouris (2011).

government, repealing the memorandum and prompting national elections), but it has had long-term political and personal consequences. Even after the Syntagma Square encampment ended, its impact was profound. From September to October 2011, few days were marked by the absence of strikes and demonstrations.

On the other hand, the Greek Indignant movement illustrates that rage and indignation are not simply means of mobilizing erstwhile 'passive citizens'. Cognitive evaluations and diagnostic frames are embedded in these emotions. Thus, protestors, who mobilize out of rage and indignation possess political identities that are clearly manifested in the claims and repertoires of action they adopt. In the case of the Greek Indignant movement left-wing protestors played a prominent role. Protestors embracing right-wing populist frames also participated actively in collective mobilizations, while segments of the extreme right penetrated collective protests. Hence conflicting political forces competed in moulding the movement's identity. This underlying conflict within the Greek Indignant movement was not played out at that time. However, had it been played out, it would have revealed that the interplay between indignation and democracy is in no way straightforward. Advances in democratization and inclusive citizenship are only one of the possible outcomes of this complex interplay.

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