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THE SOCIAL MEDIA PARAMETER ON PROTEST MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION.

The case study of the Greek Aganaktismenoi movement.

PhD Thesis

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Contents

Introduction 5

1. Theory Chapter 13

Social movements, the public sphere and media 13

The public sphere in the era of mediatization 20

Internet, media and democratic politics 30

The role of media and media theories 33

Political Efficacy: the merits for my research 41

The Greek case study 46

2. Methodology Chapter 54

Research questions and objectives 54

Research design 56

Mixed methods research design: Emergent sequential exploratory triangulation design – Visualization 58

Qualitative versus quantitative methods discussion: complementary approaches rather than mutual exclusion. 61

Phase I - Qualitative 64

Ethnomethodology 64

Participant Observation 65

Phase II Quantitative 67

E-survey 67

Ethical considerations and limitations 68

Limitations 69

Role of the Researcher 70

3. Empirical qualitative data: participant observation 71

Participant Observation Data Presentation 71

Setting the scene and explaining the geography of the movement. 71

Rage against the machine: motivation and political naivety 77

Re-inventing the "political beast" within the citizen 81

Regaining a sense of community 91

Aganaktismenoi and the media, traditional and digital 95

4. Empirical quantitative data: e-survey – a qualitative presentation 101

E-Survey - a qualitative presentation 101

Participation in the movement and recent voting behavior 102

The Movement and the media, old and new 111
Political efficacy amongst the *Aganaktismenoi* lines 113
Demographic profile 116
5. Data Analysis, Synthesis and Discussion 118
Data Analysis, Synthesis and Discussion 118
Digital social media-led protest movements: the dangers of mobilizing large crowds within an ideological void. 119
Creating a new international *Indignados'* "language": how the digital media enhance the transnational movement potential 126
The digital social media's Heritage to mediated mobilization 128
Conclusion 136
References - Bibliography 158
Methods Appendix 1. 179
E-survey questions 179
Flyers Appendix 2. 185

I dedicate this work to

Raffaele for keeping me sane,

Fiore and Flora for their invaluable everyday support,

Elena and Ognian for their intellectual presence in my thoughts,

my parents and brother for their unwavering faith in me.

Thea, Dan and Penny for their practical advice and help and support.

Abstract

This thesis concerns an inquiry into the social media parameter on protest movement mobilization. In particular, it investigates how the use of social media in the contemporary, heavily mediatized environment –contested by the emergence of the media manifold and the increasing interdependence of social relations- affect the way citizens mobilize on an unprecedented scale and velocity. It looks at the possible effects this social-media led mobilization has on participants' sense of political efficacy -their belief in their agency's capacity to inflict political change- as well as its relation to the public sphere on a national and transnational level. To illustrate this, the author uses the case of the Greek Aganaktismenoi movement, which was active between May and November 2011.

The research questions of this thesis touch two main areas: social mobilization in a heavily mediatized environment; and the role of digital and social media platforms in the development of this new-type of movements.

This thesis proposes a post-constructivist, multiparadigm theoretical approach, combining critical theories of media and sociology with a research tool from political communication. This is reflected in the adapted methodology; more specifically, a qualitative approach, based on ethnomethodology, supported by a mixed methods design, namely an emergent sequential exploratory triangulation design, complimenting reflexive empirical work.

One of the key findings of this research was the nexus of social media-led mobilization and political naivety which characterized the initial large crowds of participants. This signifies, that the autonomized, a-political nature of the social media who played the role of the ''organizing grounds'' of the movement, affected the participants' capacity to display actual and effective counterpower. However, this thesis argues that social media's heritage on protest movement mobilization, in the case of the Aganaktismenoi, was observed in the form of three pillars of emancipation: 1) Legitimation of collective decisions via their publication in social media, 2) Personal responsibility for posted material and 3) The realization of the potential of a latent direct-democratic prospect. A novice feature of this research is the proven direct relation between participating in this new type of social-media led mobilizations and enhanced levels of participants' political efficacy.

Future research is needed to explore further the relationship between digital media as tools of mediated mobilization and political efficacy of the participants in such protest mobilizations, as well as the implications of mediatization on protest movements' longevity and the quality of the political discourse produced and popularized during digital media-led mobilizations.

Introduction

This thesis is an inquiry into the social media parameter on protest movement mobilization. I investigate how the use of social media in the contemporary, heavily mediatized environment affects the way citizens mobilize and form protest movements on an unprecedented scale and velocity. I am interested in the possible effects this social-media led mobilization has on people's sense of political efficacy as well as the prospective feedback to the public sphere on a national or transnational level, given the unique tempo/spatial potential of new media technologies. To address this I look into the case of the Greek version of the *Indignants* movement, called the *Aganaktismenoi* movement, which was active from May to November 2011.

The so-called Arab Spring and the use of social media in the uprisings from Iran to Tunisia and Egypt has caught the fascination of many scholars. The cyber optimists have called it a "facebook revolution" (Castells, 2012) whereas others have looked at it with hope as well, from the perpective of *cyberdemocracy* (Tsagarousianou et al. 1998), talking about social media movements or networked protests and the logic of connective action, thus acknowledging the relation between digital media and the *personalization of contentious politics* (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013). More critical voices seek the underlying economic, political, cultural and sociological conditions that led to such a use of social media and warn that social media are not only activists' tools, but are also shaped by state and capitalistic power as well as institutionally vested interests (Fuchs, 2012, 2014b, 2014c; Morozov, 2010, 2013). In particular, Morozov is fiercely against the idea that social media can bring about revolutions and he characterizes the talk of Facebook and twitter revolutions as "a naïve belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside" (Morozov, 2010,

xiii). While this academic debate is vivid and interesting, it is, however, important to avoid becoming distracted by the similar use of social media in the case of the Arab Spring movements and the western movements, like the *Indignants* in Europe and the Occupy in the USA and Europe. The socio-political, religious and cultural differences between the two societal paradigms are vast and do not allow for a common theoretical approach and investigation of the phenomenon in Islamic regimes and western democracies alike. From the role of religion in everyday life to the rights of women, the access to education, public space and freedom of speech to many other case-particular factors, theorizing in general terms appears problematic and beyond the scope of this research. Hence, here I will focus exclusively on the new parameter social media have added to the mobilization and organization of large protest movements in western democracies; in other words, I will look into the relationship between mediatization and protest mobilization, with a specific interest in the effect on protesters' political efficacy.

This aforementioned debate between cyber optimists -of several shades and tensions- and cyber sceptics is seen by some as obsolete. I argue, however, that although the debate has moved beyond its original form it still remains relevant (Fuchs, 2015; Iosifidis and Wheeler, 2016). Critical research in times of a global capitalist crisis and reflection on scholarly work around the internet and its capacity to liberate and democratize the international public sphere has resulted in a surging interest for critical theories with regards to social media. Fuchs and Sandoval (2014) in particular reject the emancipating capacity of the current internet network and look into what kind of Internet is desirable for the future, how an alternative Internet can look like, and how a participatory, commons-based Internet and a co-operative, participatory, sustainable information society can be achieved. Their work investigates how capitalism, power structures and social media are connected. They discuss how political struggles are connected to social media and what current developments of the Internet and society tell us about potential futures. Dahlgren (2014) also discusses social media and political participation under the binary of "*Discourse and Deflation*", arguing against optimistic views of social media as facilitators of sustainable political participation. This position brings the above scholars to the opposite side of the debate with Castells and a wide range of scholars who see the internet as a tool for user empowerment (Pierson et al. 2011), for connective action (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012; Bennett

2002;) or a mediation opportunity (Cammaerts, 2012), or even as a space for '"creating the collective" (Kavada, 2015). Between the two poles of this dichotomy there are many moderate critical voices who negotiate the relation between the current internet reality and mobilizations, participation, human agency and democracy (Loader and Mercea 2011, 2012; Mattoni, 2013; Mercea 2012; Bastos et al. 2015), looking at media as sites for ideological democratic struggle (Carpentier 2011). Taking the above intellectual debate into consideration I argue that although social constructivism has informed relevant scholarship in the recent years, not only does the aforementioned binary between cyber optimists and cyber sceptics still remain relevant but it has been more focused in recent years, reflecting the global capitalist crisis in the era of deep mediatization.

While it is surely important to investigate scholars' understanding of the online environment's nature and potential, it appears particularly imminent to maintain a broader understanding of the digital media environment's interconnection with most other aspects of human agency; This is reflected in crucial aspects of both the personal and the public sphere in the western democracies' deeply mediatized environment. While citizens live in a reflexive environment, one that Giddens and Lash (1994) called *autonomized modernization*, they are expected to make identity choices (Beck, 2005) and utilize vast quantities of information as individualized units; nonetheless, they are expected to demonstrate political sophistication and analytical skills that will allow them to make educated civic and political choices in a complex globalized environment. At the same time all aspects of everyday life are colonized by media logic and practices, under the mediatization paradigm (Couldry 2008). Moreover, as media technologies evolve the process of mediatization is evolving to what Couldry and Hepp (2017) now call deep mediatization

> Deep mediatization derives from the interaction of two very different types of transformation: a changed media environment characterized by increasing differentiation, connectivity, omnipresence, pace or innovation and datafication (the emergence of the media manifold); and the increasing interdependence of social relations (the complex role in social life of figurations and figurations of figurations, that are based,

in part, on a media-based infrastructure, but whose dynamics evolve beyond it) (2017:215).

It is within this environment that the social media-led mobilizations are looked at in this thesis. Understanding our current reality as deeply mediatized adds more gravity in these new types of mobilizations as potential formative future initiatives, in both the political and the societal sphere, especially since a large part of current political experience is mediated. Through the case of the Aganaktismenoi this research observes the unfolding of the increasing interdependence of social relations (as "figurations of figurations, that are based, in part, on a media-based infrastructure, but whose dynamics evolve beyond it" (Couldry and Hepp, 2017:215) with regards to protest mobilization, while acknowledging the facilitating role of a changed media environment characterized by increasing connectivity, omnipresence and differentiation. We, thus, understand deep mediatization through the case of the Aganaktismenoi. Moreover, new media technologies offer unprecedented tempo/spatial experiences which galvanize digital media-led mobilizations, allowing for potential online and offline presence convergence. Taking this under consideration we seek to evaluate the formative political potential of the Aganaktismenoi movement.

The world has been witnessing the very quick mobilization of crucial masses via digital social media. However, a monodimentional media and/or communications approach would not be sufficient in order to investigate this phenomenon in full, neither would a sociology of mobilization approach, because of all the complex parameters mentioned above. Hence, while these new social-media led mobilizations have intrigued many scholars and there is a variety of essays around them from many different academic faculties, I argue that there is a prominent need for a fresh, multi-paradigm scope regarding this research topic. This will be this thesis' original position and contribution to the relevant theory. I propose a multi-paradigm, critical media approach, combining theories from the media and communications studies, sociology and media sociology as well as political communication studies. In other words, this thesis is utilizing a combination of theories: public sphere theories and their challenges in the digital media environment, media consumption theories and critical media theory, as well as reflexivity,

mobilization theories and the theoretical notion of political efficacy. Thus, with the help of triangulation, mixed methodology and an elaborate, reflexive analysis, synthesis and discussion of qualitative and quantitative data, we can have a deep look into this complex research topic and sufficiently address research questions, aims and objectives.

Subsequently, the research questions of this project are two: 1) What is the connection between mediatization and civic mobilization, as it plays out in the form of the new type of social media-led movements like the "*Indignados*" and the "Occupy" movements? 2) What is the role of traditional and newer media (namely social media) in the creation, formation, organization, communication and social effect of these new types of protest movements and, vice versa, how do these protest movements affect the way the traditional and newer (social) media are perceived by the movements' participants?

Furthermore, the two main research objectives are: 1) To investigate how mediatization, or the colonization of everyday life by media logic and practices, affects –while at the same time reflects- the way power relations are perceived by the citizens on the one hand, and the way social frustration is realized and acted out in the form of these type of protest movements on the other hand. 2) To consider whether the use of new media technologies and social media leads to the enhancement of citizens' political efficacy and their democratic participation. Hence, to explore the possibility of social media as a new type of broad political "*agora*", or in other words a public political space of dialogue, where thoughts can move freely and fast, facing new dangers: fragmentation, information chaos, uncontrolled censoring and false framing. These digital spaces of dialogue can also be seen as a new layer to the public sphere, I argue, parallel with the traditional ones. One needs to be cautious, however, and acknowledge the dangers facing democratic societies within this mediatized environment. Bennett and Livingston (2018) are alerting towards the dangers of an emerging *disinformation order*, suggesting that "public spheres in many nations have become divided and disrupted as growing challenges confront the democratic centring principals of a) authoritative information, b) emanating from social and political institutions that c) engage trusting and credulous publics" (2018:126-127).

The above research questions and objectives lead to several reflections which have informed this thesis: Firstly, that the new mediatized environment confronts everyday life and affects all aspects of it, political participation included. With all its complexity and constant changing, the mediatized environment opens a new, virtual territory of "hegemony", where ideas are presented, met, fought against or supported, in an infotainment background, most of the time mixed with irrelevant social activities like music or games. This has an impact on citizens' perception of *the political* and indeed *the social*. Acknowledging this reality leads us to think that mediatization affects citizens as political beings within the democratic system. With regards to the Aganaktismenoi movement one could observe, however, that social media have played a significant role in the communication of the protests to the world outside Greece, but have had less impact upon the highly politicized audience within Greece. Interestingly, what social media have done in a unique way was to de-stigmatize action on the streets for one part of the new generation who was heretofore absent from the political scene and often characterized as apolitical. On account of the speed and the popularity of the social media, protests became something familiar, something "ordinary people" could identify with because their peers in the social networks were participating in it, not something extremely radical and revolutionary, possibly for the militants. This brought more people to the streets (in this case to the squares) but simultaneously decreased the level of politicization of the movement. On the contrary, the traditional media played an institutional role and addressed the movement in a spasmodic, provocative and opportunistic way. Observing the above led the researcher to investigate whether participation in this new type of social media-led movement affected people's political efficacy and to some extent influenced their actual voting behaviour. The results of this investigation were clear in favour of the idea described above; we found that there had been a change in the political efficacy levels of the movement's participants. This is looked at as one of the unique features of this thesis, namely to empirically prove the use and influence of a political communication tool, the notion of political efficacy, in a mixed methods qualitative approach investigating digital media-led mobilizations.

As mentioned above, given the nature of the research questions, aims and objectives, a qualitative approach is considered best to address the issues. Although the initial methods in the

research design have been ethnomethodological, participant observation and interviews, a reflexive approach has been required to confront field work realities. In this case field work realities meant the tempo/spatial fluidity of the mobilization and its abrupt end led to the adjustment of the methodology design, from qualitative to mixed methods, adding an e-survey to complement the findings of the participant observation, after the movement dissolved from the streets.

The above will be analytically explained in the methodology chapter, the second chapter of this research, where I also share the limitations of my study, discussing them and identifying areas for further investigation in the future. However, before discussing methodology, I elaborate on the literature critical to the research subject and provide a multi-paradigm theoretical background for my thesis, in the second chapter. There, I discuss literature and theories of the public sphere, political participation, media and identities, internet and democracy and political communication in a reflexive, critical way. I ground my arguments and my intellectual framework on critical media theory, as presented by Christian Fuchs.

I continue with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the empirical data in the following three chapters. In Chapter three I analytically present and discuss the qualitative data gathered via participant observation. In Chapter four I present and explain the quantitative data gathered via the e-survey, in a qualitative way, as this thesis calls for. I do, however, provide visual examples, charts and graphics to achieve more clarity in my presentation. The fifth chapter is where the triangulation, synthesis and discussion of the mixed data is taking place. A deep analysis is highlighting the unique findings of this multi-paradigm approach which lead to original arguments. These are the unique contribution of this thesis to the relevant body of literature.

The last chapter of this thesis is naturally the conclusion. There I summarize the main points of the study, occasionally using deductions made based on the main body of the text. I integrate and synthesize the various issues raised both in the theoretical and the discussions sections, providing answers to the research questions. I identify the theoretical implications of the study with regards to the overall study areas and I make recommendations for future research.

Closing this introduction, I want to discuss this thesis' unique feature, stemming from its multi-paradigm, mixed methods approach: this is the novel practical use of a political communication theory tool, namely the notion of political efficacy, in an empirical media sociology study. It is crucial, however, to make a point of order regarding the integration of the notion of political efficacy in this thesis' theoretical framework: although a separate part of the theory chapter has been dedicated to the notion of political efficacy and its merits for my research, political efficacy has not been placed in the centre of the literature review. This is a conscious choice of the researcher. That is because, although the use of political efficacy in a qualitative empirical research is novice, the theoretical concept of political efficacy itself does not have the gravity to maintain the centre of attention of the multi-paradigmatic, inter-disciplinary approach that this thesis proposes. In other words, this is a qualitative, ethnomethodology-based, mixed methods approach to the new type of social media-led mobilizations, conducted with applied use of a political communication tool, traditionally used in quantitative studies. Consequently, the originality of this research, filling the relevant gap in the literature, is that it considers the dynamic relation between an individual's political efficacy and her participation in the new type of social media-led movement. Moreover, it looks at how this participation feeds back into her political efficacy and affects her potential future understanding of the political system and voting behaviour. This dynamic, conversational process, proven by this study, can become the base for a new round of research on political mobilization and the use of media and new technologies. It will offer fresh opportunities for policy suggestions as well as for political communication analysis, both by the institutionalized political agents (i.e. national political parties, unions, universities etc) and the national or transnational civic protest movements and activists.

1. Theory Chapter

Social movements, the public sphere and media

As observed originally in the 2011-2012 protest movements in Tunisia and Egypt, Spain, Greece and then the Occupy movement outside stock exchange premises around the globe, digital media platforms have played a significant role in the phenomenon of non-partisan, rapid and massive political mobilization. To investigate and analyse the role of the digital media platforms, specifically social media, in this new type of political mobilization, this research operates at the common ground between media sociology and political communication. Featuring a unique, multi-paradigm approach, it draws theories from media studies, sociology and political communication. The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of medium level theories used under the umbrella of macro level critical media theory. More specifically: this research utilizes communication and media theories (Couldry, 2008, Demertzis, 2011, Hesmondalgh, 2007, Matos, 2008, 2012, Papacharissi, Pleios, 2012, Weber, 1978), theories of the public sphere (Habermas, 1964, 1989, 1992, 2006, Arendt, 1958, Dahlgren, 2005, 2013, Chadwick, 2011 Fraser, 1993, Fuchs, 2011, 2014, Hallin & Mancini, 2004), theories about new media and democracy (Dahlgren, 2014; Fuchs, 2012, 2014; Olsson, 1965; Morozov, 2011; 2013; Papacharissi, Mercea, 2012, 2014, Treré and Mattoni, 2015) sociology and media sociology (Adorno, 1978, 1990; Beck, 1992, 2005, Bourdieu, 1991, 1993, Debord, 1970 Giddens and Lash, 1994, Hall, 1997, 1999), as well as the notion of political efficacy, grounded in political communication (Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991; Coleman et al., 2008; Jung, Kim, and de Zúñiga, 2011). The macro level theory of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci (1971) will compliment critical media theory (Fuchs, 2011, 2012) as the analytical reference. Broader questions about the underlying power relations embedded and reflected within the social media platforms and how they interact, shape and advance the new type of protest movements, will be addressed. Although this is a multi-paradigm critical approach,

based on Christian Fuchs' analysis of critical media theory, this thesis is grounded in media sociology, looking at the new type of digital media-led mobilizations and investigating how the current deeply mediatized environment affects protesters' political efficacy. It does that by looking at the example of the Greek Aganaktismenoi movement.

The research is complemented by the notion of reflexive sociology, proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, a combination of theoretical and empirical work. According to Bourdieu, modern society is based on the accumulation of economic, political and cultural capital and one needs to allow for reflection between the different social structures as well as self-reflection of the researcher when looking into social issues. This condition was accurately described by the American sociologist William Thomas as early as 1923, when he noticed that the situations men define as true, become true for them. Later this became known as the Thomas theorem: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (1928: 572). In the 20th century it was the French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1980), amongst others (Davidson, 1997), who in the 1960s-1970s approached reflexivity from a more anthropological perspective and talked about the relationship between power and knowledge production. This theoretical and methodological approach of interpretivism and (post)-constructivism is going to be utilized both in the empirical part of this research and the reflexive discussion of theoretical frameworks. Is social media-led construction of (mobilization) reality real enough to produce a sustainable offline mobilization with real effect in participants' political efficacy?

Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (Beck, 2005; Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1991) in their common and individual work address reflexivity as a general tendency of contemporary modern (or postmodern) society to undermine itself and to become autonomous as a new social pattern. Beck, Giddens and Lash call this new era *autonomized modernization* and they define reflexivity as cognitive, institutional and aesthetic, respectively. Each one of them perceives it in his own way, but all of them agree that reflexivity is a very distinctive characteristic of contemporary societies, closely connected with individualization, active trust and identity choices, as they interpret it. Ulrich Beck's "risk society" theory (Beck, 2005) talks about the instability of contemporary environments and the loss of a sense of an historically established

social reality safety net. Today's citizens, according to Beck, face a wide range of identity choices and risks for the first time in human history, such as mass migration on an unprecedented scale, environmental changes fuelling natural disasters and migration, social insecurities and unprecedented technological advantages that shape the everyday life in a new, ever changing environment. The new media technologies and their everyday implications in both the private and the public sphere are one of the critical factors shaping the new ''risk society'' especially with regards to theories of mediatization (Couldry, 2008, Hepp, 2013, Couldry & Hepp, 2017), hence the colonization of everyday life by the media logic. However, seen from a critical point of view, Beck's theories, as well as Giddens' and Lash's, are bourgeois theories, tackling the problem from a managerial point of view and not looking into broader questions of power distribution and class divisions within the so called risk society. By calling the new era ''autonomized modernization'' the three scholars imply a universality and naturalization of the socially embedded material conditions of inequality, ostracizing any revolutionary dynamics in the sphere of cognitive, institutional and aesthetic reflexivity, instead of acknowledging these categories as sophisticated capitalistic superstructures.

Establishing the relationship between mediatization and the risk society leads to broader sociological questions about mediated identities, societal reality and technology. More specifically, the relation between identity and media representations of the citizen and of the social movements comes into question in the work of many scholars (Postmes, T., Spears, P., & Lea, M. 1999; Reicher. S., Spears, P., & Postmes, T., 1995; Spears, P., & Postmes, T., 2013; Papacharissi, 2011; Melucci, 1988). Papacharissi, for example, takes a great interest in the ''networked self'':

> The Self, in late modern societies, is expressed as fluid abstraction, reified through the individual's association with a reality that may be equally flexible. (2011: 304)

Seeing identities and representations as results of the social construction of meanings themselves, has been nominal to this discussion. Du Gay's, Hall's et al. Circuit of Culture (1997) explain how meanings are exchanged and re-shaped between the media production and media consumption, amongst three other factors: identities, regulations and representations. Their

work paves the way for current sociological investigations on how new media technologies facilitate for this perpetual re-shaping of meanings and identities. Consequently, questions about new technologies and the possible convergence of practices and spaces are also posed by theorists. Deuze suggests that convergence is more than a technological process, it should be seen as,

> having a cultural logic of its own, blurring the lines between production and consumption, between making media and using media, and between active or passive spectatorship of mediated culture. (2007: 74)

This idea of Deuze is supported by du Gay's, Stuart Hall's et al circuit of culture (1997), where he explains how meanings are exchanged and re-shaped between the media production and media consumption, amongst three other factors: identities, regulations and representations. Commenting on a comparison analysis by Kaye regarding communication sustained via social networking sites and blogging networks, Papacharissi states:

> Results indicated that social networking sites could support the affirmation of political attitudes and behaviours where more information-driven platforms, like blogs and YouTube, provide the fodder for the development of these attitudes (Papacharissi, 2011:211).

Subsequently, she states, "future research could investigate these relationships further, as they certainly reflect connections between user orientation, type of use, and consequences" (2011: 314). Investigating the aforementioned areas with regards to the new type of social media-led civic mobilizations in Europe, where social media and democracy come together in an ambivalent and debatable relationship (Abdallah, 2011; Loader, Mercea, 2012), in a heavily mediatized environment (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Livingstone, 2009) is one of the challenges of this research.

Amidst various political and economic crises in the "global village", the past two decades have seen various theorists trying to assess the role of new media technologies in democratic processes, initially the Internet in general and social media in particular after the advent of web 2.0. Often these debates are framed in terms of the public sphere and as Peter Dahlgren (2014:

191) puts it they follow two opposing narratives: On the one hand enthusiasts laud the democratic potential of social media (Benkler 2006; Castells 2010, 2012), On the other hand sceptics, or those with a more critical analysis, underscore the constraints of these media in the face of other factors that shape political realities (Fuchs 2011; Hindamn 2009) and even how theymay be deployed for anti-democratic measures (Morozov 2011). Others position themselves in more nuanced ways (van Djik 2013; Gerbaudo 2012; Lievrouw 2011) or offer a mix of voices (Loader and Mercea, 2012). On the site of this basic dichotomy of internet enthusiasts and sceptics with regards to democratic potential of the social media, there are parallel debates focused on the dimension of global inequalities and economic division between developed and developing countries, internet penetration and media democratization. Matos, for example, discussing media and politics in Latin America, investigates

> the ways in which the medium of the internet functions to strengthen media democratization in the continent amid governmental efforts to overcome the digital divide between the rich democracies and developing societies, especially regarding access to the information and participation in the global mediated public sphere (2012: 172).

This thesis contributes to this intellectual debate, aligned with the views of the sceptical critical analysis. It examines the issue of social media and political participation from a theoretical angle combining Frankfurt School critical theory with the critique of political economy of Media/Communication/Information Culture, as articulated by Christian Fuchs (2009a, 20011b),

> both traditions have developed critiques of the role of media communication in exploitation, as means of ideology and potential means of liberation and struggle […] and are valuable, important and complementary for studying social media critically. (Fuchs, 2014: 22)

Fuchs' take on critical media theory will be supported in my analysis by the Gramscian notion of "cultural hegemony", which helps to explain the wide and ever spreading popularity of social media and their "prosumer"[1] logic, in alliance with the dominant ideology of consumerism.

Fuchs advocates for a critical approach to media studies and he points out the ideological role of the media:

> By discussing the role of ideologies in capitalism, Marx and Engels have anticipated the fact that media frequently play the ideological role of technologies of consciousness and legitimize capitalistic domination. (Fuchs, 2011).

Marx compared ideology with a *camera obscura*, which makes reality appear upside down (MECW 5, 14), whereas Engels suggested that ideas are "reflections –true or distorted- of reality" (MECW 25, 463). Following that line of thought, if media play an ideological role in today's informational capitalism, then any mobilization in favour of participatory democracy encouraged by the media must reflect this ideological role at its core. According to Marx, the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas *(MECW 5, 59), hence ideology is a false consciousness.* This definition of ideology by Marx has been further developed over the years to reflect the complexities of current situations. Lukasc (1923) argued that bourgeois ideology tries to present capitalism as an historical law that cannot be changed, whereas Antonio Gramsci added the notion of Cultural Hegemony to the economic analysis of Marx, arguing that the dominated classes submit to the dominant ones also culturally, by incorporating the dominant ideology and deploying an opportunistic attitude towards domination instead of resisting it (Gramsci, 1971, 226). Of research interest here is also the practical application of Gramsci's ideas of cultural hegemony. How are the participants in social media-led protest movements elaborating on the colonization of the public sphere and the media, by the media logic (Couldry,

[1]When the consumer of the social media is also a producer of content and meanings. Meanings are circulated via representations and are consumed by media users (Circuit of culture, Du Gay, Hall et al, 1997). But at the same time new media technologies allow for individual production of media outputs, hence meanings. This way media users are simultaneously consumers and producers or meanings in the current mediatized environment.

2008) which reflects the embedded interests of the ruling classes? To what extent, if any, is the cultural consensus sought by the elites perceived as such by the protestors, and thus brought out as a field of struggle for the movement? The protestors' decoding of media's encoded preferred readings (Hall, 1997) with regards to the causes, aims and results of the movement and how they utilize the different qualities of social media with regards to their cause, will also be considered. These research interests will be pursued by examining the Greek movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*, looking at both its physical presence and components, its aims and objectives as well as its dissolve and possible "merging into'' the Greek political scene and activism structures.

This research raises critical questions with regards to the new type of protest movements organized and emancipated with the help of social media: do these movements attempt to tackle important issues of structural inequality? To what extent are the protests short sighted and contain elements of self-interest? We are thus looking at the ideological role social media played as carriers of the dominant ideology and how this affected the protest movements they nourished. In a recent article considering "The political economy of capitalist and alternative social media" (2015) Fuchs and Sandoval point out and underline the two antagonistic theoretic approaches towards the "role of social media in contemporary political and revolutionary movements such as the *A*rab Spring, Occupy, the 15-M in Spain and the Indignant Citizens Movement in Greece, etc."[2] On one side of the theoretical debate they consider scholars like Castells who claim that contemporary revolutions and rebellions are social media movements or networked protests of connective action (Castells, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; see Fuchs, 2014c: chapters 4 and 8 and 2014b for a detailed criticism). According to Fuchs and Marisol these scholars "reflect the populist and techno-determinist sentiments of the tabloid press about the "Facebook and Twitter revolutions". On the other side of the argument, they position themselves and other academics who have warned that social media are not only activists' tools, but are also shaped by state and capitalistic power (Fuchs, 2012, 2014b, 2014c; Morozov, 2010, 2013). In particular, Morozov is fiercely against the idea that social media can bring about revolutions and

[2]Other movements included in Fuchs and Sandoval (2015) are: "the Yo Soy 132 in Mexico, The Taksim Gezi Park movement in Turkey, the Free Fare Movement in Brazil and the opposition in Syrian civil war".

he characterizes the talk of Facebook and twitter revolutions as “a naïve belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside” (Morozov, 2010, xiii). Moreover, other academic voices echoing these views also draw attention to the nature of the networked structures arising via the digital media technologies:

> social media do not seem to result in democratic networked organisation structures, but are embedded into hierarchies, internal power structures and the formation of elites within social movements. (Gerbaudo, 2012: 86)

This research will take the side of the latter in the argument and will try to prove its post-constructivist stance by the use of a combination of critical theories of media and society and empirical research. This approach aspires to ground a dialectical theory of media and society and inform empirical studies of the role and relationship of social media in contemporary social movements.

The public sphere in the era of mediatization

The contribution of newer and renewed media platforms to the discussion about democracy and the public sphere is one of the most vivid in the field of media sociology and political communication. As analysed above, many scholars argue in favour of a technological determinism, suggesting that digital media technologies which enable instant tempo-spatial communication of large parts of the population will inevitably shake the global media organisation platforms, thereby affecting the embedded political interests and opening ways towards a more democratic public sphere and in conclusion a more democratic society. On the other side of the argument, critical academics and thinkers problematize the political economy of the digital media platforms and organization, pointing out that new technologies cannot *per se* pave the way to more comprehensive and inclusive democracy. They argue that although new technologies seem to have a very vivid presence in debates of and about the public sphere, they

remain only technologies, and are still used under a broader socio-economic paradigm, that of consumer capitalism. In this capacity, scholars like Fuchs argue that social media reproduce the already established power relations in societies. In Gramsci's terminology one can argue that new media is the new weapon in the arsenal of the global elites for pursuing cultural hegemony, using the new media technologies to protect and maintain their interests. From the Frankfurt school's ''cultural industry'' notion to Hesmondalgh's "cultural industries" in plural tense with all the correlations implied, this debate has always taken place within the public sphere. Here I will provide an indicative description of the much extended discussion about the relation between media, democracy and the public sphere. Starting from Jürgen Habermas' work on *The Transformation of the Public Sphere*, published in 1962 the era of mass-communication's regime, I will then look at Hannah Arendt's ideas about the modern public realm and Peter Dahlgren's categorisation of the three analytical dimensions of the public sphere. This very short allusion will conclude with a contemporary revisit of Habermas' theory on mass communication, democracy and the public sphere by Andrew Chadwick, who proposes that today's media system is a hybrid one, providing some opportunities for democratization of the public sphere but restricted by its political economy and organizational limits. Finally, criticism on Habermas' initial notion of the public sphere will be presented (Frazer, 1993; Negt and Kluge, 1993; Hallin, 2004) and alternative notions of a counter-public sphere, or a multi-ethnic, or even proletarian public sphere will be explored.

The importance of Habermas' contribution to the way we understand and use the notion of the public sphere today is vital and broadly accepted. Furthermore, his contribution is now complemented by theories on the very latest addition to the dialogue on the public sphere, namely the Internet, new media and online political activism[3]. We can distinguish between his early work in the 1960s and his later work in the 1980s-90s-00s (Habermas 1984, 1987, 1996, 2006). In the former he draws from the critical tradition of the Frankfurt school, describing the public sphere as a bourgeois pluralistic space where the actors are equally sophisticated and

[3]Habermas, despite his age, still remains a key figure of the European Intellectual family, once again stepping into the front scene with his very recent passionate preoccupation with the European Union. The financial crisis and indeed the political crisis behind that, as well as the Greek issue as part of the European Union's future development has been the sole subject of some of his latest interviews with the German press (2011-13).

influential. In the latter on the other hand, he seems to acknowledge his earlier weaknesses and turn his attention towards communicative rationality or the deliberate character of communication, networking, new technologies and the disproportion of embedded power relations within the public realm. As Dahlgren puts it:

> (Habermas) in his updates of his public sphere perspective (1996, 2006), now stresses complexity, overlapping spaces and criss-crossing media and interaction. (2009:158)

It was in 1964 when Jürgen Habermas published "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article", discussing the term. The article begins with the following definition of the concept of the public sphere:

> By "the public sphere" we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all the citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body (1964:49).

In the same article, Habermas notices the important role of the mass media in the formation of the public sphere by stating:

> In the transition from the literary journalism of private individuals to the public services of the mass media the public sphere was transformed by the influx of private interests, which received special prominence in the mass media (1964:53).

I argue that today, in the internet era, the production and political economy of social media calls for a need to investigate how this reflects on the further transformation of the public sphere, taking under consideration the new potential for immediate and costless individual action within the social media environment.

In this seminal article Habermas makes yet another point, that the "representative public sphere yielded to that new sphere of 'public authority' which came into being with national and territorial states" (1964:54). However, seven decades later one can acknowledge the impact globalization and new technologies have had on the concept of the public sphere: while

maintaining a national (mainly linguistic, historic and cultural) relevance, it has definitely acquired a transnational side, resulting from the globalized debates, and from organizational and communicational needs and aspirations. A vital role in this internationalization of the public sphere's relevance can undoubtedly be ascribed to the new media technologies. Social media provide a transnational terrain for dialogue and initiatives beyond the borders and the control of nation-states, allowing for transnational activism in the cyber public sphere. However, are the fragmented, spatially and temporary, social media users and social media activists able to explore the potential "new areas of hegemony" with regards to power relations and to create the conditions for more democracy? In a footnote of an article Habermas says:

> The internet has certainly reactivated the grassroots of an egalitarian public of writers and readers. However, computer mediated communication in the web can claim unequivocal democratic merits only for a special context: It can undermine the censorship of authoritarian regimes that try to control and repress public opinion. In the context of liberal regimes, the rise of millions of fragmented chat rooms across the world tends instead to lead to the fragmentation of large but politically focused mass audiences into a huge number of isolated issue publics. Within established national public spheres, the online debates of web users only promote political communication, when news groups crystallize around the focal points of the quality press, for example, national newspapers and political magazines (Habermas, 2006).

The intellectual argument developing here comes from Marxism and Critical Theory and is that of objectification and alienation in the fragmented media field and isolated issue publics.

Admittedly, the issues of public space, public participation, citizens and democracy have problematized many a scholar throughout the decades. Pretty much in parallel to Habermas's work on the public sphere, Hannah Arendt made her own contribution to the relevant discourse, drawing also from a critical and feminist tradition. In her signature article ''the human condition" Arendt (1958) points out that in pre-modern society the private realm was related to family and economy and the public one to politics. Later, within modern society the capitalist economy became disconnected from the private sphere and emerged as an autonomous sphere, based on

commodity production and wage-labour, loosely interconnected to politics. This idea is shared with Habermas who explains that ''the modern economy became a private sphere of society that […] [is] publicly relevant" (1989: 19), hence it became political economy. Following this observation I argue that significant actors of the modern economy, as media organisations undoubtedly are, are then publicly relevant and we need to investigate their role in the public sphere through a political economy of the media approach.

According to Arendt (1958) the dimensions of the public sphere are two very distinct and unrelated: the space of appearance and the common world. The first refers to, "a space of political freedom and equality which comes into being whenever citizens act in concert through the medium of speech and persuasion" (1958:23). The second, the *common world*, is "a shared and public world of human artifacts, institutions and settings which separates us from nature and which provides a relatively permanent and durable context for our activities". (Hannah Arendt, The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). It is not difficult to recognise these two dimensions of the public sphere into today's mediatized environment and to see them laying the ground for more citizen-led engagement with politics. This could happen through the digital media technologies, allowing social media to become both a space of political freedom and a medium of speech and persuasion, as well as human-made shared and public world.

However, Arendt makes sure to emphasize that there is no theory of natural rights to guarantee the principle of political equality in the political realm. No ''natural human condition'' pre-exists the socially constructed political scenes to ensure that every citizen participates equally. On the contrary, for Arendt individuals acquire an attribute of citizenship upon entering the political realm and this attribute can only be secured by democratic political institutions. Bringing these thoughts to the contemporary web based media field raises questions of democracy within the internet platforms and the users' society, regulation and political economy of the social media platforms. In *The Human Condition* (1958), the German born political philosopher explains how, in the ancient Greek democracy, the private realm was considered to have a basic status, almost a status of mere survival. There, it was the public realm which was celebrated as the space for the brave and worthy citizen of the *polis* (city-state): who was not

afraid to devote his life to the affairs of the city and sacrifice himself for freedom, and where courage was a political virtue par excellence. Indicative of that distinction is the Greek word *idiotis,* meaning "private citizen", which nowadays came to the English language as a linguistic loan, "idiot'', to mean a person of low intelligence. Arendt describes the ''good life'', as Aristotle called the life of the citizen, therefore as not merely better, more carefree or nobler than ordinary life, but of an altogether different quality. It was "good'' to the extent that by having mastered the necessities of sheer life, by being freed from labour and work and by overcoming the innate urge of all living creatures for their own survival, it was no longer bound to biological life processes (Arendt, 1958:36, 37). She concludes that

> the background of actual political experience, at least in Plato and Aristotle, remained so strong that the distinction between the spheres of household and political life was never doubled. (…) As far as the members of the Polis are concerned, household life exists for the sake of the ''good life'' in the Polis. (Arendt, 1958:36, 37)

Through a lengthy and accurate historical monitoring of the socio-political history of Europe, Arendt discerns that the ancient Greek idea of the distinction between the private and the public realm is maintained into the middle-late Roman years. During the late Roman years she notices a shift towards attributing more credit to the private realm, which was re-established in Christianity and gradually came to be respected in today's representative democracies as the space for the law abiding, good citizen who minds her own business and doesn't look for trouble – very much at the opposite end of the evaluating hierarchical scale of the direct ancient Greek democracy. Then,

> with the emergence of mass society, the realm of the social has finally, after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength. (1958:41).

The emergence of mass society was then followed by the emergence of mass media, where the social was celebrated and has been the terrain of applied cultural hegemony by the global elites, taking the form of cultural imperialism via mass media and new technologies. Today, mass media co-exist with a deregulated media scene, with the new media technologies produced and

consumed in a rather fragmented fashion. With regards to the role new media technologies are playing in political participation, the public sphere and the rapid mobilization of large numbers of protest movements' participants, the words of Arendt appear prophetic:

> Politically, this means that the larger the population in any give body of politics, the more likely it will be the social rather than the political that constitutes the public realm… Large numbers of people, crowded together, develop an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule; …In reality, deeds will have less a chance to stem the tide of behaviour, and events will more and more lose their significance, that is, their capacity to illuminate historical time. (1958:44)

While the intellectual debate around the public sphere, media and democracy is largely coming from the critical and Habermasian traditions, modern scholars add their contributions by looking at how new technologies and the internet act as parts of the equation. Peter Dahlgren argues that the public sphere tradition

> looks critically at institutional arrangements, especially in the media, as well as constellations of power and patterns of communication that can support or hinder democracy. (2009:5)

His contribution with regards to the role of the new media technologies in the dislodging of mass media centralized information flows towards a mass audience, will be discussed in the following subchapter, concerning internet, media and democratic politics. Here, following the above discussion of the current state and structure of the public sphere, this thesis will look into Dahlgren's three analytical dimensions of the public sphere: namely, the structural, the representational and the Interactional (Dahlgren, 2005).

The structural dimension has to do with the formal, institutional features. This includes media organizations, their political economy, control, ownership, regulation and issues of their financing, as well as the legal regulations frameworks defining the freedoms of, and constrains on communication. Within this dimension Dahlgren places all the classic democratic issues such as freedom of speech, access to the media, inclusion/exclusion, political institutions, power and

regulation etc. With regards to the internet, structural issues refer to what he calls cyber-geography and web-architecture features. These factors are relevant in so far as they affect the internet's accessibility for civic action. He goes on to conclude that "a society with weak democratic tendencies is not going to give rise to healthy institutional structures for its public sphere" (2005: 151). This, in turn, will affect the second aspect of the public sphere according to Dahlgren, the representational one, which refers to the output of the media. Here he includes both mass media and what he calls "minimedia" like newsletters or campaign promotion materials. Here, issues about political communication, accuracy, fairness, pluralism, agenda setting (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and ideological tendencies, framing (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Scheufele and Tewskbury, 2007) and modes of address are discussed. He particularly sees the representational dimension as highly relevant for online contexts of the public sphere as well. Lastly, he talks about the interactional dimension, referring to Habermas and others who argue that a "public" sphere should be conceptualized as something other than just a media audience. Here the approach lies in accordance with classic democracy theory, where deliberation is fundamental. Highlighted is the importance of citizens engaging with issues and debates, interacting and participating rather than atomized individuals who consume media products. In regards to interaction as a dimension of the public sphere, Dahlgren sees two aspects: citizens' encounters with the media and encounters between citizens themselves. He goes on to stress that "interaction has its sites and spaces, its discursive practices, its psychocultural aspects; in this sense, the public sphere has a very fluid, sprawling quality'' (2005:159). Thus, relevant studies should move beyond the actual sites of media reception and probe the circulation of meaning in broader micro-contexts of everyday life, which is becoming more obvious and relevant with the advent of the internet and new media technologies. After all, social media are a thriving environment for micro-contexts and the study of interaction.

Andrew Chadwick makes his own, very contemporary contribution to the intellectual debate about the nature of the mass media and the public sphere by introducing the idea of a hybrid media system. In his recent article in *The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics* (Chadwick et al. 2016), he opens the discussion by quoting Habermas and attempting to establish whether the situation in the public sphere is at all similar to the one the classic thinker described

in 1962. For Chadwick the hybrid media system characterises the post-mass-broadcast age, to which Habermas and other key thinkers refer in their core work, and is comprised of a merging of older and newer media. In this new hybrid media system, older media are also renewed by adopting and incorporating new technologies. Examples of these renewed media are television channels launching their own online platforms where users can have live chats on the broadcasted programmes; printed newspapers going online with interactive newsfeeds and twitter accounts; radio stations using web-pages with embedded players and commentating spaces etc. According to Chadwick the hybrid media system,

> is built upon interaction among older and newer media logics –when logics are defined as bundles of technologies, genres, norms, behaviours and organizational forms- in the reflexively connected social fields of media and politics (Chadwick et al, 2016:8)

He continues to describe how power relations are played out in this hybrid media system, which inevitably transforms the public sphere following the technological breakthrough in the field of communications,

> Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever-evolving relationships based upon adaptation and interdependence and concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, enable or disable others' agency across and between a range of older and newer media settings. (Chadwick, 2013:4)

According to Chadwick, the greatest contribution of hybrid system thinking is that it rejects dichotomies and offers a powerful way of thinking about politics and society because it foregrounds complexity, interdependence and transition. He goes on to suggest that (following Brian McNair's (2006) work on media and cultural chaos) we can assume that systems have varying degrees of complexity, instability and messiness. Systems often undergo long and chaotic periods of change (Chadwick et al. 2016:9). However, systems are based on divisions of labour that emerge among actors in the pursuit of goals, especially in important large-scale societal projects, like politics and media, because these projects cannot be undertaken without some embedded, regularised structures for managing cooperation over time (Grewal, 2008). Because

digital media are simultaneously a form of communication and organisation, today the structures of cooperation in civic life may be relatively loose, ad hoc, and spontaneous. They are continually adapted to the goals being pursued (Chadwick et al., 2016:10).

In the current mediatized age, the importance of time and of the social actors ensure the continuity of enactment and re-enactment of the systems and are not to be undermined. Moreover,

> in the organizational field of politics, the interplay of older and newer media logics has created new repertoires of engagements that change established orthodoxies about what counts as political participation (…) Digital media may be used to reinforce or subvert other mediated and face-to-face models of engagement. (Chadwick et al., 2016:16)

However, Chadwick's discussion of the hybrid media system and its relation to politics and the public sphere concludes in a key point: although the renewed media emerge as a stepping stone to a "mediated pathway to political engagement", the hybrid media system does not lead directly to a more inclusive form of democracy.

> Hybridity presents opportunities for non-elites to exert power, but media and political elites can, and do, adapt to these new environments. However, as media systems become more hybrid, the power of elite organisational actors has generally weakened". (Chadwick et al., 2016:21)

In the paragraphs above I have investigated some theoretical supplementations to the Habermasian notion of the public sphere. These scholars explore new angles of the public sphere, especially those arising from the enhanced role of new technologies in the transformation of the field, without challenging the core of the Habermasian notion of the public sphere. However, there are some theorists who present a direct response to Habermas. One of the early counter debates comes from Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge as early as 1972 in their book *Public Sphere and experience: Towards an analysis of the bourgeois and the proletarian public sphere*, where they talk about counter-public spheres. According to Downing (1988a) Negt's and Kluge's argument suggested […] "the identification of alternative zones for radical debate and reflection

within present day society". Christian Fuchs (2011) discusses their proposal about the proletarian public sphere as a counter-public sphere and explains that it has resulted in general discussions (Jameson 1998) and discussions within the alternative media discourse (Downey and Fenton 2003; Downing 2001:29; Sholle 1995). Fuchs defends their proposal against criticisms of being part of the subjective notions of alternative media debate. He argues that

> for subjective notions of alternative media, the focus is on any type of media production that takes place outside the established mass media, whereas for Negt and Kluge such processes are only part of counter-public spheres if they are an expression of the interests of the dominated (Fuchs, 2011: 305).

Following on that debate, Downing refers to some of his previous work (1989) and suggests that certain forms of political activism in the United States, centering on the quite novel alternative computer uses, could be termed examples of an alternative public sphere (Downing, 2001:29). He goes on to discuss the variety of alternative public spheres in and around social movements, a subject that was also touched by Fraser (1993), who also recognizes the value of the notion of counter public spheres as well as the pluralism existing on the Left, with regards to participation and democracy. This is the theoretical framework this thesis is going to explore in the next subchapter, with a focus upon participatory democracy and media and how this relation is reflected in the new type of digital media-led social protest movements.

Internet, media and democratic politics

The relation between the internet and democracy has been one much and intensely discussed, celebrated, criticized and revisited during the past two decades. The initial excitement of the digital democracy aficionados, saw a Habermasian participatory democracy enhanced via online *agoras* (market-places) emerging with the help of the new technologies. On the eve of the 20th century, scholars were envisioning new digital spaces of democracy and online public spheres that would promote democratic governing via the participation of individuals and the effect this

would eventually have on policy makers and governments. In *Cyberdemocracy,* Tsagarousianou looks into the possible urban civic networks that technology will enable (Tsagarousianou et al, 1998), in hope and expectation of the possibility of an enhanced democracy via these potential urban civic communities. At the turn of our century this debate progresses, deliberating about e-Government success around the world (Blumlers and Gurevitch, 2001). With or without state participation the new digital space was seen as a positive boost to civic participation and was expected to have a logical development into a more inclusive democracy. In fact one of those first cyber-libertarians, Perry Barlow, one of the co-founders of the *Electronic Frontier Foundation* (EFF) in 1990, went as far as authoring a *Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace*[4] (1996). There Barlow boldly manifests the creation of a world without privilege or prejudice, racism or class divisions; a world of freedom of speech and equal opportunities, without property and identity as hitherto known to humanity; a world not based on matter but existing virtually in the cyber-sphere.

Unsurprisingly, Barlow's declaration was very soon proven unrealistic and the first decade of the 21st century brought the first wave of severe criticism based on policies and facts. The examples of China and North Korea's totally state-controlled internet, of heavily controlled web access in Iran and Saudi Arabia (among others) leave no room for romantic "cyberdeterminism" with regards to enhancing freedom and participatory democracy. Parallel to that, a new wave of criticism appeared in the literature, coming from the radical left and gender studies. Theorists have been pointing out the hierarchical, capitalistically structured and (largely) "Western elites' owned" nature of the overall web infrastructure and operation (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Fuchs, 2012, 2014, 2015; Dahlhren, 2014; Sandoval, 2015) and how it affects democratic participation and political process. The above scholars stress the importance of the political economy of the internet and the new media technologies, resulting in social media, with regards to questions of

[4] *"We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force or station of birth. We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity. Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movements and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter and there is no matter here. (Barlow, 1996).*

political participation and democratization of society via new media. Alongside these arguments come voices who highlight the fragmented and destructive nature of information dissemination via the social media. These voices, like Papacharissi (2010) argue that the web environment in its current form promotes a transformation of political practices and social relations, which are found to be metamorphosed and amalgamated with the practices and logic of privatized consumption. Papacharissi goes on to argue that although digitally enabled citizens may be skilled and reflexive in many ways, they are also generally removed from the civic habits of the past. She sees this as causing what she calls "civic vernacular" or according to Dahlgren (2014) "the solo sphere", what he sees as a historically new habitus for online political participation, a new platform for political agency.

On the political side of this argument regarding participatory democracy and the best means to promote active participation, one has to acknowledge the contribution of the New Left, in the western political discourse. According to Margaret Scammell (2000) it was the leading writers of the New Left, such as Pateman who first articulated their critique of modern pluralist and elite theory. Scammell describes how, in her famous work *Participation and Democratic Theory,* Pateman (1970) characterizes the modern pluralist and elite theory as the "contemporary model" of Democracy, in which the concept of participation is minimal. "These theories, she argued, reflecting the influence of Schumpeter (1970: 3), were imbued with fears of the dangers of popular active participation" (Scammell, 2000: xxxv). Another classic theorist of the New Left, C.B. Macpherson (1977), built on Pateman's thoughts and argued that the (then) contemporary model of democracy had abandoned a central doctrine of the classic democratic theory, that of the insistence on participation. Hence, theorists argue that the New Left's version of participatory democracy came to be seen as the main left-wing counter-model to the legal democracy of the New Right (Held, 1996:264). However, the notion of participation was more expanded than the pluralistic take on participation, which can be summarized as a concern in voters' engagement with politics for the purpose of offering legitimacy and stability to the democratic political system. As Scammell puts it "for 'participationists', however, participation is itself a goal" and they make a point out of the fact that low levels of knowledge and participation are not compatible with genuine democracy. Held takes this argument further by stating that participation,

> fosters human development, enhances a sense of political efficacy, reduces estrangement from power centres, nurtures a concern for collective problems and contributes to the formation of an active and knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a more acute interest in government affairs (Held, 1996: 267-78).

Here, one very interesting aspect of the process of democratic participation, namely the notion of political efficacy, is mentioned by Held as a key element. The researcher is going to expand on that at the end of this chapter, explaining the history of the term, its relevance and its merits for this thesis. However, before looking into political efficacy, a notion grounded in political communication theory, it is essential to investigate further some other media theories, necessary for facilitating this research approach and completing its intellectual framework.

The role of media and media theories

Media as a vital terrain of contemporary social activity, dialogue and control, is affecting our very perception of the world, society and our place in it. Over the past two decades, the evolution of media technologies leading to a new media reality has significantly changed the scenery of the public sphere in western democracies and indeed in the whole world. This phenomenon is described by theorists as mediatization (Couldry, 2008, Hepp, 2013, Couldry & Hepp 2017, Livingstone, 2009, Krotz, 2009). The term mediatization has its roots to the German school of thought (Mediatizeirung) and it refers to the colonization of everyday life by the logic and the practices of the media. As opposed to the traditional term mediation, which has a broader, literal meaning. In other words, while a few decades ago we were talking about mediated experiences via media consumption, in today's social reality media is not something citizens can choose to use or not; instead, the presence and logic of media is present in every aspect of life, from personal relationships to work, leisure and even politics. US President Donald Trump is conducting most of his communication with his electorate and the rest of the world via the media logic, this is via twitter, introducing policies or debating issues in 140 characters messages. Social

media companies are involved in major data breeches and political scandals (facebook, Cambridge Analytica).

Thus, I argue that mediatization provides an umbrella structure, overwhelming, nourishing and encapsulating the mediated interconnection of the public sphere and the new, digital media-led, protest movements this thesis is looking at. I argue that, mediation and mediatization co-exist, rather than excluding each other, as a two-leveled dynamic process, with every one of the two levels functioning autonomously, following its own rules and logic. On the first level, mediation operates as an uneven yet dynamic process in which organized media institutions penetrate the general circulation of symbols in social life (Silverstone and Hirsh, 1992). During this conversational, non-linear, two way process everyday life feeds back to the media and changes the way it operates. On the second level, mediatization exists as a superstructure, a non-linear, one-way process of convergence with the rules and practices of the media. Under this super-process, multiple and simultaneous sub-processes of mediated circulation of cultural symbols, creation and exchange of meanings take place.

Undoubtedly digital media technologies are a vital component of mediatization. "Mediatization came in waves – mechanization, electrification and digitalization- which each changed the whole media environment fundamentally. … To understand mediatization we must understand it as a process of the increasing deepening of technology-based interdependence" (Couldry and Hepp, 2017:53). Media technologies unique tempo-spatial capacities allowed for mediatization to grow during the past decades into what Couldry and Hepp (2017) now call deep mediatization

> Deep mediatization derives from the interaction of two very different types of transformation: a changed media environment characterized by increasing differentiation, connectivity, omnipresence, pace or innovation and datafication (the emergence of the media manifold); and the increasing interdependence of social relations (the complex role in social life of figurations and figurations of figurations, that are based, in part, on a media-based infrastructure, but whose dynamics evolve beyond it) (2017:215).

It is within this environment that the social media-led mobilizations are looked at in this thesis. Understanding current reality as deeply mediatized adds more gravity in these new types of mobilizations as potential formative future initiatives, in both the political and the societal sphere. By deconstructing their *mondus operati* and in doing so explore and utilize any useful theoretical or methodological tools. Besides,

> Deep mediatization involves all social actors in relations of interdependence that depend, in part, on media-related processes: through these relations, the role of 'media' in the local construction of reality becomes not just partial, or even pervasive, but 'deep': that is, crucial to the elements and processes *out of which* the social world and its everyday reality is formed and sustained (Couldry and Hepp, 2017:213).

Due to the complexity of the mediatized environment and the multiple mediated meanings, with regards to democratic political participation led via social media, it is essential to introduce some theoretical tools to describe the operation of the new media and their potential uses by the media consumers. These theoretical tools will be used to explain the ways in which social media are fundamentally interconnected with the development and visibility of the new type of protest movements. Leah Lievrouw's mediated mobilization is one such theoretical tool. The term refers to the fourth out of the five genres of contemporary, alternative and activist new media she classifies in her 'new media and genre' theory. By genres she refers to "types of expression or communication that is useful and/or meaningful among the members of a given community or within a particular situation" (Lievrouw, 2011:20). According to her theory, mediated mobilization "is concerned with the nature and distribution of power in communities and societies, and the promotion of radical and participatory democracy, where participatory democracy is defined as the widespread, direct involvement of citizens in both political processes and governance" (Lievrouw, 2011:149). Lievrouw's ideas regarding mediated mobilization are applied in the data analysis, synthesis and discussion chapter of this thesis.

Exploring further the role of media theories in the comprehension of the new type of digital media-led protest mobilizations requires to acknowledge the metaphor of media ecology; that is, seeing media as environments as opposed to autonomous, static technological outputs.

As Lekakis (2017) puts it “media ecology, in other words, aims to illustrate the ways in which media institutions and practices influence social and political life” (Lekakis, 2017:31). The relevant discussion, with regards to the medium theory approach, goes back to McLuhan and Postman, with the latter introducing the the *media ecology* metaphor in 1968, recognizing that McLuhan had used the concept before in a personal communication (Lum, 2006: 9). Postman defines media ecologies as “the study of media as environments” and he sees that “technological change is not additive but ecological” (Postman 1998, p. x). According to Emiliano Treré and Alice Mattoni (2016) this means that “each new medium does not simply represent an additional layer, but alters the relations within a system of other media, reconfiguring the ecology in unexpected ways” (2016: 293). It becomes apparent that ecological perspectives of media technologies highlight the importance of addressing media from a holistic perspective, thus appreciating the complexity of media as empirical phenomena. Treré and Mattoni (2016) acknowledge the shortcomings of the medium theory approach to media ecologies, discussing criticism from the mediatization paradigm regarding the technological determinism entailed in the medium theory, which prevents it from observing the full interaction between social actors and the media they use. At the same time, though, the mediatization paradigm compliments medium theory as it observes the increased influence of media logic in every aspect of social and political life. According to Treré and Mattoni, (2016) medium theory is accompanied by three other ecological perspectives on media, namely: Information ecology, communicative ecology and Fuller’s media ecology. Treré and Mattoni see the four ecological perspectives on media as complementary.

Despite its evident shortcomings, the author agrees with Scolari (2012) who argues that some of the key reflections of medium theory can still prove useful for contemporary analyses of media and society. In this article, the limitations of medium theory are integrated by the strengths of the other ecological approaches. … information ecology is able to move concepts of medium theory like coevolution and coexistence from the macro level to the micro/local dimension of analysis; communicative ecology shows the need to study the complex interplay between the technological, the social, and the discursive levels; and Fuller's media ecology reintroduces the significance of the political nature of the ecology, and the need to reflect on the materiality of communication technologies (2016: 298).

The metaphor of media ecology has been used often to look into media and mobilizations and/or activism. One example is the work of Treré (2012) who employs the information ecology perspective to analyse the media practices of the student movement that emerged in Italy in 2008. Another example is Peeples and Mitchell's work (2007) on research on protests against the WTO summit in 1999. A more recent example is Lekakis' (2017) work, looking into alternative media ecology and anti-austerity documentary production in Greece.

This thesis is definitely considering the digital media as parts of the current media environment and is seeing media technologies as ecological, not additive. Moreover, mediatization is seen as complimentary to medium theory with regards to the Aganaktismenoi movement. Examining the new type of digital media-led mobilizations from an ethnomethodological perspective this thesis is also looking at the coevolution and coexistence of the theoretical to the local dimension of analysis. The complex interplay between the technological, the social, and the discursive levels are observed through the empirical data presentation and discussion. The political nature of the media ecology and the materiality of communication technologies is definitely an aspect this thesis has brought in the forefront, using a critical media theory approach.

Human agency, however, is the other part of the aforementioned process. According to economics' Rational Choice Theory (Becker 1976; Frey 1999) the preferences of the individuals are conditions for their behavior. In other words, their goals, motives or desires define their behavior deterministically. On the other hand, rational choice theory acknowledges that individual actors' behavior is dependent upon certain constraints or opportunities. This refers to conditions or phenomena that restrain or promote the individuals' action towards the desired goal, clearly affecting their goal-oriented behavior. In the case of the protests and social movements in Greece, and indeed in many other places around the globe, we can use the above theoretical frame to look at the situation from a media and new technologies point of view. In this case one needs to look at constrains and opportunities new media technologies bring into the equation (Hacker, 1996; Fuchs, 2011, 2014; Loader & Mercea 2011; Mercea, 2013, 2014;

Shirky 2010; Bastos, Mercea & Charpentier, 2015; Papacharissi, 2011;), combined with the classic media theory of u*ses and gratifications* (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974; Lazarsfeld, 1940).

The arguments are based on the wide version of the rational choice theory, the one that assumes "bounded rationality" as Opp expresses it. And he states that one of the,

> basic assumptions of the wide model are that beliefs (which includes perceptions) and all sorts of costs and benefits (including soft incentives such as norms or informal sanctions) may be determinants of behaviour (Opp 2009:3).

What is becoming apparent is the dominating role of subjectivity as determinant of behavior. However, as Dahlgren notes,

> from the standpoint of psychoanalytic theory, our subjectivity is never fully unitary and centred, and we are never fully transparent to ourselves, because the unconscious intervenes to some degree, operating, as it were, behind our backs. Thus political participation builds upon the interplay of both of these aspects of our mental dynamics. (Dahlgren, 2014: 194-195)

Subsequently, he concludes that "politics is entwined with people's desires, anxieties, visions and hopes, and all such subjective elements feed affective charges into their engagement, mingling with rational, analytic elements". (Dahlgren, 2014: 196)

Consequently, the ways in which citizens and activists perceive and imagine media technologies has a big impact on their political actions. Here the sociological term of *media imaginaries* becomes relevant. According to Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni media imaginaries "are worth studying because they reveal how digital protest media platforms operate as sites for the realization of multiple political potentialities, values, desires and ideals" (2017:407). In addition, Treré and Barassi (2015) discussed the relation between media imaginaries and political mobilization realities, and showed the material consequences media imaginaries have for political practice. Applying that to the digital media environment Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni claim that:

> The ways in which digital technologies are imagined, including how specific, perceived meanings, values, capabilities and ideologies are ascribed to them, shape the practices developed to engage with them and can thereby configure distinct types of digital activism, leaving others aside. (Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni, 2017:407)

Following logically, Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni (2017) develop the concept of media imaginaries under the prism of the new type of digital media-led protest mobilizations, arriving to the theoretical conception of *digital protest media imaginaries*. They define this digital protest media imaginaries as:

> The multilayered ways in which social movement actors enact particular values, ideologies, assumptions, desires and attitudes in their media practices based on their conception or vision of the opportunities and limitations of particular communication technologies, beyond what the material affordances of the technologies themselves or their intended uses might indicate (Nagy and Neff (2015). (Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni, 2017:407)

It is clear, however, that building on the digital protest media imaginaries, the participants in the new type of social media-led protest movements define their goals in accordance with the actual effects of the imposed policies and austerity measures. Both the political and the economic fields of everyday life are considered, where democracy is challenged and the actual income of the population is decreasing significantly. On the other hand, however, citizens' understanding of political agenda and economic practices is largely based on the way media present and analyze the current situation, most of the times as a very painful but nevertheless given reality, which is deprived of any political-social-historic context. Therefore, people are left to deal stoically with obscure and problematic policies because there is no other alternative, as Margaret Thatcher first put it in the '70s (TINA). Moreover, personal political views, general aspirations or particular circumstances are the lens via which participation in the new type of protest movements is filtered. The role of the new media technologies is vital here, as any participation helped by the media links, by definition, the media users to the social domain beyond the media. However, as

Carpentier (2011) notices, following the news on a webpage and participating in a political discussion online is something a lot of people do every day, but this does not automatically constitute political participation. Sometimes this activity can be described as “slacktivism”, meaning a lazy, narcissistic form of participation in a political cause just by reproducing information online, re-posting relevant sources etc. with no further engagement. Morozov describes “slacktivism” as a,

> feel-good online activism that has zero political or social impact. It gives those who participate in “slacktivist” campaigns an illusion of having a meaningful impact on the world without demanding anything more than joining a Facebook group (Morozov, 2009:42).

However, for Carpentier, online participation, participation in the media and via the media, becomes political participation

> when these activities in some way connect with the political –when online networking and involvement through media in larger societal contexts articulates with the terrain of power relations and when those using the media position themselves in relation to issues, that is when these activities become situated in agonistic fields of conflicting interests. (Carpentier, 2011:78)

This thesis acknowledges both positions and argues that they actually can be seen to complement each other. In other words, this thesis claims that online participation becomes political participation when media users do not indulge only in a “feel-good, online activism with zero political or social impact” as Morozov says, but they position themselves in relation to the issues and their online involvement “articulates with the terrain of power relations” as Carpentier requires. In other words, online activities that could be seen as “slactivism” become activism if they are politically conscious and have some offline political or social impact, i.e promoting a demonstration on social media to trigger relevant discussions amongst contacts, which lead in actual, physical participation of initiator (activist) and her social media contacts who showed interest in said demonstration.

Political Efficacy: the merits for my research

As previously discussed, today's highly mediatized environment calls for a broader discussion on what mobilizes people in specific ways, people who are unprecedentedly connected and driven by media technologies. Not caring for technological determinism, this research supports the relevance and importance of a somewhat "silent" notion of the political communication field, that of *political efficacy*. The normative axis here is to challenge McLuhan's logic of "the medium is the message'' and shift the attention towards an audience-centric approach. In other words, the all-powerful effects of new media technologies on civic mobilization are not regarded; our interest, instead, is focused upon the social media user, producer and consumer. Thus, the notion of political efficacy allows for intellectual interest to be realigned towards a social media "prosumer-centric" approach.

The argument based on the merits of the notion of political efficacy (PE) sheds light on how the digital media interact with people's understanding of the political system and sense of belonging to the *Polis*. Consequently, questions about individuals' political actions and behavior stemming from or related to using social media, as well as people's participation in this new type of media-led movements, can be addressed under a new light: the relation of the notion of political efficacy and the use of digital media technologies is one of the means to understanding this new and challenging power relation between social media and their user's political behavior.

Political Efficacy is commonly misunderstood as political sophistication. While it includes political sophistication amongst other things, the notion of "political efficacy" refers to a person's ability to understand the operating political system she lives in and interact with it. Political efficacy has been studied since the 1950s, with the first attempt to define it aging back to 1954, when Cambell, Gurin and Miller gave their definition as follows: Political efficacy is,

> the feeling that individual political action has, or might have an effect in the political process, meaning that it is worth it to exercise one's rights as a citizen. The feeling that political and social change is possible and that every citizen can play a role in the coming of this change. (Cambell, Gurin and Miller, 1954: 157)

At the beginning of the attempts to measure it, political efficacy was thought of as a mono-dimensional phenomenon and was basically correlated with the prediction of voting behavior. Today, political efficacy is addressed as a multi-dimensional barometer of democratic systems.

Researchers have approached the term on two levels, of internal and of external political efficacy. The first refers to the feeling a person has regarding her ability a) to understand how the political system works and b) to affect this system with its actions. Essentially, internal political efficacy (IPE), besides a person's understanding of the political system, refers to the person's actions regarding the political system. In other words, what does the person herself do to participate in and affect the way it operates, for example voting, demonstrating, writing letters to public officers, talking about politics/public affairs, etc? These actions are divided into two categories: actual actions and potential actions, defining *Objective Internal Political Efficacy* (Ob.IPE) and *Subjective Internal Political Efficacy*, respectively (SubIPE). To put it simply, on the one hand Objective Internal Political Efficacy answers the question: "what did somebody actually do?", measuring the objective actions, i.e. voting or demonstrating in the past. On the other hand, Subjective Internal Political Efficacy answers the question "what would somebody do?", and shows the person's subjective views on how she thinks, wants or even wishes to behave when it comes to taking political action, i.e. if she would protest for a specific reason or in general.

The second level of political efficacy is the external one. This refers to the political system's responsiveness to people's actions. Of course, the measurement of external political efficacy is complicated as it involves two different issues at the same time. One of them is each person's understanding of the system's responsiveness, which then has to do with the person's knowledge, sophistication, expectations, goals, perception etc. The other one is the actual responsiveness of the government and the political institutions to the people's demands, e.g. the responsiveness of the government to mass demonstrations against funding cuts in education/public sector by introducing relevant policies addressing the issues or not.

For the initial researchers the basic tools of measuring political efficacy were four questions, coded as: NOSAY, NOCARE, COMPLEX and VOTING (Cambell, Gurin and Miller, 1954: 168). These acronyms symbolize the four following statements (that were sometimes put to the

research subjects in the forms of questions): “people like me do not have any say about what the government does” (NOSAY); “I don’t think that public officials care much what people like me think” (NOCARE); “sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what’s going on” (COMPLEX); “voting is the only way people like me can have a say on the government’s actions” (VOTING). Later research showed that the first two statements respond to the responsiveness of the political system and its institutions, what we now identify as external political efficacy. The third statement proved to be an intermediate one, responding to different aspects of both the external and the internal political efficacy. The fourth statement, together with other four that the researchers tested throughout the following decades, form the basic measurement tools of internal political efficacy. The new statements were introduced by Niemi, Graig and Mattei in 1991. After a confirmatory approach they proposed these: “I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics” (SELFEQUAL); I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country” (UNDERSTAND); “I feel that I could do as good a job in a public office as most other people” (PUBOFF); and “I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people” (INFORMED).

Despite the importance of political efficacy for a deeper understanding of a vast variety of sociopolitical functions based on citizens’ agency, limited studies have explored the concept further after the significant work of Niemi, Graig and Mattei (1991), let alone from a multi-disciplinary point of view. This trend has been changing the last few years, with researchers re-discovering the multi-dimensioned analytical potential the notion of political efficacy offers. More specifically this is true in the media and communications and political communications research fields. One seminal work which places the notion of political efficacy to the modern, digital era is that of Coleman, Morrison and Svennevig (2008), which “addresses prevalent contemporary anxieties about public disengagement from the democratic political process” (2008:1). The authors think the sense of alienation and distance form government practices is best understood in relation to the concept of political efficacy. Regarding the internet potential and political efficacy the state

> In the light of this sense of dislocation from structures of power and sense-making, several participants appeared to regard the Internet as a potential means of acquiring useful information and linking with like-minded others. (Coleman et al., 2008:779)

And they continue to argue that

> In some case, the experience of online sociability spilled over into political practice – or at least, aspiration. One participant having expressed some despair as to the possibility of exerting any influence upon the political system, felt encouraged by the possibility that: "you could start a protest now on a message board and I reckon we could probably get 150 hits for it by the end of the week. (Group 2)". (Coleman et al., 2008: 280)

A more contemporary look on the issue of political efficacy and online exposure is provided by Ardèvol, Diehl, and de Zúñiga (2017). Naturally, a decade later than Coleman et al., these scholars see political efficacy under the prism of deep mediatization and are thus able to make more relevant points, regarding the notion and its potential relation to civic/protest mobilization. Looking at the *antecedents of internal political efficacy incidental news exposure online and the mediating role of political discussion* they have found that political discussion is a mediator between incidental online news exposure and internal political efficacy (ibid). More specifically, they claim

> Results show that both intentional news media use and incidental exposure have a fully mediated effect on internal efficacy. Political discussion with weak ties is the mediating variable that explains the effects of both types of news consumption patterns on internal political efficacy. (Ardèvol, Diehl, and de Zúñiga, 2017: 92)

What is explicitly important in this finding, with regards to investigating the correlation between political efficacy and the civic protest digital media-led mobilizations, is the note about the role of the weak ties, but not the strong ties, as a mediator between incidental news exposure and internal political efficacy. Exploring that notion within the context of the new type of social media-led mobilizations leads to a very interesting realization: In fact, one of the main characteristics of the new type of social media-led mobilizations and movements are the weak ties among their participants: they largely do not have prior relations between them, they organize online and they

meet offline, in the physical space of a square, as is the case with my case study. Amongst the participants there is a flourishing political dialog, based on common interests and goals. So this is the perfect environment for Ardèvol et als. (2017), finding to play out. The implication would be that participants in this new type of mobilizations, who live in a heavily mediatized environment and are constantly exposed to incidental online news, would observe enhanced levels of internal political efficacy, due to the mediation –at the place of protest and online- of political discussion with weak ties. This research seems to verify this conclusion, and by extend Ardèvol et als., (ibid), relevant findings. But prior to that, this research is looking at the potential effect of participation in the new type of social media-led mobilizations on the participants' levels of political efficacy.

In this thesis I argue that there is a very significant connection between a person's political efficacy and her participation in the new type of media-led protest movements. Although the relation between political efficacy and political/civic protest mobilization participation has been theoretically described to some degree, it has never been proven directly via the study of a specific movement. In other words, this research shows the interrelation between taking part in this new typo of social media-led protest mobilizations and alterations in the levels of participants' political efficacy. This direct and indubitable linkage is clarified by my empirical research work, presented and utilized ad one of the novice features of this research. Complimenting participant observation, I conducted ad hoc interviews and an e-survey, where I used two sets of questions to investigate the two aspects of political efficacy of the participants of the *Aganaktismenoi* protest movement in Athens:

- External political Efficacy: (NOSAY – NOCARE) = System's Responsiveness + COMPLEX
- Internal political efficacy: INFORMED – (SELFEQUAL + UNDERSTAND)

I used these statements in their broad version wording, as used by the European Social Survey (ESS)[5]. I maintain that consistency in the questions' wording will allow for frictionless potential future comparative studies.

[5] Conducted by City University's Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, which is host to the European Social Survey (ESS); a multi-nation initiative designed to monitor and explain trends in attitudes, beliefs and values across countries in Europe (and its close neighbors). http://www.city.ac.uk/arts-social-sciences/sociology/research/centre-for-comparative-social-surveys

The originality of this research, filling the relevant gap in the literature, is that it considers the dynamic relation between an individual's political efficacy and her participation in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. Moreover, it looks at how this participation feeds back into her political efficacy and affects her potential future understanding of the political system and voting behavior. The dynamic, conversational process, proven by this study, can become the base for a new round of research on political mobilization and the use of media and new technologies. It will offer fresh opportunities for policy suggestions as well as for political communication analysis, both by the institutionalized political agents (i.e. national political parties, unions etc) and the national/transnational social protest movements.

The Greek case study

The empirical part of this research is based on the ethnomethodological observation of the Greek "Aganaktismenoi" social media-led protest movement, which took to the streets of Athens in 2011 during "a period of widespread social turbulence, as well as unprecedented political instability due to the debt crisis" (Theocharis and Lowe, 2016). According to Mavromatis:

> The phenomenon of Aganaktismenoi can be seen as politics proper [Arendt, 1958: 182-197] erupting within the midst of post-politics that the country has found or led itself to (Fouskas, 2013; Papas, 2013). (Mavromatis, 2015:444)

Mavromatis (2015) uses Hannah Arendt's method of hermeneutic phenomenology "to understand the Aganaktismenoi movement as a unique political phenomenon" [because this method] "focuses on the interpretation of political events as political actions that unfold in public and through their outcome make (or fail to make) 'history'" (2015:433). However, studying the Aganaktismenoi as part of a broader reality of new type of social media-led mobilizations has divided scholars, with some talking about a realization of true politics (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013) and others seeing "a new political subject revolting against

bio-capitalism" (Douzinas, 2012:83). As much as this debate is tempting, it lies only partially within the scope of this research, which is to investigate the civic protest mobilization in a heavily mediatized environment and the role of digital and social media platforms in the development of this new-type of movements. Focusing on the interdependence of new digital media platforms and the mobilizations in Athens, this thesis explores how the new digital media platforms facilitated the Aganaktismenoi mobilization and how they were utilized by the movement. In a comparative study between ''sister'' movements of Indignados and the Aganaktismenoi, as well as the Italian civic protest movements taking place in parallel during 2011, Treré, E., Jeppesen, S. & Mattoni, A. (2017: 415), characterize the Greek digital protest media imaginary as "largely *techno-pragmatic*", as opposed to the Italian *techno-fragmentation* and the Spanish *technopolitical* ways of engagement. By "*techno-pragmatic"* Greek digital protest media imaginary the mean that:

> Greek media activists seized the means of production of representation in several platforms, using them for what they imagined they could achieve in a practical, goal-oriented attitude. While more activists such as those involved in Indymedia Athens did discuss the technopolitics of platforms (Miloni 2009), particularly when the site was shut down by the administration of the university that housed it (Croeser and Highfield, 2015), the free culture technopolitics of Spanish media activists was not fully actualized be the protest culture that evolved in Greece. (Treré, E., Jeppesen, S. & Mattoni, A., 2017: 415)

The researchers go on to identify the leading role facebook played in the Greek Aganaktismenoi mobilization context saying "facebook was purposefully used as an aggregator for the alternative media self-produced and self-representative content of the movement" (ibid, 415). Moreover, they provide an explanation for this acknowledging that: "Contributing to this utilitarian approach to media was the fact that several mainstream media outlets in Greece were shut down, and newly unemployed professional journalists migrated to contribute to activist media and movement mobilizations" (ibid, 415). This research came the same conclusion via its empirical ethnomethodological observation of the movement, as I explain later on here and at the participant observation presentation chapter.

Consequently, questions about the role of the national press, the established and emerging national public spheres and political communication arise. Habermas pointed out the importance of quality national press for the crystallization of public debate around focal points and thus the promotion of political communication within established national public spheres (Habermas, 2006). This brings up a very interesting side effect of the recent economic crisis in Greece; the destabilization of the traditional media scene parallel to the awakening of the public sphere in the eve of an unprecedented mass protest movement. Here I first describe the immediate effects of the economic crisis in the media geography of the country. Following that, I highlight the underlying connections between the dramatic changes in the organized media institutions of the country and the dramatic changes in the established political agents, namely the political parties. These two aspects of institutionalized power, political parties and media organizations, proved to be very unstable and suffered great losses. This is explicable looking at the Greek media system as the most characteristic example of Hallin and Mancini's "Mediterranean or Polarized pluralist model", named by "the high degree of ideological diversity and conflict that characterizes these South European countries, rooted in delayed development of liberal institutions" (2004:73-74). They note that this is connected to a strong role of the state in society, a strong role of political parties, clientelism and a weaker development of rational-legal authority.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) talked about three models of media and politics in their book *Comparing Media Systems*. These models take into account the historic-socio-political process of several countries or regions and draw on similarities that allow for generalizations. The models are the Mediterranean or Polarized pluralist model, the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model and the North Atlantic or Liberal model. Obviously, Greece can be attributed to the first model, and is actually the most characteristic example of it; situated on the edge of the trigonal visualization of the three models. According to Hallin and Mancini,

> The Mediterranean or Polarized pluralist model is characterized by an elite-oriented press with relatively small circulation and a corresponding centrality of electronic media; freedom of press and the development of commercial media industries generally came late;

> newspapers have been often economically marginal and in need of subsidy. Political parallelism tends to be high (2004: 73).

All the above conditions applied to the Greek media scene at the time the mass protest movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* broke out, in May-November 2011, and they largely explain the dramatic affect the financial crisis had on the press and other traditional media organizations. On the contrary, alternative media platforms, namely new (at the time) digital media and social media, blossomed within the years of the crisis and provided the terrain for the return of the engagement with the civic public sphere and, as a result, the space for expression, organization and mobilization.

This inevitably raises questions about journalism and democracy (Matos, 2008, Pleios 2012) within the Greek context during the economic crisis, and these questions are also supported by the polarized, pluralist model. It claims that,

> the late and contested transition to democracy in the Mediterranean region of Western Europe has produced distinct patterns of relationship between the media and the political world. (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 89)

With journalistic traditions operating within an historic context where,

> the media developed as an institution of the political and the literary worlds more than of the market. (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:90)

In the Greek media scene established media organizations, mainly press but lately electronic as well, are suffering severely from lack of funds and personnel cuts. One of the most historic and respected Newspapers, *Eleutherotypia*, always in the top three of the Sunday newspaper market until 2010, was shut down in 2013 after being taken under the management of a court appointed administrator for a year and a half, facing huge debts and leaving journalists and stuff unpaid. I argue that this event was of capital importance for the reshaping of the geography of Greek media, as it led to the immediate ‘’liberation’’ of a large and dynamic number of experienced journalists, formerly “trapped” in the systemic co-dependency of the Greek media and political elites. Between 2012 and 2013 about 200 experienced, highly skilled yet

disappointed and frustrated journalists were set free in a sinking media market, with an impressive result: the formation of a new newspaper, called *Efimerida ton Syntakton* which translates into ‘‘the newspaper of the reporters”, bringing a fresh, alternative and highly anti-systemic (at the time) mass media voice into the traditional media field. Moreover, following the closedown of *Eleutherotypia*, all the other major newspapers applied staff reductions and wage cuts, following or exploiting the general atmosphere of austerity and massive unemployment in the journalistic sector. The situation was worse for smaller range newspapers and magazines, which closed down in large numbers, with a speedy pace. On top of that, one of the 10 nation-wide broadcasting television channels in the country, namely *Alter,* went officially bankrupt, after being occupied for more than a year by the unpaid journalists and other staff, airing only their message to the audience, explaining how they have been working unpaid for up to 10 months and mocked by the owners of the television station, Mr. Kouris, jailed, at the time this report is written, for tax evasion.

This media scene is clearly not in favour of independent journalism nor does it nourish the theoretical and professional models of journalists, that of the “watchdog” or the “advocate” (Janowitz, 1975). Professional standards are compromised by existential agonies and media ownership is reaching its institutional limits as a carrier of vested interests. This situation made the role of the digital media in Greece even more critical with regards to participatory democracy and protest mobilization. Citizens and audiences appeared to have lost trust in the journalistically compromised, politically dependent old media that has been frightened into abeyance and concentrates solely on fighting for survival in a competitive market. However, this trend is more obvious to the younger generation. In their article *Networking Democracy,* Loader and Mercea describe what actually started happening in the Greek public sphere with the help of new media technologies, resulting in the mass protest movement of the *Aganaktismenoi:*

> Equipped with social media, the citizens no longer have to be passive consumers of political party propaganda, government spin or mass media news, but are instead actually enabled to challenge discourses, share alternative perspectives and publish their own opinions (Loader & Mercea, 2011: 763).

But how does this new potential relate to the civic society and the public interest? Do citizens take advantage of their newly found power and actually challenge discourses and if so to who's benefit? Iosifidis defines the public interest as

> the collective cultural, political, social, and informational benefits to society, which serve both the democratic processes or political participation and cultural, social, and economic well-being (2012: 27).

This raises the question of the potential empowerment dynamic of the Internet and social media, with regards to civic engagement and political participation: does the manifested result empower the protest movement under question? Iosifidis argues that media technologies are enabling and can be used for both causes: empowerment and domination. This research is going to investigate which of the two is the case with the Greek movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*? Also, how do new and old media reflect power relations and facilitate empowerment or domination?

This very short description of the native Greek media geography and its transformation over the years 2011-2013 would not be complete without a reference to two projects, unprecedented for the Greek media scene. In the first place, the web-broadcasted program of the ex-employees/occupiers of the public broadcaster (ERT): this constitutes an alternative media operation of an otherwise systemic media organization per se. With no due purpose and lacking official democratic processes, the government of Greece shut down ERT overnight on July 13, 2013. The Polarized pluralism model might provide some answers with regards to the incentives and targets of this move. However, the resistance and occupation of the building and web-broadcasted program was maintained for 5 months with an unprecedented escalation of viewings and sharp, bold journalistic analysis. Closely related to that ''pirate'' broadcasting project is the creation of another alternative media project, called "ThePressProject". This information platform started in 2011-12 as a web based experiment of professional journalists who had been made redundant under the new crisis conditions, and decided to create a multimedia web platform, a web newspaper with embedded web TV and live streaming, financed only by donations from the public. In many ways it is the impersonation of Andrew Chadwick's overarching contention of "new and newer media"; a hybrid media model as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Today,

four years later, “ThePressProject” has become one of the most reliable independent media sources in the country, with great appeal to social movements and the public in general. It features an English version, and during the previous General elections, of September 2015, it launched its own series of thematic television programmes, which presented some of the more radical voices of the Greek political scene. It features a regular satirical web broadcast and a weekly news radio cast. It collaborates with several other alternative and radical online media platforms on a thematic base. “ThePressProject” will be examined as an example of a mediated two-way process where the material conditions of everyday reality under the economic crises, the dynamics of a mass protest mobilization partly energized by media technologies, and the huge unemployment rates of professional journalists are fed back to the media. All this combined with the newest technological potential and “the rapid speed (with which) the internet has become a part of our daily lives” (Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992:187) altered the way media operates on a national level in Greece, creating a new paradigm for the country’s media scene and organizations.

Operating within this national media geography, the Greek protest movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* was a local version of the new type of digital media-led protest movements. In this chapter I have discussed in length how these new social movements, energized and maintained by new media technologies, find their place in the public sphere. I have also looked into how they interact and transform the public sphere, creating possibilities for alternative, radical spheres of discourse, where empowered social media “prosumers” discover new ways to be active and engage with politics and participatory democratic practices. In addition, I have discussed how previously mass audiences are becoming more fragmented and use multimedia strategies, inviting the proliferation of media outputs, in a mediated, uneven yet conversational process. Moreover, I have argued that this is taking place within an overall mediatized environment, in which the practices and the logic of media colonize every aspect of life; politics, participation, mobilization and social movements. As a result, new types of protest movements have risen, nurtured by the new (at the time), social media. According to Bennett (2002) their “capacity to communicate and share rich information across social and temporal divides may in itself be counted as a political asset”. Bennett refers to a type of internationally connected social

movements like those that resisted armed interference in Iraq in 2002 and 2003, where new media technologies began to be used, like email lists and webpages with user generated information. Bennett calls this the political capacity of the movements. The convergence between new media technologies which followed the web 2.0 and the new organizational, communicational and transnational capacities of social media like Facebook and twitter has been unprecedented. Its efficacy has been proven by the new type of social media-led protest movements globally in 2011-2012. Here, I argue that there is solid ground for distinguishing these new type of social media-led protest movements, not with regards to questions of representations and reasons for mobilization, but with regards to political capacity, as defined by Bennett.

2. Methodology Chapter

Research questions and objectives

The research questions asked in this research project touch two main areas; that of social mobilization in a mediatized environment, and that of the role of traditional media/new media platforms in the development of the new-type of movements and their potential co-dependency. Therefore, the two main research questions are:

1. What is the connection between mediatization and civic mobilization, as it plays out in the form of the new type of social media-led movements like the "Indignados" and the "Occupy" movements.
2. What is the role of traditional and new media (namely social media) in the creation, formation, organization, communication and social effect of these new types of protest movements and, vice versa, how do these protest movements affect the way the traditional and new (social) media are perceived by movements' participants?

The two main research objectives are:

1. To investigate how mediatization, or the colonization of the everyday life by media logic and practices, is affecting –while at the same time reflecting- the way power relations are perceived by the citizens on the one hand, and the way social frustration is realized and acted out in the form of these type of protest movements on the other hand.

2. To consider whether the use of digital media technologies and social media leads to the enhancement of citizens' political efficacy and their democratic participation. Hence, to explore the possibility of social media as a new type of broad political "*agora*", or in other words a public political dialogue space, where thoughts can move freely and fast, facing new dangers: fragmentation, information chaos, uncontrolled censoring and false framing.

The above research questions and objectives lead to several reflections which have informed this thesis: Firstly, that the new mediatized environment confronts everyday life and affects all aspects of it, political participation included. With all its complexity and constant changing, the mediatized environment opens a new, virtual territory of "hegemony", where ideas are presented, met, fought against or supported, in an infotainment background, most of the time mixed with irrelevant social activities like music or games. This has an impact on citizens' perception of *the political* and indeed *the social*. Acknowledging this reality leads us to think that mediatization affects citizens as political beings within the democratic system. With regards to the Aganaktismenoi movement one could observe, however, that social media have played a significant role in the communication of the protests to the world outside Greece, but have had less impact upon the highly politicized audience within Greece. Interestingly, what social media have done in a unique way was to de-stigmatize action on the streets for one part of the new generation who was heretofore absent from the political scene and often characterized as apolitical. On account of the speed and the popularity of the social media, protests became something familiar, something "ordinary people" could identify with because their peers in the social networks were participating in it, not something extremely radical and revolutionary, possibly for the militants. This brought more people to the streets (in this case to the squares) but simultaneously decreased the level of politicization of the movement. On the contrary, the traditional media played an institutional role and addressed the movement in a spasmodic, provocative and opportunistic way. Observing the above led the researcher to investigate whether participation in this new type of social media-led movement affected people's political efficacy and to some extent influenced their actual voting behaviour. The results of this investigation were clear in favour of the idea described above; we found that there had been a change in the political efficacy levels of the movement's participants. This is looked at as one of the unique features of this thesis, namely to empirically prove the use and influence of a political communication tool, the notion of political efficacy, in a mixed methods qualitative approach investigating digital media-led mobilizations.

In the course of research the original research questions were complemented, unavoidably, by more secondary questions, which shaped and were shaped by the different phases of work. These questions are:

1. How are the old and the new (at the time), social media perceived by the protestors in terms of factors of mobilization, radicalization or conservatism as a result of the role media play in the social movements' scenery?
2. Does the use of the social media enhance citizens' notion of political efficacy or not? And what is the link between the use of new social media and political efficacy?
3. Is engagement with social media another form of "slacktivism'' (feel-good participation that requires minimum effort and has little real-world impact) or is it a first step towards political engagement and action in the real world?
4. Is this relation between the use of social media and political efficacy reflected in actual, objective, traditional political behaviour such as protesting, voting etc?

These questions will be addressed in the relevant chapters, in proportion with the frame and objectives of this specific research. The above stand as a proof of the multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary nature of the research object and they call for an appropriate, tailor-made, mixed methods research design in order to be addressed.

Research design

This study will use a mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), which is "a procedure for collecting, analysing and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study, to understand a research problem more completely" (Creswell, 2003). This method's design is clearly suggested by and inextricably connected to the research questions, aims and objectives mentioned above. The rationale for using a mixed methods research design is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are

sufficient by themselves, to answer the research questions in depth and to capture the details and fine shades of both the media-led movement at hand and the role various media platforms, traditional and new, played in it. However, when used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

While concentrating upon the research interests, the researcher must also keep in mind the situation in the field and be aware of opportunities as they arise (or the sudden loss of opportunities) of acquiring information and data needed to take this research to the next level, that of the analysis. Tackling such issues requires recognizing that mixed methods designs can be both fixed and/or emergent, as Creswell and Clark put it (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). Also, emergent mixed methods designs generally occur when a second approach (quantitative or qualitative) is added after the study is underway because one method is found to be inadequate (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

Due to issues that developed during the process of this research, which led to the dramatic change of the field, it proved necessary to be reflexive and to deviate from the original methodological approaches planned concerning field-work. Thus, a very specific, "tailor-made" emergent mixed methods design occurred. To put this into the context of this specific research, the movement's sudden but inevitable withdrawal from the streets, before my qualitative case study was strong enough to stand against concerns about subjectivity and bias, created the need to add a quantitative component to my qualitative case study. In this way this qualitative case study became an emergent mixed methods study (Ras, 2009). This process is described in detail in this chapter, explaining the different methodological approaches used at the two different stages of this emergent mixed methods research design and the methodological process of triangulation used to bond them together.

Triangulation is a technique used by qualitative researchers to ensure that complicated questions are answered in an elaborate way. According to Cohen (2006) "Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in an investigation to produce understanding. Rather than seeing triangulation as a method for validation or verification, qualitative researchers generally use this

technique to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed". Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identify four types of methods triangulation: methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation and theory/perspective triangulation. Here I am going to use methods triangulation which, according to Denzin and Patton, is characterized by the following:

1. Checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods.
2. It is common to have qualitative and quantitative data in a study.
3. These elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon.
4. Often the points where these data diverge are of great interest to the qualitative researcher and provide the most insights.

Mixed methods research design: Emergent sequential exploratory triangulation design – Visualization

This research will be conducted according to an **Emergent** s**equential exploratory triangulation design.** This emerged using Morse's notation system (Morse, 1991), drawing from Morgan's study on "*complementary* designs" (1998) as well as Tashakkori & Teddlie's analysis on "*mixed model* designs" (1998), and the models suggested by Steckler et. al (1992), as shown on Table 1.

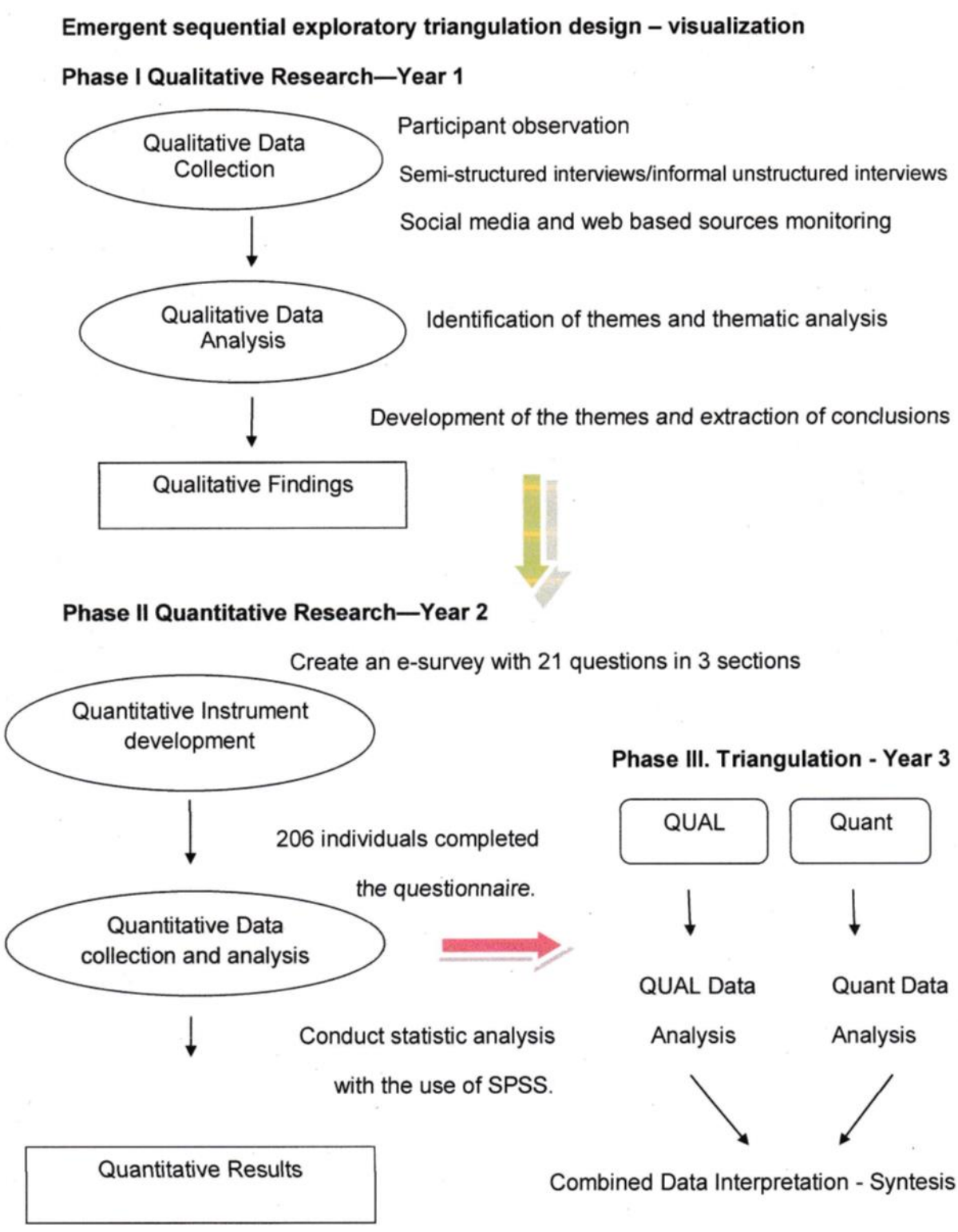
Table 1. Classifications of Mixed Methods Designs

Morse 1991	Simultaneous triangulation
	QUAL + quan
	QUAN + qual
	Sequential triangulation
	QUAL -> quan
	QUAN-> qual
Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird,	Model 1: qualitative methods to develop quantitative measures

& McCormick (1992)	
	Model 2: quantitative methods to embellish qualitative findings
	Model 3: qualitative methods to explain quantitative findings
	Model 4: qualitative and quantitative methods used equally and parallel
Morgan (1998)	Complementary designs
	Qualitative preliminary
	Quantitative preliminary
	Qualitative follow-up
	Quantitative follow-up
Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998)	Mixed method designs
	Equivalent status (sequential or parallel)
	Dominant-less dominant (sequential or parallel)
	Multilevel use

Based on all the above theoretical typologies I hereby present and explain the mixed methods design constructed and applied in this research, complemented by visualization. For ease of understanding, the explanation will follow the visualization (on the next page). The individual phases and respective methods will be discussed afterwards.

Emergent sequential exploratory triangulation design – visualization



Qualitative versus quantitative methods discussion: complementary approaches rather than mutual exclusion.

Following the above, it is important to explain that this research is going to follow a qualitative approach, as it promises greater merits with regards to answering the research questions in the best possible way. Qualitative methods are broadly used when it comes to social phenomena where the views of the actors are of high importance and their subjective understanding of the situation could actually be one of their motives for further action or indeed for the lack of it. The above corresponds completely to the nature of the current research as it addresses what mobilized the participants of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement within the mediatized environment and how they perceive the role of the traditional and new (at the time), social media with regards to their movement. The actors' perspectives and subjective understanding of the situation is the principle concern. This is exactly where a quantitative approach would fail to provide the crucial information and hence would not enlighten us as to what mobilizes people in this way, what triggers these new types of movements, nor would it reveal possible mobilizing factors potentially connected to social media.

However, after the field work came to a sudden end due to the displacement of the movement from the square, it became apparent that some of the results of the qualitative methods used up to that point (namely of participant observation) were quite challenging and would need to be verified from a completely different angle. Under the prism of a reflexive, multi-paradigmatic approach it was chosen to use the objective merits of a quantitative tool to test the qualitative findings. The decision here was to use a quantitative tool in order to verify what could be otherwise characterized as ''subjective'' observation, a usual criticism of participant observation as a method. For this reason an e-survey was designed and used very precisely, with targeted questions, as a means of confirmation or rejection of the original observations, without the aim of investigating the phenomenon in its totality. The questions were separated into three sections; the first asking about whether and how the participants participated in the movement, the second about the media and the movement and the last exclusively focusing on the participants' political efficacy, so as to show the direct links between the empirical work and the

theory[6]. However, although the e-survey came into the plan at a later point in time, responding to a practical need in a reflexive way, it is by no means regarded as a method of lesser importance. On the contrary, the data gathered by the e-survey are used in triangulation with the rest of the findings of a largely qualitative approach.

The research was conducted in two parallel fields, the virtual one of the social media and the actual one, on the ground, complementing one-another in the most essential way. This was both desired due to the nature of the questions asked and at the same time dictated by necessity, due to tempo/spatial objective conditions. This combination -however problematic in the context of doing research in real time, observing a movement in the squares and streets- was at the same time beneficiary as it allowed for a detached perspective, some emotional distance and more rational judgment.

The monitoring of the movement through the media started the moment this movement appeared in the public eye, on May 2011, however, the first part of field work took place in June and the second in August/September 2011, when I spent time in the occupation of Syntagma Square using an ethnographic approach. The field work conducted then followed the basic guidelines of ethnography as: A) there was no stage of theoretical approach, no construction of a hypothesis, nor any prior described data to be obtained and, reasonably no testing of a non-existent hypothesis. B) The only purpose of my presence was to observe and try to understand what was going on using all the information available; talking to people, collecting leaflets, attending the general assembly, listening to what they are saying and how they work with each other, observing and identifying different groups within the larger group, noticing the way they dressed, the way they talk and every other piece of information discernible. C) I, as an observer, was the primary research instrument, establishing relations with the protesters and campers, switching between two roles, that of the participant as observer and that of the observer as participant.

As is common with those using the method of participant observation, sometimes the

[6] The questionnaire follows in Appendix 1.

observer is willing or/and able to reveal their identity and sometimes it is thought more beneficial or/and safe for the researcher not to disclose their identity in order not to jeopardize the research. In my case I used both methods. I was mostly open about my identity and my work in the square, but there were several occasions when I did not reveal the reason I was there. This happened mainly when I came into contact with groups that looked ambiguous, to say the least, as to their motives of participation and as to their objectives. In these situations I presumed that they would not talk openly about their identity had they known I was there as a researcher, as they were obviously "fishing" for followers and they seemed to like "muddy" waters. I will elaborate on these encounters in the following paragraphs.

As the situation in Athens changed and Syntagma Square ceased to be occupied, the movement dissolved into its many contradictions. Yet this was not exactly the end of it. Smaller groups had taken action in various neighbourhoods of Athens forming smaller scale local assemblies. At this stage I turned towards interviewing some of the ex-participants of the movement to be able to capture their views and experiences. I conducted three interviews, two in person and one over the telephone. The first was with Katerina, a 28 year old secretary I had originally met in the field, at the Upper Square. We met during her lunch break at her workplace. The interview was a recap of her experience. She was not actively participating in any initiative anymore and she was quite cynical and disappointed/politically apathetic by the turn of events. The second interview was with Vassili K. 26, at a coffee shop. He was very optimistic in general. He said he was affiliated with a revolutionary left political party and he was used to struggles ''dying out'' on him. But he was positive ''no struggle goes waisted'' as he put it. The third interview I did over the telephone being in London. This chat was with a 40 year old lady, Maria. She participated in the Aganaktismenoi mobilization after many years of no activism. She was affiliated with a left party when she was young but stopped being active after she started a family, she said. She was romanticising the mobilization but at the same time was very disappointed with the outcome. She said "I do not regret it, it reminded me of my youth… But I should have known better than to expect any real change to come out of it''. These three interviews signalled that a fresh methodological approach was needed. It looked that individual interviews would not lead to any concrete conclusions as the individual experiences and motivations of participants were

as diverse as the people themselves. Hence very difficult to codify in a meaningful way. The merits of a quantitative method were much needed at this point to complement the participant observation's findings.

Following the actual, "physical" presence of the movement, its virtual "person" had an amazingly similar story to tell. The movement became very active in the web at first, with its own site and fora, under the very ambitious name "realdemocracy.gr" and then dissolved into internet chaos, at the same time as many new personal or semi-professional blogs appeared together with journalistic projects online. This is the point where, at the end of 2012 the "physical" and electronic tracks of the "*Aganaktismenoi*" seemed to fade out, following parallel paths, indicating an immediate connection of the movement's media to its most involved participants in the field.

Phase I - Qualitative

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is a technique based upon direct observation. Moreover, trying to decode people's motivation for mobilization, ethnomethodology offers unmatched merits. Harold Garfinkel argues that "Ethnomethodology is the study of the means (methods) that people (ethno) use in their lives to recognize, interpret and classify their own and others actions" (D. Silverman (ed) 2011). According to Sue Wilkinson (2011),

> Studies which are designedly ethnographic (rather than content analytic) in nature are studies which aim to provide contextual, interpretive accounts of their participants; social worlds.

This tackles the challenges, describes in a rounded way the aims of the current research and justifies the use of ethnomethodology as a basic element of the research design.

The third important merit of the use of ethnomethodology in this research comes from

the very nature of it, namely the concurrent nature of the research and the development of the phenomenon under question. To put it simply, the task here was to look at a current phenomenon as it unfolds in real time. Following a series of ethnographic observations,

> in a process-based fashion made by Garfinkel in Institutional settings to demonstrate the indexiality and reflexivity of social practices, ethnomethodology has been increasingly used since the '60s and the 70s to grasp phenomena as they unfold. (Gobo G, in D. Silverman (ed) 2011: 164)

According to Gobo (2011) political ethnography highlights aspects neglected by quantitative analysis, such as the impact of micro-politics on macro-phenomena, the complexity of everyday life, the network of participants' meanings, their motivations, the making of political action, and the practices of politics.

The above advocate for the relevance of ethnomethodology, and for the need to involve it in this research design. What is more, ethnographic methods have been successfully used for the analysis of political phenomena under certain circumstances. According to Tilly (2006) ethnographic methods are useful for the analysis of political phenomena consisting not in macro-structures and fixed roles but in interactions among participants, families and small groups. This description could not be more accurate with regards to the Greek movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* in Athens, Syntagma Square. This was a political mobilization based on the actual interactions of its participants, both online and offline. No macro-structures were significant for the movement's course of action. This made ethnomethodology the most appropriate method for this research.

Participant Observation

Ethnographic methodology comprises two research strategies: non-participant observation and participant observation. According to Giampietro Gobo (2011) Participant observation has the following characteristics.

1. The researcher establishes a direct relationship with the social actors
2. Staying in their natural environment;
3. With the purpose of observing and describing their social actions;
4. By interacting with them and participating in their everyday ceremonials and rituals; and
5. Learning their code (or at least parts of it), in order to understand the meaning of their actions.

All the above characteristics were met by the current research and will be discussed in the data presentation and analysis where the findings of the participant observation will be categorized according to themes and all the ceremonials, rituals and codes of the observed group will be decoded in an attempt to understand their meaning and to analyse it, in order to answer the research questions.

Twelve semi-structured interviews and many ad-hoc interviews/informal chats were conducted during the participant observation, mainly in the Square but also in coffee places and workplaces. The most unusual one was an impromptu interview with a taxi driver/protester on the way to the demonstration, inside his taxi. There was also one interview conducted over the telephone, and two more online, via Skype, while the researcher was in London.

Semi-structured interviews were always done in an informal way of a chat. The researcher took notes and occasionally used a tape recorder. This was not efficient because the noise in the square was covering the voices. It was also creating some more distance between the researcher and the interviewee. Ad-hoc interviews and chats were taking place all day. There is no particular list of them due to their very casual type and very large volume. It would be like keeping a list with everyone the researcher spoke to. No recording device was used, neither note were taken because they were taking place between fellow participants in the demonstrations/mobilizations. Since the researcher was conducting participant observation she had to address some limitations on this front. There were many times that a conversation/impromptu interview would be interrupted by a newcomer, some activity or by a clash with the police even. However, notes were taken in the researcher's notebook as soon as

possible after the chats or ad-hoc interviews. At the end of each day the researcher summarised her observations in her diary.

Phase II Quantitative

E-survey

As empirical research requires a reflexive approach in order to be more effective, there is always room for many more methodological tools. This was when I realized there is a need to find the participants of the movement again, try to track them down and ask them personal questions to verify the results of my empirical research and the interviews I had taken on the first phase of the movement. For this reason, within the multi-paradigm approach and the reflexivity characterizing this whole endeavour, a new methodological tool was used as explained earlier, that of an e-survey, addressed to the people who participated in the movement and asking them questions about it and their own political efficacy.

The e-survey was launched experimentally in March 2013 and, after some amendments following the trial period and the suggestions of the participants in it, was officially launched in April 2013. It circulated online, using the social media and in particular emails and facebook. The method for the distribution of the questionnaires was the “snowball” method. Originally it set off from both the personal facebook accounts of the researcher, with indiscriminate recipients and with the notice to be forwarded indiscriminately. The way it will be connected to the qualitative, empirical research via Triangulation will also be discussed in detail.

Ethical considerations and limitations

At the time this research was undertaken, there was no obligation or advice from the Department or City University for acquiring an official Ethics Approval. However, in the course of the field-work all the scientific measures were taken to ensure the ethical treatment of all participants. This was done in several different ways, as several different methodologies were used.

- No children or vulnerable adults were approached during the field-work. Although there were children present, accompanying their parents at the demonstrations, the researcher never had a direct conversation or interview with them with the intention to use it in the research data. The only reference to children will be made in the context of participant observation, where the researcher was able to listen and to observe how the parents interacted with their children, what information they were giving to them, and how the parents referred to their children's presence in the square where the movement evolved.
- All participants interviewed were fully informed, and in detail, about the description and the aims of this research while at the same time they were fully aware that they participate with their free will and they can at any stage of the interview stop the process and leave without any consequences.
- All the participants were given my contact, both in Greece and in England, so they could contact me at no inconvenience and with no extra cost, had they changed their mind about their participation in the future.

The e-survey opened with a note to all participants, letting them know that it was conducted for academic reasons and that the identities of all participants would be disclosed by the use of the appropriate software. In fact, the identities are not even available to the researcher since the electronic survey format used does not provide the identity of the participant, which has been automatically replaced by a reference number.

Limitations

Following the discussion of ethical considerations it is important to refer to the overall limitations of this thesis. Of course, adopting a multi-paradigm approach leaves this thesis more vulnerable to criticism from multiple fields. However, I believe this is substituted by the merits of this approach and the fresh aspect it provides to a complex research area, such as social media-led protest mobilizations. The same could be argued for the use of mixed methodology but I would also argue that the combination of participant observation and a complimentary e-survey was the most appropriate reflexive methods design, responding to the changing circumstances in the field, serving the purposes of this research best and answering the research questions, aims and objectives.

Lastly, a criticism that I judge valid and I have already noted myself is the particular demographic profile of the e-survey participants, regarding their education level. It appears that, although the questionnaire was distributed randomly, the vast majority of the participants were university graduates or post graduate degrees holders. This raises questions on a dual level: first, on the demographic distribution of the use of internet in Greece in 2011; and second, on the potential effect of some contacts the researcher had inside the movement, who happened to be university degree holders and their addresses were amongst the first used to distribute the questionnaire, urging them to forward it indiscriminately to contacts, using the “snowball” method. These two areas could also open venues for further investigation in the future.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's involvement with data collection in the two phases of this study has been completely different. In the first research phase, the qualitative one, the researcher was fully and directly involved due to the method used, namely participant observation. The very nature of participant observation introduces a possibility for subjective interpretations of the phenomenon being studied and creates a potential for bias (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2000). However, this will be tackled by the use of the mixed methods and the input of triangulation in the data analysis and interpretation level.

In the second phase of the research, the quantitative one, the researcher had a much less participatory role. This phase comprised of an e-survey which the researcher designed in London and then distributed online to the participants in Athens. Standardized procedures were used, including a pilot e-survey, reliability and validity checks, the snowball distribution method and disclosure of the participants' identities. The data analysis was performed using standardized statistical techniques before the data was merged with the qualitative findings, handled and presented in a qualitative way.

The mixed strategies called for the researcher to assume a more participatory role at the level of data interpretation, which was conducted by merging and synthesizing the two data strands with a transformative theoretical lens, that of critical theory (Newman and Wyly, 2006).

3.Empirical qualitative data: participant observation

The two following chapters address the mixed empirical data on which this thesis is based on, discussing the qualitative and quantitative approaches respectively. This chapter explores qualitative data collected via participant observation, conducted at the place and time the movement under research occurred, namely Syntagma Square, Athens, Greece, May-October 2012. The following chapter will discuss quantitative data acquired via an e-survey. Both chapters will be analyzed and synthesized in a third chapter.

The main source of the qualitative, participant observation data presented here is the observer's diary I kept. The following paragraphs aim first at setting the scene and explaining the particular geography of the movement, based on the observers' diary entries and some published facts, through media and/or political agents' announcements. Following that familiarizing process, motivation and political naivety with regards to the movement in question are discussed. Next, the participant observation notes point towards an interesting process of re-inventing the political animal within the participants. The observation of this and how it led to regaining a sense of community is presented next. Lastly, this chapter closes with a participant observer's view on the presence of the media organizations in the mobilization space and the different perception the movement's participants held for traditional and newer, digital media.

Participant Observation Data Presentation

Setting the scene and explaining the geography of the movement.

The observation of the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* took place in their natural environment, where the movement came to being and acted out, namely at Athens' "Syntagma Square". Adding semiotic value to the movement, the Greek word "Syntagma" means

"Constitution", and the square is thus named because this is where the Greek people demonstrated the desire to acquire a constitution on September 3rd, 1843. It is the square directly in front of the House of the Parliament. The first call for mobilization of the *Aganaktismenoi* was made on Sunday the 22nd of May 2011 prompted by various facebook accounts reposting an anonymous facebook call for a protest gathering on May 25th [after a "provocative viral meme circulated by the Spanish *Indignados* accusing the Greek people of sleeping" (Sotirakopoulos and Sotiropoulos, 2013:446]. Later, however, the date of September the 3rd 2011 acquired an extra symbolic value for the movement, being the date when the movement resumed after being evicted from the square in mid-summer. The ousting by the Council of Athens took place during a period known in Greek politics as "people's swimming season". This nick-name signifies the absence of any laborious activity due to the extended heat and the very important religious holiday of the 15th of August which traditionally keep the Athenians away from the city. Therefore, fieldwork with regards to participant observation took place in two stages, in June 2011 and in August/September 2011.

One of the first things noticed by the observer of the mobilization in Syntagma Square was the "geographical division" of the movement. The geography of the Square seemed to have influenced the formation of two different groupings of people, actively participating in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. As shown in the picture below, Syntagma Square is comprised of the actual square and the streets around it. The north side of the square, the one facing the Houses of the Parliament is at street level, a dozen stairs higher than the main square. There, the street and the open courts of the Houses of Parliament, including the Statue of the Anonymous Soldier, form a plane area, which was transformed during the demonstrations into the so-called "upper square". Down the aforementioned stairs, the actual square was, respectively, called the "lower square". From now on these two terms will be used to define the two sections of the actual space where the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* acted out.



Picture 1. Syntagma Square, Athens, June 2011. Credits: Reuters News Agency.

The upper square, comprised of the road and the open space just in front of the Parliament where the indignation and fury of the protestors was directed, provided the best front for the fight. This is where all the frustrated law abiding citizens gathered, shouted slogans and gestured angrily towards the politicians inside the building, seen as the "headquarters of the enemy". This was also where both the media and the police had immediate and easy access, being on the main street. And this was the first place to be "claimed back" by normal city life once the numbers of the protestors dwindled, returning to use as a fully operating road. The "lower square", however, provided a certain distance from the theatre of the fight, nourished debates and discussions during the daytime, and provided shelter and refuge for the protesters who were camping during the night. Naturally, this environment was more welcoming to the development of a sense of community, continuity and common cause that gave strength to the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*. As the weeks proceeded, there was a clear trend being

shaped, as to how people would move between the two spaces, the upper and lower square, and as to where different groups would settle. It was clear that the "upper square" was where the newcomers would mostly go first, and then, they would wander around and either go back up, or stay below in the lower square, a place more given to discussion, organization and preparation. The semiology and actual results of this movement in terms of the politicization of the movement and the production of tangible change of participants' political behavior change will be discussed later in the analysis part of this chapter.

In the very large crowds of the first two weeks the observer could distinguish politicized groups of people able to see the potential and the dynamics of this movement in political terms and more passive bystanders. This has been observed by other researchers too, for Georgiadou et al, found that "differences in the levels of political efficacy and cynicism were important for highlighting the two main types of protesters: the engaged and the bystanders" (2019:54). This dichotomy was evident by the discussions they initiated or where involved in, the analysis and insight information they contributed and their eagerness to explore the very fabric of the movement; in other words to understand the human geography of the participants, to make sense of the aims and objectives as well as the dynamics on the ground in terms of political sophistication and mobilization experience. But these were a small minority of politically sophisticated, active and conscious people, consistently present in protest movements – according to their own admission. For one who is familiar with the particular political scene of Greece these groups could be very broadly associated with the non-parliamentary, revolutionary left of the country. It has to be stressed that this was the first time in modern Greek history that the Greek Communist Party (the largest Communist Party in the EU with 7,54% at the 2009 General Elections, 3rd party in the Greek Parliament at the time of the protest) was not participating in a large political mobilization like the movement of the Syntagma Square. The rest of the revolutionary, anti-capitalistic left larger or smaller parties were present, albeit without their party's flags[7], following the non-partisan character or the movement. This exact character

[7] Although some of them where handing out their own, signed leaflets, propagating their parties' positions and view of the mobilization. A very vocal such non-parliamentary small party was OKDE, which stands for Organization of Communists, Internationalists of Greece (Appendix 3).

was the reason for the Communist Party's absence, according to its official press release (June 7, 2011). This new type of movement was by birth and self-definition against political parties, so the Communist Party argued it could not participate without its flag and its guarded blocks. They criticized this format of protesting as one that lacked ideological background –a fair accusation at that point. They went one step further to describe this movement as a-political, reactionary, deceiving the working classes and labor movement, uncontrollable and in effect dangerous. According to their official press release, the Greek Communist Party is calling for the working and middle classes to think about how struggles without clear target and class orientation cannot bring meaningful results. Among others in a long press release it is saying:

> "It is encouraging that the people and the youth are out to the streets demonstrating their accumulated rage as this can create a climate of meaningful uprising. … But, the generic demand *'down with the Memorandum'* is not saying anything of essence if it is not accompanied by a demand to bring down the monopolies, the EU and the political parties that serve them. Otherwise worse memoranda will be coming. … For demonstrating against unemployment to be of essence it needs to be accompanied with the fight to nationalize all big business. (KKE PO Press release, June 7, 2011)

It goes on to claim that:

> The popular, cultivated, superficial and populist slogans "*thieves*" and "*liars*" rid the real guilty parts [of their responsibilities], [them being] the plutocracy that is legally stealing from the people. Slogans like '*oust the political parties and syndicates'* are reactionary. (KKE PO Press release, June 7, 2011)

The press release is then warning and calling people's forces to:

> Treat with distrust the flattery and "hugging" from parties, Mass Media, the bid business and several mechanisms that pretend to be non-partisan. The systemic mechanisms have every reason to keep the mass indignation blur and to cage [restrict] it in meaningless slogans or in reactionary ideologies". (KKE PO Press release, June 7, 2011)

This stand of the Greek Communist Party, and its following absence from the Square will be discussed further in the analysis and the synthesis of the data, in an attempt to explain some of the movement's effects and results in the actual political field and the following year's elections.

During that first period in the upper square one could see a lot of Greek flags (many more than the few Greek flags scattered in the lower part of the square) a gesture full of semiotic value, symbolizing the national character of the feelings of frustration and disapproval that the movement aspired to voice. At that point in time it did not mean a lot more than any other note on the researcher's observation log. It is important to stress that the *Aganaktismenoi* movement started and was shaped around the concept of a "non-party", "non-flag", people's movement, already observed at the Spanish *Indignados* movement, earlier that year. However, this simple observation of the first period was very telling of the political process going on at the ground-roots level and the ideological "schism" that was taking place between the upper and the lower square: the first being transformed into a fishing pool for the right wing nationalists and the crypto-fascists and the second being the space for the growth of the anti-capitalistic, anti-austerity movement, which was obvious to the observer at the second phase of participant observation, commencing September 3rd 2011

This geographical division developed during the first weeks of the movement and in September 2011 the status quo of the two spaces was set, solid and almost non-transparent, with the two groups going from alien to hostile towards each other. Often they seemed to just tolerate each other in order for them not to get into trouble with the police. When I shared my thoughts about the separation of the movement and the two different spaces the responses I got were more than telling. This happened during a relaxed, casual evening chat with fellow participants in the mobilization, in the anti-capitalistic, by that time openly leftish, lower square. Asking them if and why the crowd was separated up and down the stairs of the square, I got the following very straightforward answers: "*There are fascists among the people up there*" or "*They are up there guarded by the police"*. According to Kostas K. there was a violent clash between the

two groups late one night of early September and "*only last minute were victims avoided*" as he put it, by the intervention of the more coolheaded and only for protecting the *Aganaktismenoi* movement from the stigma. After that incident, Giannis M. said, "*we have made an agreement that one will not go to the space of the other*". The sentiment was the same in the upper square, although the comments were less detailed and varied from ambiguous gestures to "*they are freaks*" (Nontas) and "*down there they think they are bringing Communism and the Revolution*" (Nikos) or "we are simple people and we want to help our country. They are politicized!" (Katerina). That last one was said as an apparent accusation, showing the general lack of political sophistication in the upper square.

Rage against the machine: motivation and political naivety

Attempting to theorize about this massive mobilization at Athens' Syntagma Square, inevitably one needs to investigate the key motivation leading this large, heterogeneous crowd to take to the streets and protest in the first place. The answer to this question became very obvious to the participant observer: Anger, frustration and a will to shape their own future, at least on the first level. These where they key observations during the first couple of weeks. And they seem to agree with Castells' take on the new type of social movements in the internet age, as he puts it:

> From the safety of cyberspace, people from all ages and conditions moved towards occupying urban space, on a blind date with each other and with the destiny they wanted to forge, as they claimed their right to make history – their history – in a display of the self-awareness that has always characterized major social movements (Castells, 2012:2).

In the beginning, while the movement was taking shape, the crowd was vibrant and very large, in constant motion during the course of the day and night, with people passing by, staying for a while, going away and maybe coming back later, sometimes after work or between activities. The general mood was that of excitement and anti-conformism. People seemed largely friendly to each other, in a sort of unspoken "alliance" against what they identified as the common enemy; the austerity measures the Government was pushing forward to be voted at the Parliament. This

conscious or unconscious rage against the establishment and the elites' policies, in response to the global economic crises, was the common cause for mobilization, and one could very easily observe that during the first weeks of the movement's activity. Although socially embedded power relations and cultural hegemony were not discussed –at least not in the presence of the participant researcher- one could observe the sociological concepts of power and counterpower (Castells, 2009), in the attempt of the protestors (social agents) to challenge the power embedded in the government and parliament, for the purpose of claiming representation for their own values and interest. The fact that this display of counterpower was largely unsophisticated and unrealized in its theoretical grounds was another unique characteristic of this massive mobilization, drawing from its non-ideological, non-partisan character. I claim this should be seen critically with regards to the "actual counterpower" capacity of these new types of movements. Opposing Castells, who sees the free public space of the internet as beyond the control of elites and monopolized channels of power, I argue that the digital, autonomized, a-political nature of the social media who played the role of the ''organizing grounds'' of the movement (as is evident by the initial calling to the streets via facebook and the vibrant online presence of the movement in social media) actually affects the participants' capacity to display actual and effective counterpower.

According to the observation, although the motivating issue was fundamentally political, people in the field were largely consumed by performing their indignation (Aganaktisi in Greek). It seemed that in the first weeks, most of the protestors' intentions were to steam off their anger and frustration rather than to make any coherent proposal for future policies or solutions, as an alternative to the politics they opposed. This seemed to be particularly true for the people who were coming to the streets for the first time in their life, regardless of their age. Law abiding citizens found themselves and their families in a position of uncertainty due to no fault of their own. The observer met a family of four with two young children and spent half a day with them. Both parents had been civil servants and had never protested in their lives, but now they saw both their salaries being cut, the pension system becoming shaky and all their financial benefits gradually lost. This was why they were protesting. According to their own words *"we do not want to change the system; we just want to keep our life standards intact"* (Anna and Georgos).

However, their two young children who could not quite understand what was going on, seemed bewildered with the loud atmosphere. They had never been in a protest before and they did not know what a protest was. They seemed to be very excited just seeing their parents excited and they'd already started shouting out slogans; as if it was a game they really enjoyed and were drawn into it by the energy of the crowd. There was a very powerful dynamic being created, a dynamic of radical change under public demand. My notes on the children were the result of mere observation, as no interviews with minors were conducted.

To a large extent, it became obvious from the very early days investigating the movement that this very large mobilization was exposing people to another way of political participation, an active and direct democratic process which, for most of them, was a new experience. In fact, the country had not seen such a massive and long lasting protest movement for generations, if any. One can only speculate what the effect of this personal participation and first-hand experience of movement procedures –on such a scale, numbers, time and global media coverage- would be on people with low levels of prior movement experience. The speculation becomes more tantalizing in the case of young children brought to the Square, who seemed not quite to understand what was going on but experienced a large enthusiastic crowd acting collectively. It was obvious that these children –and indeed many teenagers and adults- were having a positive and intense personal experience of what a protest is, moreover of what being a part of a very large and indignant crowd feels like: an empowering and overwhelming feeling. This experience appeared to enhance their political sophistication and their actual political efficacy.

According to the definition of political efficacy (as explained in the first chapter) the *objective* internal political efficacy of these people –hence, their own belief in their ability to affect the system via their own objective actions– was indeed enhanced. This can be recorded as a positive, short-term effect on their political efficacy from their participation in the movement. However, more research is required over the course of time to understand the potential long-term effects. The participants' *subjective* internal political efficacy –hence, what actions they would or should take in the future in order to affect or change the political system– should be looked into further. Such research ought to compare subjective perceptions with the combined findings from a) the subjects' traditional political actions in the future, such as voting behavior or

party affiliations, and b) their rates of external political efficacy, hence their perception of the systems' responsiveness to their actions. Noted as one of the points to be revisited in the long run, this will also be discussed later on this chapter, where the synthesis of the data will be checked in regards to particular, historic transformations which took place in the Greek political scene the months and years after the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*.

In general, during the first phase of the participant observation, the crowds in June 2011 seemed lively, hopeful, frustrated and almost "politically innocent''; a large part of them seemed to be exploring this new way of expressing their frustration with a belief that they would be heard and that the political elites could not ignore them, a clear sign of high external political efficacy. The prevailing sense was that most of the protestors could not believe that the austerity measures announced would actually be implemented. This was mainly due to legal implications, as the announced measures opposed a very significant part of the Greek work legislation, and they were contrary to any prior example or practice in the country. These genuinely indignant people seemed alarmed and frustrated without deep political thinking at the origins of their frustration. Most specifically there was a geographical division: the crowds gathering in the upper square were largely a-political or used to be affiliated with one of the two main parties in the past; now they had been hit by the austerity measures, lost their jobs, or were feeling insulted by the foreign (EU institutions and governments) intervention into Greece's internal affairs and the loss of national sovereignty which comes with the imposed austerity. On the contrary, the crowds gathering in the lower square seemed to be more politically sophisticated, leaning towards the left and varying from center left up to extreme left and anarchist groups, they were raising more anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist voices and were trying to get organized.

Drawing on my overall participant observation experience, based on specific conversations, interviews and the general atmosphere, the vast majority of the crowd would be happy and would be glad to withdraw from the mobilization, had some political reassurance come, promising things would not change. What seemed to mobilize the majority of the protestors was not some alternative political proposal, on the contrary, a conservative instinct for maintaining their socioeconomic status quo. During the first weeks of the protests, no revolutionary agendas or any specific plan for the future of the mobilization itself occurred.

However, the people who ended up occupying the lower square seemed more familiar with social movements and mobilization practices; they seemed to be the ones concerned with finding a way to organize and maintain the dynamics of the movement. The role of media, digital and traditional in all this process will be explored separately.

Re-inventing the "political beast" within the citizen

During the first weeks of the mobilization the general feeling was that of rage and indignation. As Manuel Castells puts it:

> They came together. And their togetherness helped them to overcome fear, this paralyzing emotion on which the powers that be rely in order to prosper and reproduce, by intimidation or discouragement, and when necessary by sheer violence, be it naked or institutionally enforced (Castells, 2012:2).

But the movement evolved and the dominant mood during the second phase of the participant observation changed. This happened when the movement regrouped in a celebratory way at the 3rd of September 2011.

The very first and very obvious observation at that point was regarding the flags. As opposed to the lack of political party flags and the abundance of the Greek flags mainly at the upper square, now the lower square was dominated by red flags, plain or in several variations from different communist groups, as well as other flags universally associated with social revolutions and resistance or non-conformism, like the Cuban flag, flags with the portrait of Che Guevara, the Rastafarian flag etc., clearly symbolizing the left orientation of the crowd. There was an obvious shift of the action, from the loud frustration on the upper square of the initial weeks to the more ideologically oriented political fermentation, taking place in the lower square. This field observation should be combined with the aforementioned observation of the occupiers of each geographical space of the square, namely the internet mobilized, heterogeneous, non-political, non-ideological crowds mainly stationed in the upper square and the more politically

sophisticated, party-affiliated crowds stationed in the lower square. This combined observation, three months on the movements' existence, lays solid grounds for a critical point against the techno-deterministic and over optimistic approach of Castells and others like Bennett and Segerberg (2012, 2013), who see the logic of connective action, with little hierarchy and organization coordination, where social media take "the role of established political organizations" (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 742). Clearly, once the social media fascination and sensualization of the protest died out after the summer holidays and the eviction from the square by the authorities in August, the only forces that kept the mobilization alive and organized its return in big numbers on the 3rd of September were already established political parties and civil rights organizations, together with politically active and ideologically sophisticated, un-affiliated individuals.

The second phase of the movement, commencing September 3rd 2011 was largely a different story. More cohesion, lesser volumes of people and more organized actions and daily routines were observed. The crowd was colorful and there was a lot of music and dancing, replacing the rage and the initial violent clashes with the police. There was a set General Assembly every evening at 9pm, something that was worked out the previous months and had become the crucial meeting point and decision making body of the movement. It is worth noticing the positioning of the Assembly, at the lower square, with the main speaker facing straight at the House of the Parliament, a confrontational discussion between the speaker, hence the movement, and the established political power clearly implied (picture 2). The General Assembly had become the main routine around which the daily activities were organized, varying from cleaning and guarding to playing music and organizing thematic discussions or communications with the sister-movements of the Spanish *Indignados* and the Occupy movements. The fact that the General Assembly (GA) was the focal point of all the activities, the debate and decision body of the movement, was what gave the *Aganaktismenoi* (like the *Indignados*) their direct democracy identity. At this point of its existence, the movement was a large, social experiment of direct democracy, organized and propagandized via the digital media, as the minutes of the GAs, the decisions and the agendas were uploaded for information and discussion at the webpage of the movement, named appropriately: www.realdemocracy.gr.



Picture 2. An iconic figure of the WWII Greek Resistance movement, later MEP with Syriza, Manolis Glezos, is addressing the Aganaktismenoi General Assembly. Glezos is addressing the Assembly but also the House of Parliament at the background, in a clear "struggle of power" denotation. Credits: Athens News Agency (ANA).

This direct democracy experiment was very interesting to observe as it developed in its different phases. In the GAs of June the participants were less settled, the people who asked to address the Assembly were not easy to categorize and the speeches where in general more frustrated, angry and charged than politicized and structured. People seemed to be willing to explore this new method of direct political debate and this proposal for direct democracy, however often either very enthusiastic or very skeptical about it. Many participants were stating that this was the first time they took to the streets or the first time after many years for the older ones. There were many volunteers for the more "hands-on" groups such as the organizing group, the cleaning group, the kitchen group etc., as opposed to the more politically sensitive groups such as the theoretical group, exploring the movement's positions, writing announcements and declarations, or the media group. One could observe some people were much more familiar with the process but they were a minority, although very strongly involved and naturally leading

others. They avoided raising heated ideological debates during the voting process, as more practical issues needed to be addressed.

There were some flyers circulated during the first phase of the mobilization but these were vague in both their political orientation and their actual aims. They were mostly calling for people to join the general assemblies and they were trying to capture the main, contradicting but not openly controversial at that point, aims and objectives of the protesters. A good example is a flyer titled "Direct democracy now: an invitation for participation" (Appendix 2). The main issues of lack of trustworthy democratic representation as opposed to direct democracy are put, together with concerns about oligarchy and political participation. It is a call to participate and tackle issues like poverty and political injustice.

On the contrary, on September 3rd, when the movement re-assembled after the involuntarily summer break[8], the atmosphere was very different, both in the general level of interaction between people and groups as well as during the GA process. Regarding the general atmosphere and the way people communicated and interacted during the day, it is worth noticing that during this second phase of the mobilization a bigger volume of particular leaflets were being handed out, indicating preparation, more sophisticated organization than the previous phase and more distinct group formations. Some small revolutionary left non-parliamentary parties were handing out their own partisan material with regards to the movement for the first time (i.e. OKDE, Appendix 2). Interestingly, there were some new grass-root groups formatted during the first phase of the demonstrations, who were all ''stationed'' in the Upper Square and they were handing out their own materials on September 3rd too. One flyer was declaring the formation of an aspiring political party with a ballot paper titled "United Aganaktismenoi ballot paper'' (Appendix 2). This indicates that further fermentations –and fragmentations- took place in a local, interpersonal and/or online level during the ''summer brake'' that did not meet the public eye. Another interesting leaflet that was circulated during

[8] As mentioned before, the movement seized the occupation of the square and other activities during August 2011. This was typically due to the eviction of the occupiers who had camped at the lower square. However, it coincided with the summer holiday period and the heat which kept many of the loosely participating citizens away from Athens.

this first day of re-grouping on September 3rd, was titled "Revolt now! The struggle continues till victory'', calling for people to re-assemble in Syntagma Square and continue the struggle (Appendix 2). The language used and the specific aims mentioned were very confusing, a mix of anticapitalistic and revolutionary left slogans, i.e calling to oust NATO and EU from Greece, together with some populist right rhetoric for country and nation and some far right, very challenging language regarding migrants is Greece, who are characterized "clandestine settlers'' threatening the cultural integrity and social coherence of the Greek nation[9]. The most interesting element of this specific leaflet, though, is that it validates the participant observation's claim about the geographic division of the groups participating in the demonstration. The signature in the flyer clearly distinguishes the group from the rest of the demonstrators and correlates its identity to its particular gathering spot, namely under the statue of the Unknown Soldier: "We are the *Indignant* [Aganaktismenoi] *Determined Greeks* of Syntagma Square (Unknown Soldier)" it reads. The statue of the Unknown Soldier is situated right in front of the Houses of Parliament.

Calling on similar instincts was another leaflet circulating largely on the 3rd of September, under the fascinating title "300 Greeks: Thermopylae 480bc – Athens 2011ac, History repeats itself" (Appendix 2). The language in this one is as populist as observed in the material gathered. It addresses the reader in the first person, claiming "I am your brother, friend, co-worker …" clearly drawing on vague notions of identity and patriotism and tempering with emotions. It rejects political or union affiliations and is asking for reader to engage on a personal capacity. Significant amount of thought, organization and political sophistication has been put into this leaflet although masked in a populistic and ideologically neutral language. Its strategic objectives correspond with far right groups and conspiracy theories of Greek supremacy. The notion of a constitutional national assembly which is mentioned in this flyer as the preferable governing body for the Greek State has been the flagship political objective of a racist, Greek supremacist group called "Ellinwn Suneleusis" (Greeks' Assembly), which appeared soon after the

[9] This language resonates with the controversial debate about national and historic purity of the Greek people which initiated from the marginal far right and managed to spill in the central political debate during the years of severe austerity following the Aganaktismenoi movement. It has been fuelled by the large numbers of Muslim immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers coming into a very homogenous Christian Orthodox country (more than 90% of the population in multiple census) between 2014 and 2016 because of the war in Syria, ISIS and the general destabilization in the middle East following the American-led ''War on Terror''.

Aganaktismenoi mobilization. The group gained significant membership and caused some upheaval all over the country under the leadership of Artemis Sorras, a controversial populist figure who suddenly appeared in the public forefront in 2011[10]. He was found guilty of fraud in March 2017 and finally arrested and jailed in July 2018 ("iefimerida", 10/10/2012, Efimerida twn Suntaktwn, 7/3/2017, The Press Project, 16/6/2018).

The role of changing media systems has been pointed out by Bennett and Livingston, with regards to the disinformation order which facilitates movements carrying radical right messages 2018). More specifically they argue that,

> The more recent volatile mix of institutional corrosion and media abundance has enabled counter politics to take on corrosive and undemocratic forms in many societies, as alternative media flows reach large audiences and help organize movements and parties that have gained higher levels of electoral success. (Bennett and Livingstone, 2018:128)

This thesis is not trying to make a direct connection between the groups observed, their circulating printed materials and the controversial political movements which appeared in a parallel or slightly later time. Also, far right and populist rhetoric observed is pointed out as a participant observation finding but is not given further analysis because it clearly lays outside the interests of this research, which is looking at the digital media-led mobilization from a media sociology perspective, with emphasis on political communication only regarding the participants' political efficacy and its potential effect on future political behavior as a result of people's participation in a new type of digital media-led movement. However it became apparent to the observer that the aforementioned groups were formed during the mobilizations, they had a relatively fixed geographic position in the upper square and they did not seem to mingle with the rest of the crowds, neither to participate in the GAs, apart from the occasional observation. All the above led the researcher to realize the dangers of digital media-led mobilizations of large,

[10] Artemis Sorras extraordinary pledges included claiming to be in position of valuable ancient Greek technological and spiritual knowledge. He claimed Greek supremacy and accused an international anti-Greek conspiracy theory for the country's situation. He featured in mainstream media and gave interviews in prime-time television, gaining legitimacy. He urged people not to pay taxes to the corrupted political elites and claimed he had the monies to buy the Greek debt in favor of the country. Many of his followers denied honoring their financial obligations to the State and are now facing prosecution by the Greek tax authorities.

politically naïve crowds within a perceived –but not actually existing as such- ideological void. This idea will be explored in the data analysis, synthesis and discussion chapter.

Meanwhile in the field, on September 3rd, during the first GA of the mobilization's second phase, the debate and the speakers' list seemed to have taken a different shape after the involuntary summer break. This time the issues raised were much more politicized and the suggestions were extremely detailed, to the extent of people handing out 4-page leaflets before a specific speaker took the stand and asking for them to be put to the vote 10 minutes later, when the respective speaker had finished addressing the General Assembly. At this point, with a good grasp of the Greek left movement and revolutionary scene, it was easy to allocate the majority of the speakers to specific political circles just from their speeches. The language used and the ideological perspectives expressed, revealed party or group affiliations. Some of the participants, when asked, admitted they perceived this as a process of the movement becoming politically mature where others saw it as inevitable, since the more driven were pulling the less politicized along. So, there was a very distinct move from the a-politicized initial character of the movement towards adopting the ideology of the anti-capitalist left. This observation supports the argument against the deterministic view of media technology being more than a medium, but the actual message instead. Opposing McLuhan's proposition, one could say that in this case the medium, i.e digital social media, has not been the message. On the contrary, a systemic medium communicated a message to large crowds and managed to mobilize them with its unique tempo/spatial capacity, but the actual political fermentation in the field conveyed this message as something largely anti-systemic, however attractive to smaller audiences.

The above conclusion is based on the combined readings of the observation notes and other ad-hoc data gathering sources, such as discussions and interviews with the participants (Appendix 3). These combined materials showed clear points and lines of evolution along the several fronts of the movement, namely the organizational, the ideological and the mobilization front. During the first GAs in June, where the motion was more towards organizing a movement and the ideological framework was moving along the lines of frustration, anti-bank, anti-

government and anti-systemic feelings, large, non-homogeneous crowds participated in the process. This was moving week by week towards anti-capitalism and direct democracy. After a couple of months this process had resumed into a completely left ideological frame, anti-capitalistic and revolutionary, with people holding discussions on possible formations of the post-revolutionary regime. There was an obvious tendency to romanticize the movement and over-estimate its dynamics, but on the other hand there were concrete presences from several work related Unions and Student Unions both from within Greece and abroad, calling for class solidarity. It was obvious to the consistent observer that both the topics and the arguments the GA dealt with were intensely radicalized. However, this went hand in hand with a radical reduction in the numbers of people attending the assemblies. Where in the first weeks one could not count the people and there was a constant flow around the GA, the whole square being overcrowded, in the first celebrated GA of September the 3rd the participants were about 600 people according to the researcher's estimation, not a small number in itself but clearly not comparable to the tens of thousands of the first weeks.

Some of the political points made by the speakers that night were along the lines of statements like: "*to stand all together against the government*", "*all workers should resist together and not fight separate fights, because our enemy is not this or that law (referring to austerity laws) but Capitalism itself*", "*Let's write off the Debt and overthrow this political system*" etc. Several Unions called for support in their strikes and there was a call for less theory and more organized actions. The vast majority of the participants seemed to agree with the ideological frame and the un-realistic aims of the GA. What was, however, very interesting was the conversation a group of men was having attending the GA: *"In any case, it is better for a democratic movement (like this) to fail than… (Implied, "than the current system*"). "*Let it fail in the end…".* The minutes of all the GAs were uploaded on the movement's website, in more than one language. In that particular GA there was a decision for an online debate, consisting of a preparation for the next GA, the next evening. This way the direct democratic process made a leap and went back to the digital social media, this time not in order to mobilize large crowds fast but to use the tempo-spatial connectivity capacity of technology for the purposes of deepening the existing direct dialogue and preparing for a more fruitful discussion in the actual field, not

online. I argue that this decision of the *Aganaktismenoi* GA of September 3rd 2011, presents an historic point for the media sociology of the massive Greek protest movement and a major shift in the way digital social media and the new type of social mobilization are inter-related in the country. Here, the new medium's technologically advanced potential is fully acknowledged and is put in the service of the movement, without romanticizing the digital democratic capacity beyond the realm of the actual, ''analog'', field of direct participation and face to face decision making.

Admittedly, at this point the *Aganaktismenoi* movement was weak in numbers. It was still large but not massive, politically mature, demonstrating class-consciousness. One could observe, however, a clear relation between the degree of politicization of the movement and the numbers of the participants it mobilized. In other words, large numbers took to the streets in the beginning, when this movement was called via the social media in an apolitical, infotainment way, as a means to "steam off" the public frustration. Meanwhile, as the *Aganaktismenoi* movement gained in ideological coherence and deepened its politicization by means of the direct democracy process, it lost in numbers. So it can be argued that for these new types of digital media-born movements, large numbers of participants come at a cost of low levels of politicization and vice versa. I claim that this could also be related to the inevitable decrease in the participants' levels of external political efficacy during the length of their mobilization. In other words, politically naïve protesters mobilize believing there will be high systemic responsiveness to their individual acts of protest. As some of the initial participants persist and become seasoned protesters their political sophistication deepens but their actual participation in a movement which does not realize its goals undoubtedly proves the lack of systemic responsiveness to their efforts and actions. This causal relation between the volume of this new, digital media-led mobilizations and external political efficacy could provide new avenues of understanding the mobilizations under question and is calling for further investigation.

However, parallel to the collective ideological maturity of the movement, one could observe great transformations of people's individual perceptions as a result of their participation in this modern, large and long-lasting movement. A very interesting pattern emerging on that field was the de-legitimization of several state institutions, the Police and the House of

Parliament / Parliamentary Democracy and the media amongst others. This was more apparent in the older protesters and participants, especially those law abiding citizens in their 50s and 60s who came in touch with a protest movement for the first time in their lives, through their participation in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. These people grew self-conscious and class-conscious through the direct democracy procedures and their direct involvement. The transformation of their perception especially on the issues of the role of the Police and policing protest movements was undoubtable. They found themselves for the first time "on the other side of the mirror" as they said to the researcher. They were used to sitting at home and watching several protest movements turning violent on television, ending in clashes with police forces. They were used to watching the clashes framed by media coverage during the "News" shows, talking about how the protesters were violent and how they -within the Greek narrative- were anarchists who threw Molotov cocktails at the police for sport, burning banks and destroying private properties indiscriminately. In their eyes the police rightfully protected law and order. Now they had the experience of how the police forces charged against them without being provoked, on several occasions during the first weeks, when they received relevant orders (that the square should be emptied). How the police sprayed them with large amounts of chemicals when all they did was to sit and talk. As one woman in her 50s very descriptively put it "*My child, we didn't do anything, I swear to God! We were just sitting there and they chocked us in teargas and chemicals*", clearly upset and unable to perceive the injustice; frustrated with herself "*that all these years I believed them and I was blaming the poor kids*" (meaning the occasional protesters). It was becoming obvious to the observer that these mature law abiding citizens had started to re-invent their political self at a relatively late stage in their lives, when they were forced or given the chance to "escape" mediated information about socio-political actions and exercise non patronized, direct democracy for a significant amount of time. When these citizens escaped the media interpretation of politics and had a first-hand experience they seemed to have discovered the "political beast" in themselves, hiding inside the citizen. And this was the direct effect their participation in this new type of protest movement had on their political efficacy, as I discuss later in the Synthesis chapter.

Regaining a sense of community

Although not obvious during the early days of the movement, when the masses were huge, mobile and frustrated, a rising sense of community was apparent during the second phase, after the September 3rd regrouping. This new-formed community had certain characteristics: More particularly, the lower square had evolved into a coherent large group, where people largely knew each other, many of them having spent many a night in the square, having organized groups to tackle the everyday issues (cleaning, preparing or bringing food and water, a medical supply team, a communications group, a technical support group, a legal support group and many other smaller groups of practical and problem-solving support of the movement). This common effort had brought a motley crew of protestors together. At this point, a full trimester in the movement's life, participators were mostly on a first name basis and the main square of Athens was operating like a small autonomous community, with its internal hierarchies, rules, codes and rituals.

Besides the obvious hierarchically assigned administrative roles, there were also less formal sociologically identified ones; an example being that of the role of the care-taker or "the Mother". Older women who started coming to the square for random reasons, varying from accompanying teenage children to making political statements or because of mere personal curiosity, had stayed. These women used to bring home-made food to the people camping at the square, or as one of them put it "*I am bringing food for my children*", answering the researcher's question while she wondered around making sure everything was in order. They used to address the young protestors as "my child/children" and they were generally accepted, respected for their persistence in going to the square regularly and, in return, physically protected by the young protestors when there were clashes with the police. There seemed to be an extended family model in place, albeit a matriarchal one. The community rules seemed to be quite loose, emphasizing to the safety of the people and the protection of the movement as a whole: avoiding party politics and ideological tensions, respecting the fellow protestors, cleaning, taking care of the space and operating within direct democracy.

However, the role of women was becoming distinct and there were observable examples of female emancipation. The researcher observed several impromptu meetings between women

of all ages. They seemed to seek further dialogue and a closer relationship with each other. This spontaneous behavior was observed from the first phase of the mobilization. As a participant observer the researcher (being female herself) took part in several relevant chats and debates. Occasionally men were involved. Most of the times they were very young and they always were few compared to the women. What looked like an interesting observation and raised many questions calling on modern identity, individualization and feminism theories actually produced material results in the second phase of the mobilization. It was on September 3rd, the day of re-assembling, when a very interesting flyer was circulated under the title "Decided Women on Suntagma Sqaure aand all Squares" (Appendix 2). This was the result of all the impromptu meetings and exchanges which took place in the previous months. Also a clear indication that further fermentations were taking place and identity politics were a very important factor fueling the mobilizations. The text of the flyer was declaring that women were standing by their decision to pass their message, which they stressed was peaceful; that they reached out to other women and aimed at capitalizing on the communication value of the printed message; that they were inclusive not exclusive and wanted to unite all women, especially those hesitating, scared or unaware of the squares movement's aims. In that declaration they assumed the transnational character of the Indignants' movement, since they refer to squares in plural and not only Syntagma square in Athens. They wrote "We address women who saw and know, those who learnt and are afraid: We are like you, with the same fears and the same right to dream and that is why we will fight". The flyer went on saying "We also address those who want to break us: we are not scared and we continue to protest in peace". This flyer was much unexpected to the observer and really shed light to hidden mobilizations and identifications within the movement. Contrary to the previously mentioned flyers this one was very basic in its preparation and sophistication and it was the only one that did not provide any way of communication with the people handing it over. It looked more like an expression of a need for solidarity and activism rather than an organized call. Risk Society (Beck 2005) in the form or the global financial crisis in a national context, shaking all familiar social and political structures, and reflexive modernization (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994), in the form of the individualized, non-partisan, non-union affiliated character of the Aganaktismenoi movement, met at Syntagma square, where a

transnational digital media-led mobilization was still able to trigger old types of solidarity (female power movements / feminism) in a new, deeply mediatized (Couldry and Hepp, 2017) environment. However interesting the above observation and material, it should be noted that this female initiative within the Aganaktismenoi mobilization never developed any further than this flyer –to the researchers knowledge. After reassessing all observations and other data, I have concluded that the driving force behind this attempt was a small but ideologically set number or mature feminists, who built on former activism reflexes of the Greek left and managed to create a relevant noise within the Aganaktismenoi movement. However, this never became an organic part of the Aganaktismenoi mobilization. Broader questions regarding current feminism activism within the new digital media-led mobilizations and the communities of participants are raised here; but these lay clearly outside the reach and the interests of the current research and are for others to address.

This young community had its own non-linguistic communication codes as well. In a pioneering exchange, the non-linguistic codes of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement, mainly during the General Assemblies, were "imported" from the sister-movement of the Spanish *Indignados* and also used by the Occupy movements in the USA and Europe. They comprised of hand gestures to signify agreement/disagreement and other positions in the dialogue. Within a short period of time they became the new global language of these new category of media-led, grass-roots movements. However, the main ritual of the community seemed to have become the daily General Assembly at 9pm, offering the assurance, comfort and sense of normality, reminding us of rituals like the religious mass or the family dinner table.

All the above advocate for the emergence and establishment of a unique, operating community within the initially large but vastly heterogeneous crowds that were mobilized under the vague title of the "*Aganaktismenoi*". However, what is really noteworthy is that this sense of community and the community itself did not disappear after the physical exhaustion of the movement, about 6 months after its uprising. One of the most valuable legacies of the *Aganaktismenoi* were the local assemblies, or "Neighbourhood Assemblies" as they were called. These were created by the people who participated in the movement. Those people took the movement's knowhow from the central square of Athens and brought it to their individual

neighbourhoods, incorporated it into the everyday lives of the neighbourhood and turned them into a vehicle for addressing local concerns, in the form of local assemblies and/or other activism. A great example of local assembly which later turned into a thriving local community activism hub is that of New Ionia borough in Athens. That local assembly came to life after the mass mobilizations of the Aganaktismenoi and it gradually took the form of a structure that is now known as the "Aqueduct, New Ionia workers' club" («Υδραγωγείο»: Εργατική Λέσχη Νεάς Ιωνίας in Greek). It is a structure based on solidarity and cooperation, under the aegis of municipality of New Ionia workers' club. This cooperative solidarity structure is fighting for equal opportunities and respectable living standards for all non-privileged citizens of the area. From the beginning it operated on a voluntary basis by local residents, as they also mention in the founding declaration (http://ydragogeio.gr/ποιοί-είμαστε-2/ποιοί-είμαστε/). Amongst other activities it provided (and still provides) free language lessons for migrants and free school tutoring (widely available privately in the Greek educational context) for school children of unemployed or low income working families. Amongst the many volunteers was Dr. Giannis Dalianis, a successful Greek physicist who used to work in the CERN and other international projects. The researcher spent half a day with him in March 2012, going through his routine in the structure. He was teaching physics, mathematics and science to 12-17 year olds but also participating in the overall running of the structure, which was done via a general assembly. He said this voluntary work has been one of the most rewarding things he has done and the first time he felt connected with his borough and its people. He was also participating in organizing music nights as an amateur musician and cultural talks, movie screenings etc. He described how this structure, inspired from the Aganaktismenoi mobilization in which he also participated, was realizing the equal opportunities and direct democracy dream in the local community. Similar local assemblies sprang out in several other neighborhoods of Athens, some famous ones being those of Agia Paraskeyi, Xolargos and Kalithea. The vitality and longevity of the New Ionia local assembly-turn cooperative structure has been noteworthy though, as it is still active in its new form today (2018), when almost all the rest have disappeared. I claim that this is a good example of how the new digital media-led mobilizations' dynamic has the possibility to lead to long term offline politicization, activism and mobilization only when it is combined with traditional organizational

structures of the class struggle, such as the Workers club of New Ionia in this case. It is not random that the most fruitful derivative activist initiative of the Aganaktismenoi mobilization (to the researchers' knowledge) materialized in a neighborhood with a strong working class tradition and community culture, such as New Ionia, one of the few former industrial boroughs of Athens, with a very strong left and communist left representation in the local council level for many decades.

Looking at the broader picture, the aforementioned local Assemblies which devolved from the Aganaktismenoi movement played an important role over the next two years at least, organizing citizens around pressing everyday concerns that had been dramatically enlarged by the economic crisis at the time (2012-2014). The direct democracy and radicalization of the *Aganaktismenoi* was applied in solidarity to the weakest in the neighbourhoods of Athens. It resulted in radical actions like opposing local councils' initiatives, reconnecting the electricity without official authorisation when it came to poor families unable to pay their bills, and even preventing repossession of working class lived-in properties by the banks. Organized Neighbourhood Assemblies became the hearts of the new movements and activism in the following years. However, this is another chapter in the evolution of urban protest mobilisation movements altogether, with strong national characteristics, which lies outside the focus of this research and calls for further investigation in the future.

Aganaktismenoi and the media, traditional and digital

When it comes to the relation of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement to the media, with reference to participant observation notes, things were clear; the traditional media, mainly television cameras, were not at all welcomed by the protestors, especially in the lower square. In fact they were not, openly, present. The large national and international media organizations covering the events at the square used the roofs and the balconies of the nearby buildings to position their cameras and correspondents. On specific days with programmed events by the protesters some cameras would appear in the streets too, at the outskirts of the square. It should

be noted that although this visual media awareness became very prominent very soon, it was much less established during the first week of the mobilizations, especially on the ‘’upper square’’, where many protesters were happy to ‘’perform’’ banging empty cooking ware and shouting slogans, acting out their frustration. At this point a *media event* (Katz, 1980) was largely welcomed by the less politicized masses. It was seen as a way to get publicity for their cause. However, soon enough the established traditional media acted out their role as mechanisms of symbolic manipulation, embedded in the institutions of society and framing the protest via the political and economic elite’s narrative. This was a breaking point for the relations between the movement and the traditional media. I claim that the newly acquired personal experience of direct democracy and the awakening of the “political beast” within law abiding citizens, gave them, as social actors, the capacity to challenge the power of the media as the long arm of embedded interests and turned the protesters’ interest towards newer forms of media able to represent their own interests, if used according to their new established movement values of participation and direct democracy.

The protesters, hence, believed the traditional media to be carriers of the established power relations, representing local elites, so they had no friendly feelings towards them. On the other hand, the TV channels did not exactly embrace the movement either. According to a joint research paper from three different Greek academic institutions on the television coverage of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement under the title “Social Protest through the TV screen: the case of the Greek Indignados” (Veneti, Poulakidakos and Theologou, 2013), the news coverage was;

> Unequally divided by channel and period: Private channels ‘were’ interested far more in the “indignados" (sic). Coverage declining over time, even though the indignados (sic) were protesting almost every day until the end of July” (2013:5).

This is easily explicable as public television (ERT) was at that time supporting the governmental policies imposing the austerity measures the *Aganaktismenoi* were protesting against. The private channels provided some coverage but only as far as it served their interests, claiming plurality and putting pressure on the government in the interest of sectors of the elites, who finance media organizations opposing the party in government, as part of the national

contradictions of capitalism. Said political affiliations are well known and generally not challenged in the Greek public sphere and the relevant debate. But even when the private television channels covered the mobilization, the framing of the movement was reluctant, even phobic and sometimes ironic, trying to understate the social and political dynamics appearing for the first time in decades.

At the actual theatre of events, Syntagma Square, the only propagating media used during the early days of the mobilization were the traditional print leaflets, tricks and printouts, in large numbers. These methods were used by many different groups participating in this heterogeneous movement in order to introduce themselves, laconically stating what they stood for, what brought them to the square and what their proposals for further action were. These "low-tech", print-media initiated a broad dialogue among the protestors, which led to many new groups being formed, merging old ones or just finding like-minded people in the square, who then went on to produce their own electronic media, namely facebook pages or blogs. The process of media production and distribution then came full circle, with new "low-tech" traditional print leaflets being handed out at the "analog" field of protest; they included the digital media addresses of the new groups and were distributed in order to attract more interest to their cause and continue the dialogue online. This observation, from the early days of the mobilization, highlighted the inventive and inter-changeable use of the different media, traditional and digital, in order to gratify the needs of the participants during each phase of the movement's development, which will be discussed in the data synthesis chapter.

This last note brings the discussion to the use of newer digital media, namely the social media, by the movement. As discussed, the relationship of the *Aganaktismenoi* with the internet and social media has been a fundamental one, the mobilization being called online and the people were asked to take to the streets mainly via the social media. However, during the weeks and months of the movement's life this relationship flourished. Digital media platforms and the social media became the tempo/spatial avatars of the movement's physical presence. The official website was used to distribute its ideas, to enhance the discourse and publish its decisions. Equally important, the movement's digital media were used to communicate with the world outside Athens and outside Greece, to keep in touch with the sister-movements and the rest of

the word. The minutes of all the general assemblies were uploaded to the movement's website, in more than one language. In particular, on the fundamental September 3rd regrouping general assembly, there was a decision for an online debate/preparation for the next evenings' general assembly, as discussed above at length.

People were asked to engage in online debate and proposal validation in thematic e-fora, in order to better prepare themselves for an educated vote in the next day's general assembly. The participants seemed to be familiar with such a process and agreed with a large majority. The debate was to take place on the movement's website, www.realdemocracy.gr, taking the relation between the movement and the new digital media to another level: a new era for massive protest movements, where the discussion is transferred from the restricted physical ground level to the accommodating cyber level and then back to the physical ground not as alternative spaces of dialogue, but on the contrary, one perceived as a natural continuation of the other. The revolutionary element in this process does not come from the ideological side of the movement but rather from the organizational side of it: it is using new media technologies to tackle the problems of organizing large numbers of people, in time and space, which have led movements, and governing in general, away from direct democracy and towards democracy via representation in the past. In this way, a new proposal was made by the actual practices the Aganaktismenoi movement employed: to use the best capacities of both the analog and the digital world in accordance with a protest movement's values, aims and objectives, avoiding romanticized technological optimism as well as ideological rigidity leading to technological ostracism.

On a tactical level, new media, mainly social media on mobile devices, have been used to outsmart the police and for reasons of self-protection. In his description of Occupy Wall Street (a sister movement in the USA) Castells (2012) writes;

> In most instances of threatened police action against occupations, Twitter networks alerted thousands, and their instant mobilization in solidarity played a role in protecting the occupiers. Using Twitter from their cell phones, the protesters were able to constantly

distribute information, photos, videos and comments to build a real-time network of communication overlaid on the occupied space" (2012:172).

This incident happened in 2012 in the United States were by that time Twitter was broadly used. In the case of the Greek *Aganaktismenoi*, in Athens 2011, the large volume of social media communication happened via Facebook. Twitter was not so popular at that time in Greece. As Theocharis et al. (2015) observed twitter was far less important for mobilization purposes to the Aganaktismenoi than to the Spanish Indignados or the Occupy movement in the US (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2017). In addition, Treré et al., found that "twitter was used less in 2011 than in 2008 [previous significant protest mobilizations' wave in Athens], as several interviews found that Greek twitter had been taken over by trolls" (2017:415). However, the researcher observed a significant number of Tweets on one occasion, during the massive, one-million people strong, mobilization of the 15^{thh} of June 2011, the day of the Parliament kettling and the violent police intervention.

However, this rise of digital media did not last for more than a couple of months. By November 2011 the movement was physically dissolved off the streets and the electronic dialogue on its official webpage was in decline. After a few more weeks the web page was mostly operating as an archive of the written work produced and a documentation of the actions and the processes. The action, even on the digital media level, was ''decentralized'' and one could observe a devolution of powers and decision-making processes to a neighborhood level, as previously discussed. New smaller groups of former participants of the movement used their experience and newly acquired digital media know-how to create local assemblies with their own media footprints in order to tackle issues in a targeted, activist way. These groups seemed to maintain their connection via the official website of the *Aganaktismenoi*, www.realdemocracy.gr. However, the server for that website was hosted in the Polytechnic University of Athens, enjoying the asylum protection that Greek Law had secured for University facilities. Given how a state University encapsulates power relations and how the digital media carry the potential of threatening that, it came as no surprise that a couple of years later the University authorities shut down the server and managed to make almost every trail disappear from the web. This way, the last online media presence of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement has faded, leaving only the

participants of this massive protest mobilization movement to prove its legacy: A legacy that consists of direct, participatory democracy in a mediatized environment and has had an actual effect on the digital media in the public sphere, changing the political efficacy and behavior of large parts of the population.

4. Empirical quantitative data: e-survey – a qualitative presentation.

This chapter offers a qualitative presentation of quantitative empirical data collected via an e-survey, which was conducted several months after the participant observation took place. The e-survey targeted veteran participants of the movement via social media (namely facebook) and sought clarifications and detailed information about questions and deductions which followed the participant observation data gathering. Through this process the researcher asked for the individual perceptions of the movement's participants in order to look into participation, political efficacy, alterations to the actual voting behavior and the movement's relationship to the traditional and newer, digital media. Thus, the e-survey data is used to complement the subjectivity of the participant observation notes and to enhance understandings and conclusions stemming from the observation. This way it helps to pursue a more general sociological analysis of the digital media's effect upon mobilization movements.

E-Survey - a qualitative presentation

The e-survey was conducted as explained in the methodology chapter. It looked into the different ways people became involved with the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*, both with regards to first approach mobilization and further actions taken as parts of the movement's development. The aim behind this combination of methods was to match the participant observation's findings with data that verify or deny them, coming as direct answers from the participants to specific questions of the researcher. This way the subjectivity of the participant observation is complemented by the objectivity of the e-survey, allowing for further analysis (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The questionnaire of the e-survey consists of three distinct sections. In the first section the questions concern the participation in the movement and explore how it took place and the role

of the media, older and newer. In this first section the researcher also asked the participants about their recent voting behavior and participation in the general elections, before and after the *Aganaktismenoi* movement appeared and seized existing. The questions here target possible direct or other effects to their actual political behavior, stemming from their participation in such a digital media-mobilized movement. The questions asked investigate the aforementioned potential effects in both the broader view of politics and more specifically in the actual form of voting behavior. In the second section of the questionnaire participants were asked very specific, targeted questions in order to measure the levels of the participants' political efficacy, internal and external (Cambell, Gurin and Miller, 1954, Niemi, Graig and Mattei, 1991, ESS 2008-2012). This allows for deeper understanding of the reasons for mobilization and most importantly for making a novel point on the connection between three factors: a) the participation in the new type of digital media-driven protest movements, b) citizens' levels of political efficacy and c) potential changes in their political views and voting behavior. The third and last section of the questionnaire addressed demographics and educational level.

Participation in the movement and recent voting behavior

What becomes obvious from the first question of the e-survey is that the level of participation in the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi* was staggering; 70% of the people who filled in the questionnaire identify themselves as "participating in some way". When asked to clarify how they participated, 75% answered they participated physically by going to Syntagma Square, while 17% said they participated by monitoring the movement through the media and supporting it in private encounters. Even at this early point of the e-survey the relation between participation in the movement and the media becomes apparent. Moreover, it is identified as a structural one, since these individuals perceive media monitoring and following the movement's media output and then supporting it in their social circles as actual participation in the movement, without physical presence. The questionnaire subsequently explores further the 75% who said they were actually, physically present in the square. Here the results are mixed as there

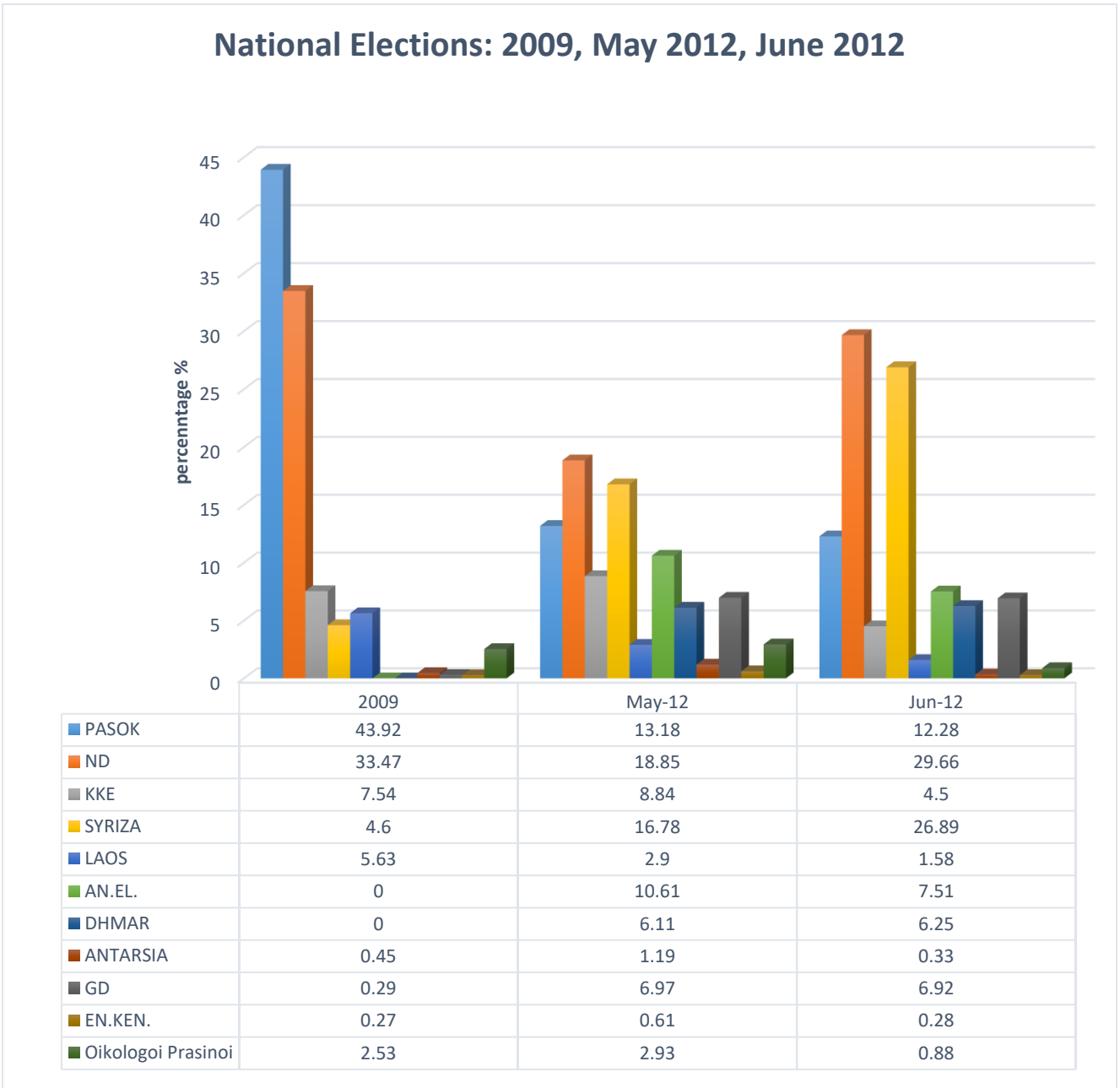
seemed to be a core body of protestors alongside large numbers moving periodically. 15% said they were going every day and 23% said they were going 2-3 times a week. Then a further 15% admitted they were participating once a week and a less engaged 22% claiming they were going to Syntagma Square less than once a week. In the last two groups we can identify the much larger weekend crowds and the enormous masses for a few occasions, reaching even one million people at the peak of the movement. This happened during the days of voting for the acceptance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) laws in the Parliament.

The following questions were asking whether the participants voted in the previous General elections of 2009 and the double elections of May-June 2012, which followed a few months after the dissolution of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. These twin general elections of May-June 2012 produced an unprecedented change in the political map of the country, seeing; the two major political parties (social-democratic PASOK and conservative Nea Dimokratia (ND)) losing more than 50% of their combined electoral strength (77.39% in 2009, dropped to 32.03% in May 2012)[11]; a small Euro-communist split of the communist party usually struggling to make the 3% entry point to the Parliament, called SYRIZA, rocketing to almost 17%[12]; a social democratic fresh split of the previously mentioned SYRIZA party, called DHMAR (Democratic Left), making it to the Parliament with 7%; and a shockingly openly ethnic-socialist, fascist party, called Golden Dawn, exceeding 6% and making it to the Greek Parliament for the first time in Greek history. There was also another unexpected first entry in the political arena, a right wing populist split from the conservative party, called ANEL (Independent Greeks), entering the Parliament with 10%. These elections (May 2012) did not produce a government so one month later (June 2012) there were fresh elections resulting in a further rise for the SYRIZA party from 17% to 27%, the communist party, KKE, dropping from 8.5% to 4.5% while the rest maintained their percentages, with the conservative ND party managing to climb to just shy of 30% and achieving a coalition government, complimented by the Greek electoral law.

[11] Data as presented by the Ministry of internal Affairs in their official webpage: http://www.ypes.gr/el/elections/nationalelections/results/

[12] All the percentages are rounded to the unit.

Table 1. Greek National Elections' results before and after the Aganaktismenoi movement. Includes 2009 elections and the double elections of May-June 2012, only months after the unprecedented mobilizations.

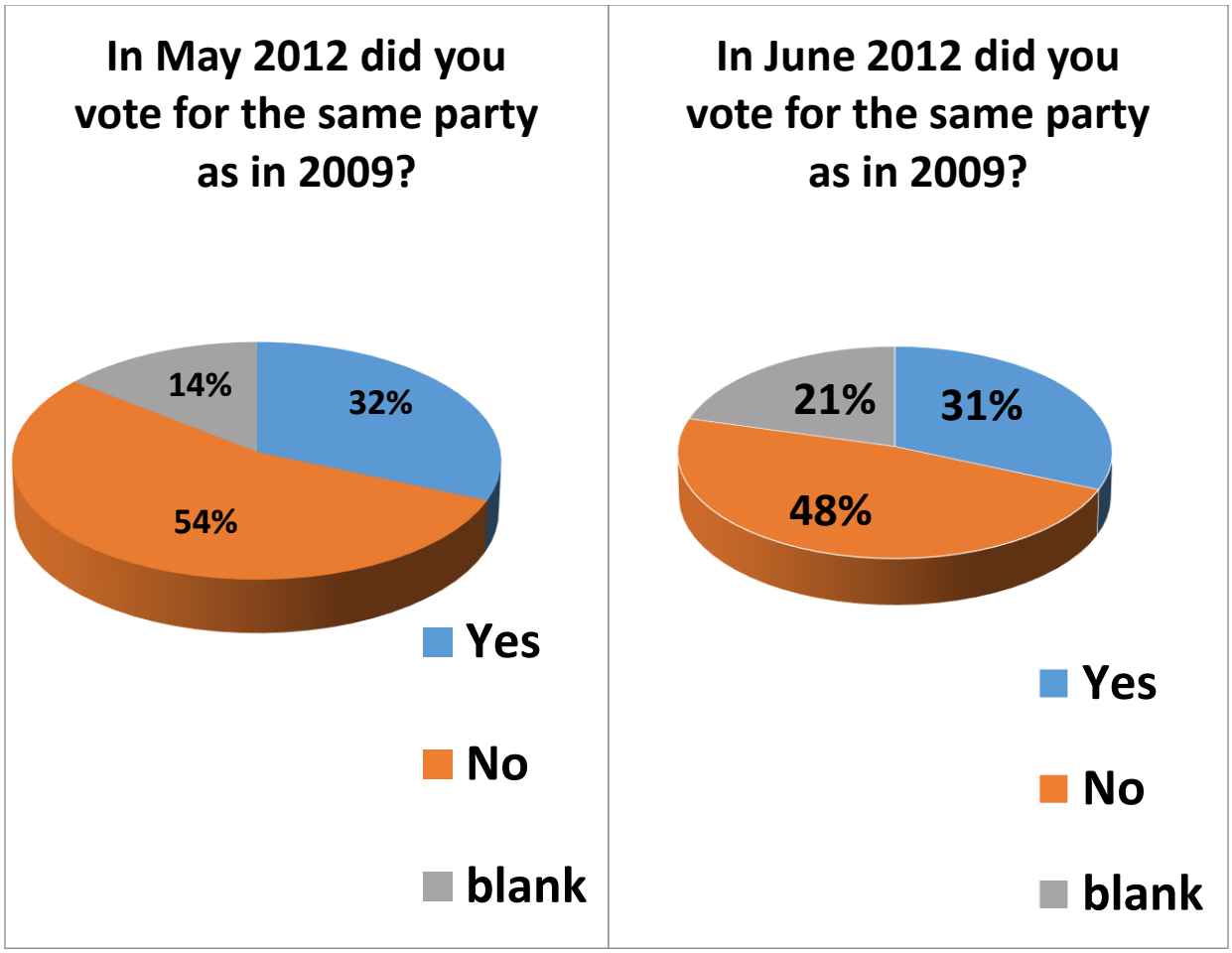


	2009	May-12	Jun-12
PASOK	43.92	13.18	12.28
ND	33.47	18.85	29.66
KKE	7.54	8.84	4.5
SYRIZA	4.6	16.78	26.89
LAOS	5.63	2.9	1.58
AN.EL.	0	10.61	7.51
DHMAR	0	6.11	6.25
ANTARSIA	0.45	1.19	0.33
GD	0.29	6.97	6.92
EN.KEN.	0.27	0.61	0.28
Oikologoi Prasinoi	2.53	2.93	0.88

But was there any indication that this radical disturbance of the political map of the country was at all relevant to the massive movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*, bringing hundreds of thousands of people to the streets? The e-survey wanted to investigate any potential links between the fluctuations in the 2012 national elections and this massive protest mobilization

called by the social media without any political guidance, which proceeded to occupying the central square of Athens for months and dissolved into smaller neighborhood groups just six months before the election. Although no direct causal link can be underlined, one can nonetheless see some very interesting numbers appearing in the results of our e-survey. The researcher found that although the participants were self-positioned more to the left compared to the previous national elections results average, there was, however, a massive shift in the way they voted a few months later, in favor of the then small party called SYRIZA. 27% of them said they had voted for SYRIZA in 2009, whereas an impressive 46% admitted they voted for SYRIZA in May 2012, and a massive 58% in June 2012! Pretty much in line with the national elections results, 8% of the participants said they voted for the communist party KKE, in 2009, which dropped to 4% in May and 2% in June 2012. Although a minority of the movement, the right wing voters seemed to follow the pattern of the national elections too, with people who said they voted for ND in 2009 at 9%, dropping to a 3% in May 2012 and rising to 6% in June 2012. PASOK voters amongst the participants were 15% in the 2009 elections, dropping to a sad 2% and 3% in May and June 2012 respectively. As for the new entries of the 2012 Parliament: DHMAR got 8% of the *Aganaktismenoi* vote in May and 11% in the June elections according to the participants in the e-survey respectively, not far from the party's official result. ANEL, the right wing split got 4% and 2% in our sample for the May and June elections respectively, the only later elected party that was significantly underrepresented in our e-survey.

Table 2. Participation in the movement and general vote mobility.

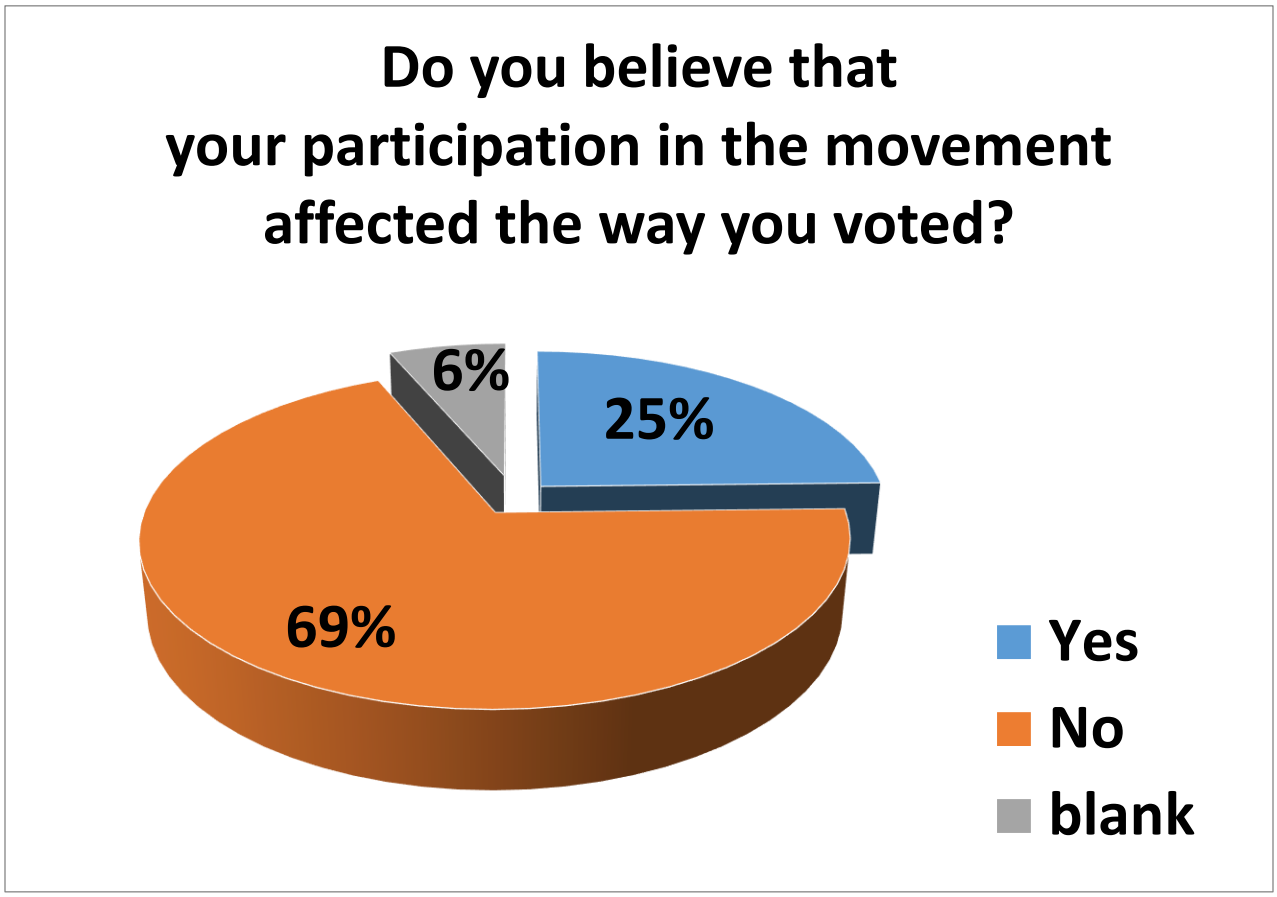


What is most interesting, is that the e-survey received no direct answer stating people voted for the fascist Golden Dawn party, which appeared for the first time in Greek political history in the Parliament with almost 7%. However, there was a suspicious 6% and 4%, for May and June elections respectively, claiming they voted ''other'' and not specifying what (as opposed to all the rest of the subjects who answered they voted "other'' and named the small party they voted for). Combining this result with the participant observation findings, one comes to the conclusion that it was extreme right wing groups and people scattered at the upper square who were not willing to reveal their voting position. They were propagating nationalism but not identifying with any known party. If this was actually the case, this research could claim that there was a silent percentage of people who participated in the movement without openly claiming a

national-socialist identity but were working towards recruiting people to their cause. This could explain to some extent where the fresh pool of voters for Golden Dawn came from, considering that the party of Golden Dawn has been around since the '80s as a fringe fascist sect, with a consistent electoral base of about 0.1% of the population in the previous decades. It has always been a marginalized neo-nazi group with armed thugs terrorizing left activists and migrants, unknown to the majority of the population, and literally non-existent outside the center of Athens and couple of other urban centers. Of course, participation in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement in this case can only be related to the level of exposure of politically unsophisticated, indignant and scared masses to a forum where national-socialistic ideas have been propagated. Any direct relation with the electoral result cannot be established. Moreover, this unprecedented reality of a fascist party achieving almost 7% in a national level cannot be explained mono-dimensionally. What we can observe from the results of the e-survey, though, is an impressive resemblance of the results to the actual changes in voting behavior as measured by the electoral numeric results, between the two consecutive general election battles: before and just after a massive civic mobilization of a new type, which was led, organized and propagated largely via digital media; A phenomenon unparalleled in the past, followed by the complete crash of the national political party map in the following general elections, another unparalleled phenomenon in the country's modern history.

Further on, to add validity to the author's interpretation, participants were asked to answer directly if they believe their participation in the *Aganakstismenoi* movement affected the way they voted in the following elections. The question also addressed those who did not participate, asking them directly if their knowledge of the events taking place in Syntagma Square around the *Aganaktismenoi* movement affected the way they voted during the elections of May/June 2012. The options were "yes/no" or "don't want to answer". Here a 25% of the participants admitted directly that their participation in the protest movement has indeed affected the way they voted. I claim that this is a very important finding, worthy of further investigation in the future.

Table 3. Participation in the movement and changes in voting behaviour. The Greek political scene changes for the first time in decades. Ironically the change was in alignment with the answers of the e-survey. Syriza in fact raised its percentage by almost 25% and Golden Dawn by 6%. It is worth noting that until May 2012 elections GD's voters were completely silent in the Greek public sphere.



The next question provided the participants an opportunity to explain in which ways their voting behavior was affected by their participation in the movement. Interestingly, almost half the answers, 47%, said "they saw a hopeful, collective dynamic for changing the political establishment which did not seem possible before the «square»". This exact wording for one of the multiple-choice questions was chosen because it voiced a dominating feeling and response from the participant observation findings. For this reason it was passed on to the e-survey to be

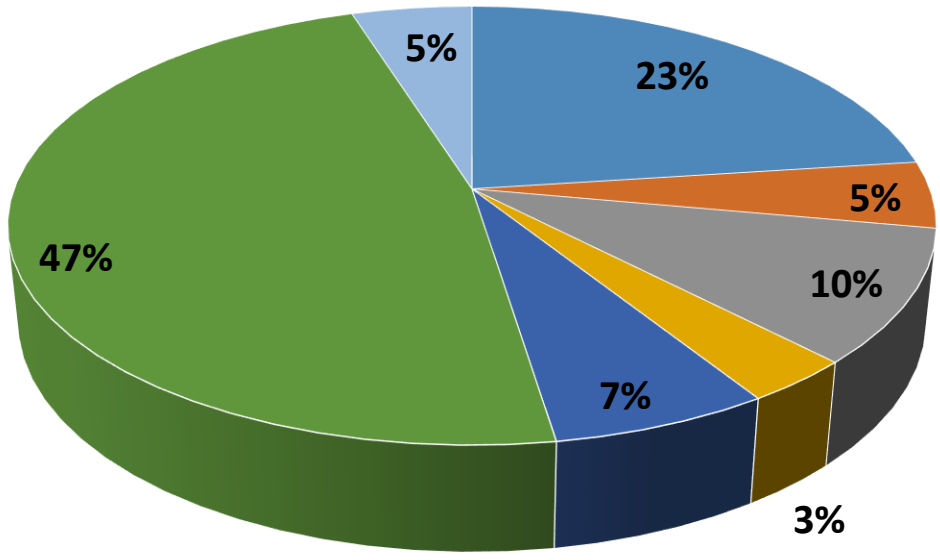
verified or not. Overall, it seems to be verified in a statistically significant way. With regards to how participation in this new-type civic protest movement affected their voting behavior, the second popular response was 23% of the participants answering that they used their vote as another way to express their indignation, the feeling they were demonstrating by taking part to the *Aganaktismenoi* movement (in Greek the Indignants' movement). A further 10% said they got in touch with a new political way of thinking and Ideologies they did not know well before, while 7% of the participants admitted they changed their vote in the elections following their participation in the movement for both the first and the third reason mentioned above, namely seeing a new hopeful collective dynamic that did not seem possible before the "square", in combination with being exposed to new political ways of thinking and Ideologies. On the same note, a further 3% justified their vote changing because of a combination of reasons one and two, namely the new hopeful collective dynamic realized at the square and their frustration with the situation at the time. Finally there were 5% who said they were influenced by people they met and this led to changing their voting behavior and another 5% who admitted that their decision on whom to vote for was affected by the movement in the opposite way; they voted for the same party as they had previously done, but only for fear of the collective dynamic they witnessed, which seemed to them so powerful that "it could bring chaos".

This last response is indicative of the effect the movement had on Greek society and its political landscape, especially taking into consideration that the response comes from those who actually participated. The vast influence in the public sphere can also be established by the national and international media interest at the time, as well as by the political parties' strategies of embracing the movement off the record (SYRIZA, ANEL and smaller radical left parties) or denouncing it (KKE). Moreover, the *Aganaktismenoi* influence in the public sphere and debate can also be witnessed by several cultural by-products in the center of Athens, namely graffiti, comics, music and theatre shows as well as several book publications and academic papers about the specific movement. However, examining these cultural by-products of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement lies outside the limits of the current thesis and is another parameter that calls for further research.

Table 4. Participation's effects

How did participation in the movement affect you?

- Followed and voted differently to express my Indignation.
- I met people who convinced me of another political way.
- I got in touch with a new political way of thinking and Ideologies I didn't know well.
- Both new political way of thinking and Ideologies And Indignance
- New political thinking/Ideologies AND a hopefull dynamic for changing the political establishment which didn't seem possible before the ''Square''.
- Saw a hopefull collective dynamic for changing the political establishment which didn't seem possible before the ''Square''.
- Voted the same as before for fear of the new dynamic which could bring Chaos



The Movement and the media, old and new

The relationship between the people participating in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement and the media has been discussed in the presentation of the participant observation findings. There the researcher established that no traditional media crews were visible in the square, covering the event as one might expect in our deeply mediatized environment (Couldry and Hepp, 2017). The reactions of the crowds to the television cameras have been described as hostile and they denounced the traditional news media, namely television and radio, as propaganda mechanisms of the culturally hegemonic elites, in an ordered service aiming at making a useful spectacle out of the movement (Fuchs, 2012, Gramsci, 1971, Debord, 1967), pointing out any tension with the police or anything else that could undermine the movement's radical effect.

In order to clarify the aforementioned relations via the e-survey, participants were asked to answer three questions, concerning how they found out about the call of the *Aganaktismenoi* to a protest at Syntagma Square, and their personal opinion about the relationship between the movement and a) the new/digital social media and b) the traditional media, hence television, radio and newspapers.

Answering the first question, namely how they found out about the existence of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement and how they first made a contact, 48% of the participants said that they found out via the internet and the social media. This proves what the protestors themselves were supporting in the field; that this was a new type of grass-roots movement of civic protest, organized and promoted by web-based media. Interestingly, the next answer saw the same percentage of e-survey participants, 23%, answering they found out via word of mouth and friends or, on the other hand, via the traditional media. What is noteworthy is that only 5% of the people who filled out the questionnaires said that they learnt about such a big and dynamic protest mobilization by their colleagues or their professional union. This shows how detached this movement was from the workplaces, traditional arenas of organizing protest movements, industrial actions and political mobilizations. Only 1% of the participants answered that they found out in another way, which could ultimately include anything from accidentally passing by Syntagma Square to being informed by a political party or affiliation, again showing how detached the movement was from the central political scene.

The preferential relationship of the movement with the internet and social media and the problematic relationship with the traditional media becomes apparent and indubitable by the e-survey answers. 47% of the participants characterize the relation between the *Aganaktismenoi* and the new and social media as fundamental. A further 33% sees it as friendly. 14% says it was a relationship of mutual interest and only 5% finds it hostile. A very faint 1% thinks there was no relationship at all between the two. On a complete contrast, 42% of the people asked answered that the relationship between the movement and the traditional media was hostile, while a further 31% saw it as a relationship based on mutual interest. Only 11% characterized it as friendly, while 8% found it fundamental and another 8% found there was no relationship at all. The complete contrast of opinion and the numbers leave no room for doubting the findings of the participant observation period. The *Aganaktismenoi* movement was definitely a new-type, grass-root, web media-born and propagated movement of civic protest, which did not see traditional media as friendly to its causes. Moreover, it was hostile towards the vested interests within the traditional media organizations and, in the best instance, used them for publicity on a mutual interest base with no trust involved.

Table 5. Aganaktismenoi and new digital Media.

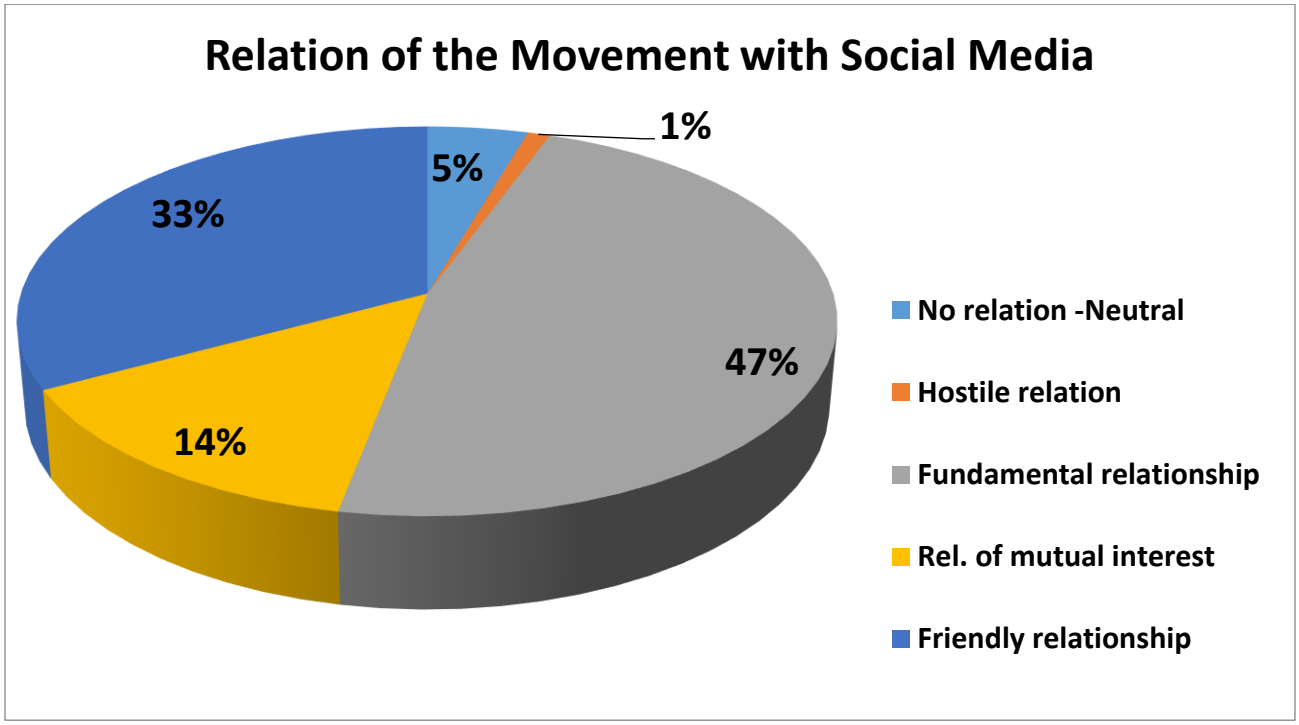
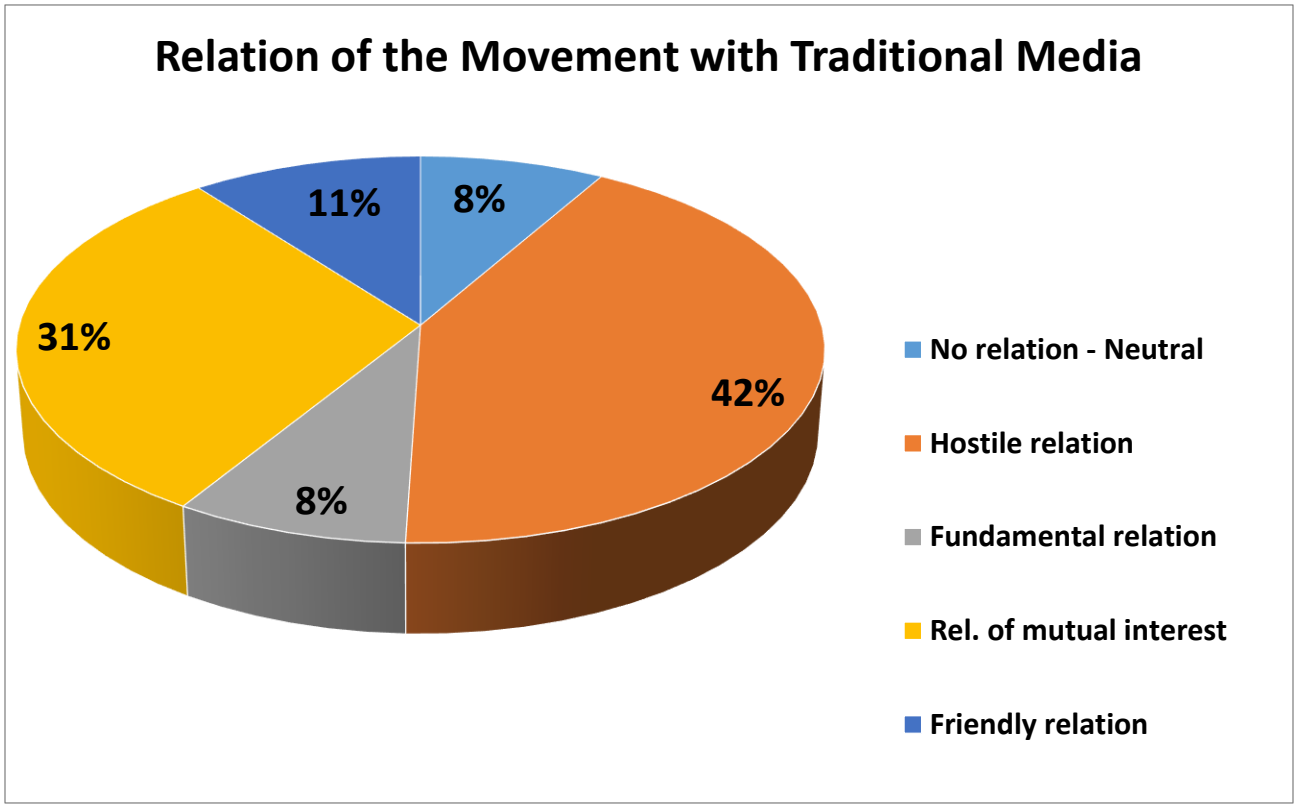


Table 6. Aganaktismenoi and traditional Media



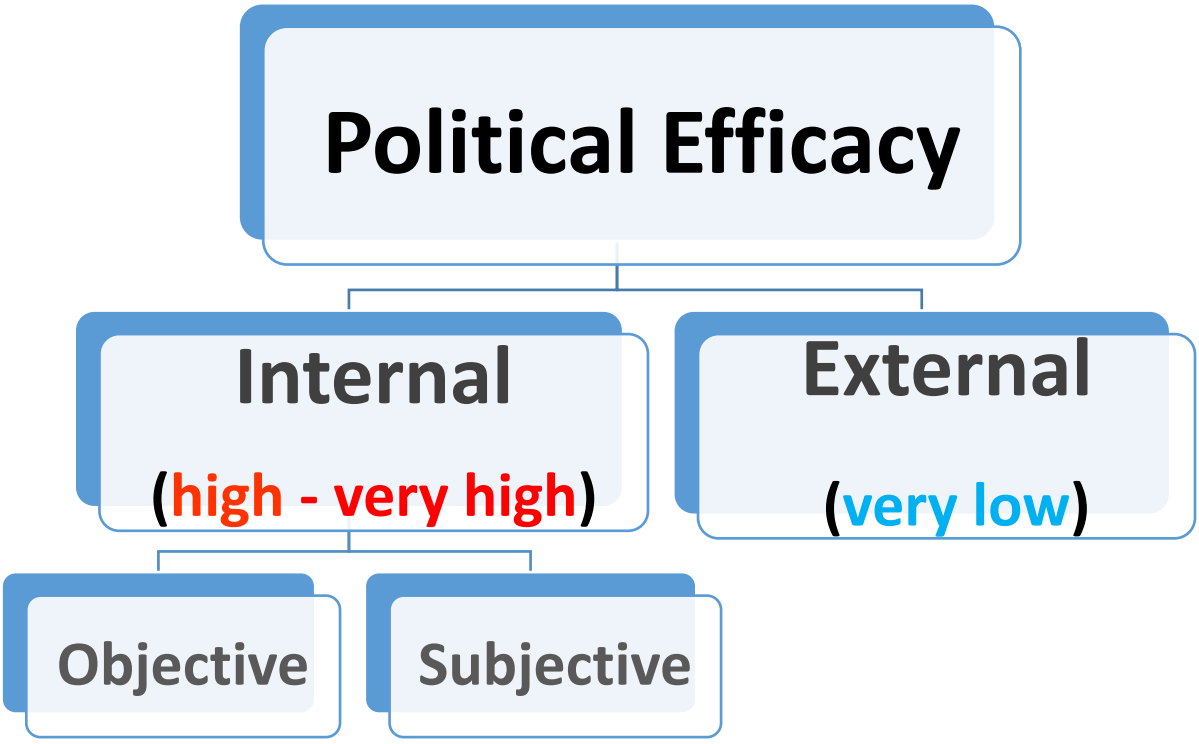
Political efficacy amongst the *Aganaktismenoi* lines

On the issue of political efficacy the results of the e-survey are also very telling, giving solid evidence of a unique relation between internal and external political efficacy of the participants and their participation in this new type of grass-root, new media-led movement. This unique relation seems to be a combination of High-Very High Internal Political Efficacy and Very Low external political efficacy.

Looking at the relevant data one sees that 82% of the participants state that they felt they had an interest in and very good understanding of politics and the important political issues facing their country. On top of that 68% said they think that they are better informed about politics and government than most people. Only 22% find politics too complicated for them to

understand. To complement the above, 72% find it easy and very easy to form an opinion about political issues and 64% think their own actions can affect the political system they live in. All the percentages for the internal political efficacy rates score high and very high. Since all the subjects participated in one way or more in the movement under question, we are allowed to take for granted a positive answer to the classic internal objective and subjective political efficacy questions, namely whether they have or would participate in a protest, rally, movement etc. On the opposite side, the scores for the external political efficacy are very low, given that 86% of the participants answered that they believe that the political system does not respond to people's expectations and actions.

Table 7. Political efficacy in the movements' participants



On a first reading, this combination of high subjective levels of political knowledge and objective actions in combination with a very negative belief in the current political systems responsiveness to people's actions seems quite strange. One would wonder why then a person

who does understand how the system works and is not bewildered by politics decides to take part in a protest movement while holding the belief that the political system does not respond to people's expectations and actions. In this very delicate balance the notion of political efficacy explains this new type of mass mobilization via the internet and social media. The answer is that the people who participate in this new colorful, grass-roots movement are characterized by a specific combination of subjective political knowledge and sophistication mixed with disappointment in the hierarchical and bureaucratic political structures of the parties, unions, parliamentarian system etc. This combination led many of them to abstain from action in the past, in other words to apathy or political cynicism. The catalyst that changed their behavior seems to have been the new media technologies. The belief, or illusion, that the internet and social media allow each person to influence organized political and media structures and gives them the ability to call for spontaneous dialogue, mobilization and protest, seems to be luring a large number of these people back to the streets. Because, after all, participants do believe that their actions can change the system as they have stated in large numbers in this e-survey, namely by 64%.

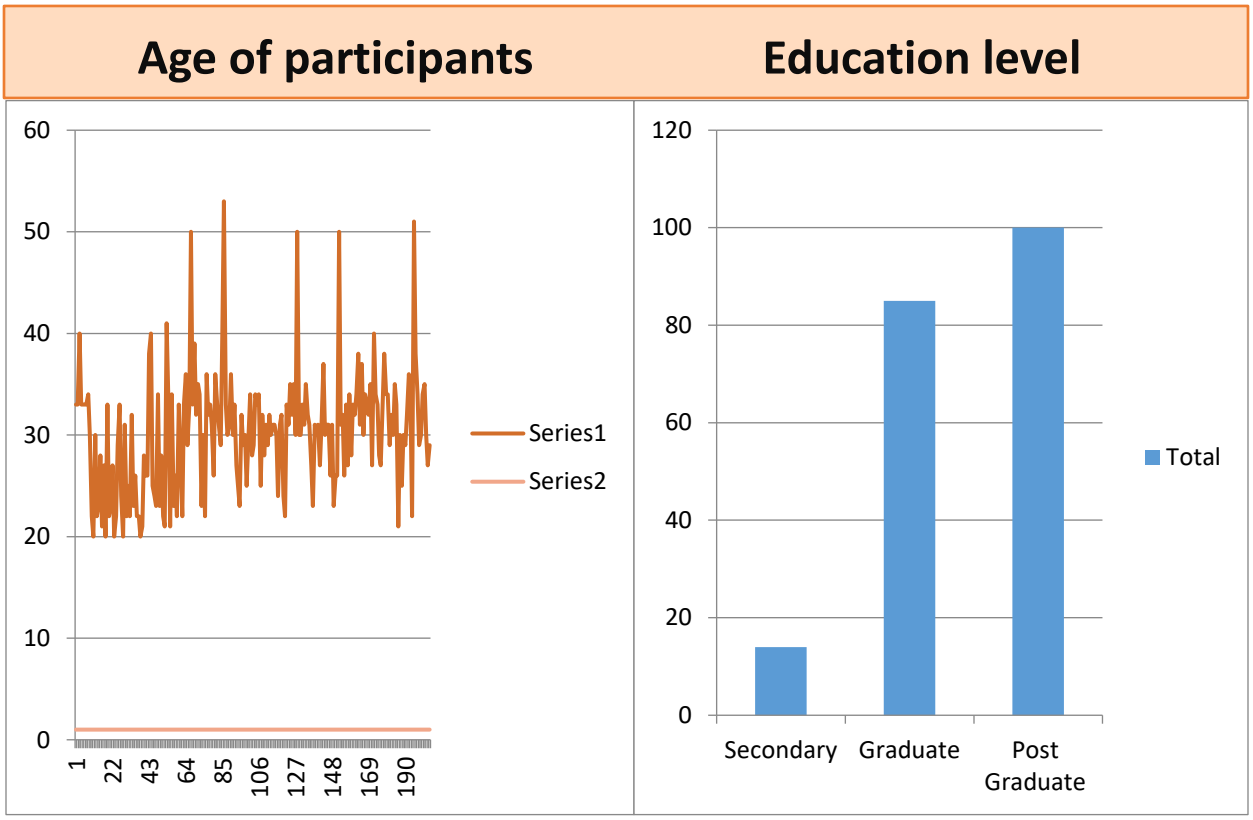
Taking the above into consideration, one could argue that today's globalized, technologically interconnected environment provides the objective conditions for people to feel they understand the political system and have a say in it. This happens as a resultant of several coexisting parameters, but mainly: a) the information abundance and free circulation via largely accessible digital channels (at least in western-type democracies), b) the mediatized environment which has colonized every aspect of our everyday lives allowing for subjective beliefs or illusions of freedom and empowerment. At the same time, this mediatized environment acts as the catalyst for people to reclaim the digital public spheres and the analog public space, demanding their share in the decision making process, outside the traditional political structures. It is fair to say that the notion of political efficacy helps clarify this relationship and for the first time gives us a tool to understand why this new type of movement appeared in the past five years, after the new digital media technological boom. I argue that looking more thoroughly into the figures and behavior of the political efficacy parameter could prove a valuable tool for the sociology of

media and mobilization studies, which could even possibly predict similar large-scale protest movements in the future.

Demographic profile

From the e-survey the researcher gathers that sex representation in the movement is almost equal, slightly in favor of women, with 55% women and 45% men participating. She also finds that 86% of the participants in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement live in Athens or Thessaloniki or a capital city abroad. This is primarily an urban movement with another 7% living in other urban areas of 50.000 people or more. Only 4% of the participants said they live in rural or semi-rural locations. The ages of the *Aganaktismenoi* varied between roughly 20 and 50 years old with the vast concentration around 30 years of age.

Table 8. Age and education levels of e-survey participants.



However, there is one demographic element that raises questions about the even distribution of the use of internet in Greece, and this is the educational level of the participants in the e-survey. It appears that 43% of them are university graduates and another 49% postgraduates with only 8% graduating no further than high-school. Of course this should be seen within the Greek social context, where secondary education is mandatory until 15 years of age and the vast majority in the urban areas finishes high-school. Also the percentage of high-school graduates who attend university in Greece is extremely high compared with the EU average. However, according to data released by the European Commission for education, 30,9% of Greek men and 34,2% of Greek women between 30-35 have a university degree (Kathimerini, 12/4/2013)[13]. This distortion in the percentages of the graduates in a national level and the graduates taking part in the e-survey could be justified by two different parameters, or a combination of both. Firstly by the fact that although the e-survey used the "snowball" method of distribution, as explained in the methodology chapter, and it commenced amongst random people who were interviewed during the phase of participant observation, it also included several of the researcher's contacts within the movement, who hold a graduate/postgraduate degree. Secondly, it could be a hint that participants with higher education levels tend to use the internet more and to be more familiar and willing to participate in e-surveys. All of the above open new lines of investigation for future research.

[13] http://www.kathimerini.gr/485580/article/epikairothta/ellada/molis-309-twn-newn-exoyn-ptyxio-aei

5. Data Analysis, Synthesis and Discussion

The data analysis and synthesis and discussion chapter aims at synthesizing all the information and knowledge extracted from the empirical data, presented in the two previous chapters, into a coherent intellectual proposal. Analysing and discussing the trends observed and the main themes that surface, this chapter examines how the co-relation between the technologically led changes in the media environment is potentially affecting the traditional forms of citizen mobilization, namely political protest mobilization. Subsequently, I investigate the effect this new form of mass mobilization has on participants' political sophistication with an emphasis on the measurable indication or political efficacy, a recognized political communication tool. This approach opens new possibilities for a multi-paradigm, more advanced research on media sociology and political communication, from a critical intellectual perspective.

Data Analysis, Synthesis and Discussion

While discussing digital media and social movements in the digital age, one cannot avoid looking at the factor of political agency and collective action. However, it can be argued that collective action itself has been challenged by the very nature of digital media which nurtures individualism, decentralization, temporality and fragmentation – of information, communication channels, actors, users etc. In the vivid relevant academic debate the digital age also emerges to challenge conventional understandings of political agency. Within social movement research, as Anastasia Kavada puts it, the challenge is two-fold;

> First, digital media destabilize long-held assumptions about the nature of collective action, about social movements and their capacity to effect change. Second, digital media highlight the need to take communication seriously in how we conceptualize both collective action and political agency (Kavada, 2016, p. 8).

In the following paragraphs I am using the empirical data from my participant observation to expand both sides, analyze the revealed aspects and work towards an intellectual framework to synthesize them. The main points to be raised are three. Firstly, the controversy between ideology and the nature of digital media and the dangers of mobilizing large crowds within an ideological void. Is the initial ideological void which characterized the protest movement under research a result of the new digital media playing a key role in its creation? Or is it the other way around; that the digital social media are created and circulated within an ideological void in the community? Secondly, observation data point towards a transnational potential for the new kind of media-led mobilized movements, evident in the verbal but also non-verbal communication symbols used. I will claim that a new international movement "language" has been created over the months prior and after my fieldwork, and this language has been organically used by the movement I investigated. These first two points are points of data analysis and discussion. Thirdly, I am going to synthesize all the above and suggest what I call "*new digital social Media's Heritage* to mediated mobilization". In that I will discuss how digital media has influenced the mobilization process in a way that has affected participants' notion of political efficacy and the political system's responsiveness. This last point will resume as a synthesis of all the above and will be this thesis' original addition to the relevant academic dialogue and literature.

Digital social media-led protest movements: the dangers of mobilizing large crowds within an ideological void.

Lately the field of digital media and collective action has provided fertile ground for many scholars to problematize on. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) discuss the digital media and the personalization of collective action. They interpret digital media platforms as coordinating mechanisms and as spaces where disparate individuals are brought together. Thus, formal organization mechanisms, such as political parties, unions or other platforms, are bypassed in the coordination of the protest mobilizations, together with the need for a coherent collective identity amongst the participants. According to Bennett and Segerberg such action is considered to be "connective" rather than collective. As Kavada (2016) insightfully points out, their

intellectual framework is positioned against earlier models that "insisted on stable identities, ideologies and organizations as a prerequisite for civil society mobilization and action" (Bakardjieva, 2015: 986). I argue, based on my participant observation findings, that this new reality is not only academically interesting but also socially alarming, as it nourishes many understated potential dangers for a democratic and tolerant civil society.

One of the most controversial and alarming findings of my participant observation was the traces of nationalistic groups with a crypto-fascist agenda, lurking in the anonymity of the non-partisan crowd, silently promoting their reactionary discourse. This finding is largely based on non-verbal information gathered from the observation, such as excessive use of nationalistic symbols or practices, and general conversational narratives combined with hints and contradictions within the verbal information received from these groups. These groups were situated on the upper square, where the less politicized crowds were accustomed to circulate. Their tactics were simple and effective. They were holding Greek flags and they were playing the nationalistic card. They were talking about national pride and ancient Greek history and they were trying to discuss with those of the people who were desperate and frustrated, without strong ideological backgrounds, mainly young or old, without apparent affiliations with some group. They used to wear ancient Greek symbols and to sing the national anthem very often.

With regards to the lack of collective identity, reflected by the geographical positioning of the different groups, it was noted that these people were standing on a specific corner, next to the permanently positioned police forces but were not, however, presented as a group. However, after talking to them during the initial phase of the mobilization one could observe established relations and even a loose hierarchy among them, which led to the conclusion that they were familiar with each other before the mobilization at Syntagma Square. They seemed to be at ease next to the police forces and the atmosphere between them seemed mutually relaxed. On the contrary, the rest of the protesters and especially those in the lower square were not on good terms with the police, nor with these groups of people. At the regrouping general assembly of the 3rd of September 2011 that specific group appeared wearing T-shirts with the logo "300" on them, obviously referring to the battle of Thermopylae and Leonidas' 300 Spartan warriors

(Herodotus). During an “ad hoc’’ interview one of the group, who claimed he was participating in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement from the beginning, constantly contradicted himself trying to convince the researcher to stay with “them” and not proceed to the lower square. He was claiming he had been a missionary soldier in the Middle East in the past but now he was an anarchist, however he was with this group of nationalists wearing a T-Shirt referring to a battle in ancient Greece. The long hair and the pretentious style were not at all convincing. His very limited and disturbed knowledge of history, politics and the specific movement were obvious to an educated interviewer but maybe not so obvious to a frustrated, non-sophisticated member of the public, affected by a perceived solidarity within the aforementioned “connective’’ action frame. He was clearly propagating nationalistic ideals and recruiting future followers without disclosing his ideology or real identity for that matter. This group was definitely promoting a phobic, xenophobic and nationalistic agenda, trying to disguise their perspective as anti-establishment, non-partisan.

In comparison with the idea of connective action there has been a lengthy debate on collective identity and its constructive role in social movements. Melucci (1996:70) views collective identity as

> an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place.

The Greek “Indignants” never developed an ideological collective identity. Participants admitted that some very loose form of collective identity was formed on the online space of the movement, where the General Assemblies’ minutes were uploaded and discussed. Here, the offline, “field” agenda of the occupied squares was presented to the social media users. However, in the offline reality of the movement several collective identities were realized, but not one coherent collective identity of the ‘’Greek Indignants’’, at least in the classic sense of the static, structuralist models of collective action and identity. Here, the communication-centric theoretical framework of Kavada (2015, 2016) proves to be very helpful in making sense of this puzzle. She argues (Kavada, 2015) that scholars like Melucci consider collective identity as a

dynamic and open-ended process, in contrast to approaches that treat it as a product. She goes on to point out that Melucci urges scholars to use the term 'identization' rather than 'identity' (Melucci, 1996:77). Kavada (2016) invites us to see the collective in looser terms as a process, thus putting communication in the centre and studying the interactive process through which a random crowd of actors becomes a collective with its own distinct identity. She argues that the emergence of digital media has led to a change in perception so vital that it amounts to a paradigm shift, in the sense that we have fundamentally changed,

> how we view the role of communication in collective action: from focusing on how already existing collectives communicate with other actors to also considering how communication is involved in the construction itself of the collective (Kavada, 2016:9).

Viewed through Kavada's analysis, the field of organizational communication is characterized by conceptual creativity, marked by the,

> Increasing cross-fertilization between social movement theory and media studies, with concepts such as Mediatization [Mattoni & Trerè, 2014] and media ecologies [Trerè & Mattoni, 2015] crossing into social movement theory (Kavada, 2016:9).

In this analysis the codified texts related to digital media play a vital role. Addressing texts in the general sense – as all the evidence of conversation, hence communication, taking place within the digital media associated with the social movements – media are then more than tools for communication, they become spaces of conversation. Moreover, taking into account the basic observations of McLuhan's idea of the medium being the message and how media extend human abilities, we can see how the new digital social media extended the social movements' abilities for communication and organization through space and time and the synchronicity of the two. However, the author has here previously contested McLuhan's proposition that in the case of the Aganaktismenoi the medium, i.e digital social media, has been the message. On the contrary, the author has observed how a systemically incorporated medium (facebook) communicated a message to large crowds and managed to mobilize them with its unique tempo/spatial capacity, but the actual political fermentation in the field conveyed this message as something largely anti-systemic, however attractive to smaller audiences. Combining the two

propositions one arrives in an intriguing synthesis about the possibility of a partial influence effect stemming from the nature of the medium to the actual message conveyed. This thesis concludes that the digital social media have been part of the message of the new type of media-led social movements like the Greek *Aganaktismenoi*, at least up to the point of the digital media's own physicality and logic inevitably affecting the form and the norms of the collective which was created largely through them. But from that point on, the situation in the field has its own dynamics which can influence the character of the message thereafter.

A second point with regards to discussing communication at this point, is that it also affects how most people currently understand political agency. Kavada argues that "embracing a processual view of the collective and of society in general provides a more multiplex and variegated view of political agency" (2016:10). She goes on to point out that "the constitution of the movement as a political actor can, in itself, be a political outcome" (2016:11). Trying to apply this theoretical framework to the experience of the Greek *Aganaktismenoi* movement, one can see how the notion of direct democracy was propagated by the social media in order to bring people to the streets. It was used both as a lure and as an aim to mobilize people, building on their frustration with the actual political representation in Greece's parliamentary democracy and their worsening living standards. Consequently, direct democracy was applied at the general assemblies of the movement. Decision making and participation were inter-related and the resulting texts, written, digital or analogue, were circulated and debated online and offline. A dynamic process of communication was indeed at the centre of the movement in that sense. I argue that although this approach, based on organizational communication, helps us shed light on the multifaceted character of the relation between digital social media and social movements, it nonetheless fails to answer the question of power vested in the very organizational and institutional character of the digital media themselves. Kavada's approach does not take into consideration the political economy of social media and their nature as sites promoting individuality and fragmented analysis. Also, it ignores the differences in social and educational capital between members of the social movement, political collectives who participate in the movement and general power imbalances that affect the communicational process towards the

construction of a collective identity and political agency which incorporate certain elements of the elites' interests.

Frank Webster makes a necessary addition to this debate by discussing the shortcomings of existing western-type democracies. He argues that "there is a widespread concern about a 'democratic deficit' in the mature democracies" (2011:21) In his analysis he points out high levels of ignorance amongst the public, which leads to low interest and participation in politics, as well as "a commercial media system dedicated to profit maximization'' which produces "content that is escapist, shallow and hucksterist because the media producers must achieve highest possible audience figures while creating least possible controversy". So the high levels of public ignorance are exacerbated by an inadequate media system and "neither the market system nor the politicians can be trusted to supply the information required of democracy" (2011:22). The aforementioned democratic deficit, which results in a uniformed electorate, raises questions over the existence of a meaningful democracy. If democracy is weak, then doubts plague the meaningfulness of civic protest mobilizations, social movements and their potential to make a difference to the policies they oppose. In the case of the new type of digital media-led movement under question, the lack of a collective ideology and clear purpose makes this argument even more prominent.

It is at this point that the absence of the Greek Communist party from the largest mobilization in contemporary Greek history becomes significant, both for the movement's identity and for its influence upon the established Greek political system. As mentioned in the qualitative data presentation chapter, the non-partisan character of the digital media-led mobilization was an insurmountable obstacle for the largest organized political institution of the Greek Left. Their initial official argument was that this kind of mobilization was uncontrollable and potentially dangerous and misleading for the working classes. This initial argument was elaborated upon and further discussed two years later by the general secretary of the Greek Communist Party, Dimitris Koutsoumpas, at the Greek newspaper "To Vima" (27/9/'13). During his interview he claimed that the *Aganaktismenoi* movement's lack of ideology and organizational references to established institutions actually did cause a void in the public sphere,

which was enhanced by the uninformed electorate and the democratic deficit. In his opinion this was a major factor that resulted in the rise of reactionary forces, who took advantage of their cohabitation of the public space with large, uninformed and frustrated crowds. According to the Communist Party's general secretary:

> The dipole Memorandum - Anti-memorandum and the coexistence in common protests (Aganaktismenoi) allowed for (social) tolerance to the Golden Dawn (by including it) as an anti-systemic, anti-memorandum force[14].

Surprisingly, this estimation is supported by the evidence of my participant observation two years prior to that interview, the point made here by the observation notes being that the very large numbers of people mobilized via the social media in an infotainment kind of way, resulted in a critical mass of frustrated but meagerly politicized indignant citizens gathering at Syntagma Square repeatedly. This created the conditions for anyone who wanted to propagandize extreme opinions, even those of hatred and violence, to mingle with the crowd and become legitimized; and in this way to reach a vulnerable and unprepared audience with the best chances of persuading them due to the comradely psychology created by the "connective" action, as described above. The instant, unidentified calling for mobilization via the social media, the anonymous crowd and the lack of a collective identity, a coherent ideology and some common organizational reference made it difficult for the movement to protect itself from reactionary ideologies and helped the crypto-fascists to approach a large audience.

[14] The answer is in reference to the high 6,92% Golden Dawn, a social-nationalistic party, achieved at the general elections of 2012, only one year after the initiation of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement and only 6 months after it disappeared.

Creating a new international *Indignados'* "language": how the digital media enhance the transnational movement potential

Another interesting point that emerges from the participant observation findings is that these new types of digital media-led movements all over the world seem to have managed to create a new type of organic interaction between them. I claim that with the help of the new media technologies, this instant transnational interaction has risen to a unique level of creating their own, basic but operative new "Indignados' language", based on non-verbal communication, namely gestures, used to debate orderly and reach consensus conclusions at the general assemblies.

In the past it has not been rare for affiliated movements to greet each other on an international level, be it by post or by sending representatives and delegations to each other's grounds. So it was not a surprise for the general assemblies of the Spanish *Indignados* and the Geek *Aganaktismenoi* to salute each other, and send messages of solidarity and support to one another. What was rare and surprising, though, was for these affiliated movements to follow identical procedures in their gatherings. One example is that the list of the speakers for the general assembly was conducted via a lottery as is the custom in all the new type of digital media-led movements of that period set after the example of the *Indignados*. But even that would not be noteworthy if it was not accompanied by a complete set of sign language gestures which became standard procedure from the Spanish *Indignados* onwards, adopted by these movements who identified with each other as actually belonging to a transnational political mobilization, able to make decisions immediately comprehensible and accessible to an international audience.

As mentioned before, at Syntagma's lower square the movement had developed pretty much along the same lines of the *Indignados* of Spain and the Occupy Movement in the United States. The establishment of the "rituals" of these new types of movements, like the different working groups managing the space and the all-important General Assembly were obvious to the observer. Although none of the above is new per se as a practice, the way they were structured and the new features that overtook the traditional Greek movement features showed the organic

co-relation between these new types of digital media-led movements. Organizationally, the most significant of these new features was the system of participation in the general assembly. Namely the very characteristic way used by the participants of the general assembly to conduct a civilized and efficient dialogue amongst large crowds and to state whether they agree or disagree with someone's position. Traditionally in the Greek context of social/political movements one finds heated discussions, a lot of verbal interference, noises and yelling from the crowd when they disagree with a position, clapping or whistling when they agree. The participants at the *Aganaktismenoi* general assemblies chose a different way to sign their agreement or disagreement, by silently moving their open palms up in the air or down in front of their bodies. This was the signature process of the Spanish *Indignados*. It was later adopted by the Occupy movements as well. In case they wanted to veto a voting suggestion they crossed their wrists in the shape of an "X" and rose them up. This very particular way of expressing opinion seemed to be creating a light, playful atmosphere but also engaged more people in the conversation. On the other hand it allowed for the speaker to acknowledge the people's views but to continue uninterrupted with her train of thought and arguments.

I claim that this new way of participating in a large outdoors general assembly should not be underestimated with regards to its significance. Besides some additional communicational merits discussed above, especially taking under consideration the very large number of people participating in open spaces, the significant point here is the following; this new codified sign language has been established as a very powerful tool for future movements internationally. I argue that there are two reasons supporting this: First, because this set of signs has been charged with an activist, anti-systemic, movement connotation for the future mobilizations they will not just be signifiers in the creation of meaning but rather heavily charged signifieds. Second, because they stand for a new, international language for protest movements. The potential for a global protest movement with common strategies and politics would be much easier to materialize if local protest movements "spoke" the same language and operated in the same way, one might argue, given how tempo/spatial obstacles can be tackled by the new technologies. And this new set of meaningful signs provides that much desired common communicational ground, essential for the potential existence of a global movement.

The digital social media's Heritage to mediated mobilization

This thesis does not intend to map, analyse and explain the radical media that came out or were associated with the movement of the *Aganaktismenoi*. On the contrary it considers the role of media, older and newer, with regards to the consolidation and proliferation of the movement in the perception of the general public, with a focus on digital social media in the urban environment of Athens, the capital city of Greece. Any radical media that came up directly or as a consequence of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement were not capable of affecting the media scenery of the capital or the country in the long term. However, I am arguing that they have been an emancipation benchmark for a large part of the population, when it comes to the use of digital media for the purposes of political mobilization.

Parallel to that, or even consequently, for many participants the movement experience led to de-romanticising of the older, traditional media with regards to any anti-systemic potential they might carry. This became particularly obvious in those cases where people's personal experiences during protest were framed and presented via a biased lens by the major traditional media, namely popular television channels broadcasting nationally and well respected national newspapers too. It happened more than once for participants to experience uncalled for police violence, when the square was evacuated or when the police had orders to break large crowds. The same people, attacked by the systemically legalized violence, found themselves watching the news later, only to be told that the protesters attacked the police or that police violence was necessary to avoid the crowds descending into anarchy. In other cases people experienced the complete lack of media coverage of a massive mobilization event or police violence event, on the part of traditional media. These first-hand experiences of media manipulation, framing (Goffman, 1974) and agenda setting (McCobs & Shaw, 1972) has been, for many of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement participants', their first personal experience of mostly academic observations in the field of media manipulation of reality. Many of the participants expanded their world view with previously unknown -or not relevant to their lifestyle- experiences of ways objectively perceived reality might be framed and manipulated by media coverage. Arguably, this has caused a noticeable degree of disillusionment and de-romanticising of the objectivity and democratic inclinations of traditional or systemic media.

Inextricably linked to the above is the realization that new (at the time) media, in this case digital social media, created their own heritage regarding *mediated mobilization* (Lievrouw 2011). The term here is drawn from Leah Lievrouw's "new media and genre theory". She talks about five genres of contemporary alternative and activist new media, one of which she calls "mediated mobilization". By genres she refers to "types of expression or communication that is useful and/or meaningful among the members of a given community or within a particular situation" (Lievrouw, 2011:20). I argue that the radical media produced during the months of the movements' activity, were a corner stone in Greek *mediated mobilization* and a critical contribution to the public sphere's agenda at the time, despite having a short life span and a minimal impact in the general media scene and the shaping of the public opinion. I claim that the experience of direct expression and personal, unmediated dialogue, via the new, alternative and in many cases radical –mainly electronic- media outputs (i.e. www.realdemocracy.gr), has been emancipating for a large part of the movement's participants. This was constructed along three pillars: 1**) Legitimization of collective decisions via their publication in the digital media**, which made the *Aganaktismenoi* general assemblies' decisions part of the official national public sphere dialogue. Hence, the digital social media have become the means to a cause, namely the influence of the public debate with the movement's agenda bypassing the traditional media channels of mass communications and the hurdles that vested interests cause regarding broadcasting the protestors' views. By being openly part of the public debate, the movement's collective decisions penetrated the agenda setting of the traditional media and was, thus, legitimized as part of the public sphere's debate in the eyes of conventional civic society. 2) **The personal responsibility every participant took for her written stated opinion**, which she was afterwards called to defend in public and in writing to her immediate social circle and the more distant societal environment via the comments and discussions in the social media. I argue that this very process elevated citizens to become active political beings, active members of the public sphere and participants who shape the current debate, as opposed to the role of the receiver/listener/judge of the public debate, promoted by the traditional media. 3) The establishment of a culturally diverse, alternative political proposal, organization and action, which was formed gradually and was inherent to the use of new digital social media, leading to

the realization of the potential of a latent direct-democratic prospect, inherit in the digital media.

I argue that the aforementioned three pillars of emancipation are **the digital media's heritage** with regards to the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. The results of the aforementioned emancipation should be studied more thoroughly and in detail by future research, looking into how this newly acquired sophistication and empowerment could possibly play out in future mobilizations and in political communication more generally. Thus, one could assess the effects digital media can have as tools of mediated mobilization on the political efficacy and sophistication of the participants but also the effects on the quality of the political/ideological debate around the given relevant movement.

Exploring this topic calls for reference to another, relatively fresh area of theoretical scrutiny in the sociology of the media, that of emotions in the media and as Demertzis puts it, the "double understanding of the media as both causes and instances of audience's affective responses" (2011:89). Demertzis acknowledges that the domination of structural-functionalism and rational choice theory have pushed the analysis of emotions to the margins for several decades, when it comes to the understanding of social action. However, whereas in sociology there has been a major shift towards the analysis and understanding of emotions' impact on social processes (Turner and Stets, 2005; Stets and Turner, 2006; Clough et al., 2007), it seems that nothing similar has taken place in the field of communication or media studies. Also, the media-emotions nexus can be found in many areas of academic and public concern and a lot of progress remains to be made in areas like political communication, for example with emotions and agenda setting or framing (Demertzis, 2011). He suggests that,

> taking emotions seriously would enhance agenda-setting and frame analysis in tandem with qualitative audience research by understanding… under which frame of reference they may form political judgements and take decisions over disputed public issues (Demertzis, 2011:85).

Taking this theoretical framework and applying it to the study of social media and the *Aganaktismenoi* movement can prove ground-breaking on the one hand and very beneficial for

the credibility of the current analysis on the other: firstly it is ground-breaking to bring this fresh area of theoretical scrutiny into the sociology of the media and political communication. This would also be in line with the multi-paradigmatic theoretical approach the current research adopted from the beginning. Secondly, bringing the analysis of emotions into the forefront will enhance our initial choice to incorporate the uses and gratifications theory in the used theoretical framework, for it is specifically mentioned as one of the main theories where *metaphoric emotional conceptualization* [15] has been applied, under the above mentioned model. This helps the analysis, explaining the emotional reasons why the *Aganaktismenoi* showed a significant preference towards using digital media in order to gratify their needs for communicating their message, maintaining and strengthening their mobilization. Also, it helps the researcher investigate fresh reasons for the very different approach the traditional and the digital media took towards the movement.

In order for all the above to become clearer, this thesis must further consider Demertzis' analysis of metaphoric conceptualization. He argues that,

> ever since advocates of the uses and gratifications theory(ies) referred to "escapism" they have treated emotions *in absentia* because under this signifier a number of different emotions may have been accommodated: calmness, tranquillity, joy, hope, delight, contentment, elation, worship, mindfulness, fascination, amazement, astonishment or even gloominess. (Demertzis, 2011:86)

He goes on to add that, "More than this, the rubric "gratifications" itself, in the name of this theory, serves as a metaphor of multiple and co-current emotions experienced by media users in real time" (2011:87). I argue that the above framework provides a significant base for

[15] According to Demertzis there are three main ways in which media studies' scholars have tended to conceptualize emotions, in the absence of a major emotions-affective turn in the field: metaphorically, metonymically and denotatively. All three approaches have merits and weaknesses. "Metaphoric approaches offer broad-spectrum explanations about people's reactions to and people's uses of media, but sweep aside proper analysis of particular emotions. Metonymic approaches bring the affective dimension much more effectively to the fore, yet they still lack specificity and concreteness. Denotative or critical research of discrete emotions, though more concrete, offers a compartmentalized account and fail to recognize that emotions are experienced in a complex and/or flow-like manner rather than one at a time" (Demertzis, 2011:88).

understanding the way a large number of the public has used digital social media in the context of the *Aganaktismenoi* mobilization.

Many protesters choose to use the digital media channels for some or many of the reasons listed by Demertzis above, according to their own testimonies. Besides, the personalized experience of digital media is in accordance with the individual emotions of the users. There is even the case of each person using digital social media for different reasons, expressing different emotions, at different times. Consequently, the individual gratifications achieved by the use of digital social media vary enormously amongst the users and in the length of time used. However, as an overall tendency amongst the participants in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement, it has been common knowledge, both academic and mundane, that the nature and technological potential of the social media – namely interactivity, mobility and tempo/spatial connectivity- have provided deeper gratification with regards to the movement's needs and purposes. The lack of these very characteristics led to the rejection of traditional media, such as television and newspapers, due to their inability to gratify the protestors' needs for quick mobilization, instant responses to the daily events and interactive communication. Moreover, the relevant emotional responses of the protestors as consumers of traditional media were negative, as they saw the traditional media framing their actions in such a way that threatened to become harmful for their cause. Hence, the use of traditional media did not gratify the needs of the protestors, on the contrary, it evoked negative emotions which led to rejection of their narrative and de-legitimization of the traditional media as channels of exercising civic control in favour of the political establishment. As Demertzis puts it:

> As individuals become all the more aporetic and distrustful of the offered truth of the "mutual spying of ideologies" and the fragmentation of societal and political reality, there is no reasonable basis to support their choices' (2011: 94).

Seen under this theoretical light of media emotions' sociology, I claim that the use of the digital social media by the protestors was not only a radical choice to use specific media channels in order to gratify some actual needs, but also an emotional response to the fact that "the grand

narrative has lost its credibility" and the de-legitimization and radical suspicion towards "pre-established rules" (Lyotard, 1984: 37, 81; Rosenau, 1992: 133-137).

Closing this last part of the analysis and synthesis of the empirical data that I call "*The digital social media's Heritage to mediated mobilization"* I claim that the effects the use of digital social media had upon the specific mobilization under research fall in two categories: the personal effects and the social effects. For example, changing media usage habits and de-legitimizing traditional media channels as sources of objective information can be registered as an effect on the personal level, referring to the movement's participants' choices. Elaborating on that, it can be argued that personal, first-hand experience of the protest movement's realities, both in mobilization and in-field organization aspects, broadened the gap between participants' actual experience and the mediated broadcasting of the events via traditional media channels. This gave people a subjective, yet based on real experience, measure to judge the objectivity of media framing and coverage of the protest movement. Their judgement was obviously negative and they rejected traditional media channels as part of the established power relations they were opposing by their very participation in the protest movement.

Another effect on the personal level, which is grounded in theory and was measured by the e-survey, was the enhancement of participants' sense of political efficacy and more precisely their internal political efficacy. As discussed in the theoretical chapter of this thesis, the sense of political efficacy is a multidimensional parameter used in political communication to estimate specific political behaviors, such as voting behaviors. It is also used as a barometer for the democratic progress of societies[16]. As previously observed, the term political efficacy in brief refers to a person's beliefs regarding their ability to understand the political system they live in and affect or change it with their own actions. Internal political efficacy refers, then, to one's perception of understanding the system and the kind of actions she has already taken or is willing to take in order to inflict aspired changes to the current political system and structures. The objective difference between action already taken and action one is willing to take, but may never actually manage to take, mark the inner categorization of internal political efficacy to

[16] Officially part of the European Social Research Survey for more than a decade as discussed in the theory chapter.

objective and subjective. Hence, objective internal political efficacy gives us a measure of someone's documented activity in the direction of inflicting change on the political system, whereas subjective internal political efficacy gives us a subjective opinion of that person's intentions to act on the matter. In the case study of the current research, participants in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement show very high levels of internal political efficacy (with 82% of the participants saying they feel they understand the ways in which the political system operates and have an active interest in political issues, 68% say they think that they are better informed about politics and government than most people, 72% find it easy and very easy to form an opinion about political issues and 64% think their own actions can affect the political system they live in). However, 48% of the participants who filled in the e-survey answered they found out about the mobilization via social media (particularly facebook). This active acknowledgement of half of the participants about social media mobilizing them is strengthened by the first week's participant observation notes, where it is clear that for the majority of the protestors this was the first time, or the first time in decades, they took to the streets. The point made here by synthesizing the above data is that new type, digital social media-led mobilizations enhance participants' objective internal political efficacy. This, consequently results in an enhancement of the subjective internal political efficacy, hence future actions they feel they are willing and able to take. A proof of this claim is the neighborhood based local assemblies that sprung up after the physical dissolve of the *Aganaktismenoi* from Syntagma Square of Athens. So, I argue that the synthesis of my participant observation and e-survey data indicate an important, yet under researched potential relationship: that of digital social media mediated mobilization and enhancement of the internal political efficacy of the protesters.

Questions about a relevant potential relation between this new type of mobilization and external political efficacy, which characterizes the sociopolitical rather than the personal level, naturally follow. Here our e-survey data show an impressive 86% of the participants answering that they believe that the political system does not respond to people's expectations and actions. This was months after the end of the mobilization, so it shows a mature opinion, extending beyond previous beliefs to include the participants' perceived systemic responses to their own massive protest mobilization. Seeing how governmental policies proceeded the months after the

Aganaktismenoi movement, and how, in fact, all the protestors' frustration and disagreements were thwarted by a common response of the political system, the e-survey participants' external political efficacy measured very low. Here there is a hint that their participation in the mediated mobilization under question, and the following disappointment affected their sense of external political efficacy, or in other words their perception of the political system's responsiveness to their actions, in a negative way. However, the data at hand is not enough to make a solid argument out of this observation. It is rather a hint that begs for further investigation. However, given the fact that the sense of political efficacy is used as a barometer for the democratization of European societies, further investigation between the relation of digital media-led mobilization and political efficacy bears only merits for the fields of sociology, political communication and media studies. This is another practical reason in favor of advocating for a multi-paradigm approach in much needed relevant future research.

In this thesis I have previously argued that understanding our current reality as deeply mediatized adds more gravity in these new types of mobilizations, like the Aganaktismenoi, as potential formative future initiatives, in both the political and the societal sphere, especially since a large part of current political experience is mediated. Here I add to this argument the contribution of the notion of political efficacy with regards to the evaluation of this formative political potential. I claim that one possible way to evaluate the formative political potential of the new type of digital media-led mobilizations is to look at their participants' political efficacy levels. More precisely, this could be evaluated by looking at changes to the levels of political efficacy before and after participation to the mobilization; Enhanced levels of political efficacy after participation in such types of mobilizations mean enhanced engagement with politics for the participants. Thus, I argue that enhanced levels of political efficacy after participation in digital media-led mobilizations could be seen as an indicator of enhanced formative political potential of the movement related with the said mobilization.

Conclusion

Concluding this thesis I will summarize the main theoretical points of my research and tie together, integrate and synthesize the various issues raised in the discussion section. I will then present the mixed methodology used and the answers given to the research questions. I will also reflect on the theoretical and policy implications of my multi-paradigm study with respect to the overall study area of media sociology, media studies and political communication. Finally I will discuss the unique contribution this thesis makes to the literature as well as recommendations for future research stemming from it.

The first chapter of this thesis, the introduction, familiarized the reader with the research topic, namely the relation between social media and new types of urban mobilization. The case study of the Greek *Aganaktismenoi* movement was introduced. I explained why looking at this new type of movement requires a multi-paradigm approach and claimed it could prove beneficial for many relevant academic research areas. The research questions were also presented in the introduction, along with a short description of the methods used and the way the findings are presented. Simultaneously, reference was made to what this research aspires to achieve.

In the second chapter, following the introduction, I discussed the main theoretical framework of this research and the relevant literature review. This theoretical chapter consists of three parts in order to better address the complex issue of new social media and political mobilization, as it played out in 2011 in the Western democracies, especially in Europe. The first part refers to the social movements, the public sphere and the media. The second part addresses the debate around the internet, media and democratic politics. The third part describes the Greek context, the physical setting for the case study, regarding the issues mentioned in the previous two parts; namely the new situation in the Greek public sphere, media environment, journalism and political scene as a result of the economic crisis and the deep austerity measures imposed, after negotiations with the country's international lenders.

Following a multi-paradigm approach, medium level theories from the fields of media studies, media sociology and political communication have been used, encompassed by an overall adherence to macro level critical theory, namely critical media theory as it is presented by Christian Fuchs, and the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony. Complimentary to the above main theoretical framework is Pierre Bourdieu's notion of reflexive sociology, mainly applied in the empirical part of the work during the several phases of data collection and analysis, as well as Foucault's interpretivism and post-constructivism.

Under this critical, reflexive approach the issue of new media technologies was taken beyond "cyber liberalism" and broader questions were discussed, regarding the political economy of digital media, the underlying power relations embedded and reflected within the social media platforms, not least in their autonomized and fragmented nature. Before delving deeper into these questions, the theory chapter explored relevant literature in the field of reflexivity, namely the work of Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash. In their analysis, they see reflexivity as a general tendency of contemporary modern (or post-modern) societies, with Beck emphasizing the element of identity choices and risk in his work *Risk Society* (2005), whereas Giddens and Lash (1991, 1994) place their emphasis upon autonomized modernization. In the theory chapter I argue that although Beck's, Giddens' and Lash's theories have helped understand less tangible sociological concepts around modernity (or post-modernity), they are however criticized as bourgeois theories, tackling the problem from a managerial point of view and failing to delve into broader questions of power distribution and class divisions within the so called risk society. By calling the new era ''autonomized modernization'' the theorists imply a universality and naturalization of the socially embedded material conditions of inequality, dismissing any revolutionary dynamics to the sphere of cognitive, institutional and aesthetic reflexivity, instead of acknowledging these categories as sophisticated capitalistic superstructures.

Following the above, the discussion on identity and media was addressed next. Here this thesis examined new media technologies and possible convergence of practices and spaces. Du Gay, Hall's et al. *Circuit of Culture* (1997) -explaining how meanings are circulated between media

production, consumption, identities and representations- supported Deuze's suggestion that new technologies possible convergence of practices and spaces should be seen as,

> having a cultural logic of its own, blurring the lines between production and consumption, between making media and using media, and between active or passive spectatorship of mediated culture. (2007: 74)

Moreover, Papacharissi (2011) advises that future research could investigate the relationship between communications sustained via social networking and blogging networks, "as it could result in connections between user orientation, type of use and consequences" (2011:314). She bases that recommendation on previous research results indicating that social networking sites could support the affirmation of political attitudes and behaviours. Investigating the aforementioned areas with regards to the new type of digital social media-led civic mobilizations in a heavily mediatized environment (Couldry & Hepp 2017, Livingstone, 2009) has been one of the challenges of this research.

Regarding new media technologies and the democratic process, we followed Peter Dahlgren's categorization of three main narratives on this debate; that of Cyber-enthusiasts who laud the democratic potential of social media (Benkler 2006; and Castells 2010, 2012), that of sceptical and critical scholars who underscore the constraints of these media in the face of other factors that shape political realities (Fuchs 2011; Hindamn 2009) and that of others who offer a mix of voices (Loader and Mercea, 2012). This thesis contributes to this intellectual debate aligned with the views of the sceptical, critical analysis, as explained by Fuchs. In his approach he combines Frankfurt School critical theory with a critique of the political economy of the media. As Fuchs puts it,

> both traditions have developed critiques of the role of media communication in exploitation, as means of ideology and potential means of liberation and struggle […] and are valuable, important and complementary for studying social media critically. (Fuchs, 2014: 22)

My analysis complemented Fuchs' take on critical media theory with the Gramscian notion of "cultural hegemony", which helps to explain the wide and ever spreading popularity of social

media and their “prosumer” logic, in alliance with the dominant ideology of consumerism. From the case study I found the practical application of Gramci’s ideas of cultural hegemony to be quite accurate: although the participants in the social media-led protest movement were mobilized by their frustration and need for changing the material conditions of their lives, they did not elaborate on the colonization of the public sphere by the logic of the media, insofar as it reflects the embedded interests of the ruling classes. The cultural consensus sought by the elites has not been perceived as such by the majority of the protesters, and thus has not been brought out as a field of struggle for the movement. What consumed the energies of the crowd was acting out their frustration and demanding for a withdrawal of the austerity measures, without further sophistication in their aims and objectives. However, as the movement evolved some of the above perceptions changed, resulting in a very different mobilization during the final months. Yet, this emancipation and ideological work via direct democratic processes proved to be inversely proportional to the size of the mobilized crowds. Hence, Gramsci’s ideas about the dominance of cultural hegemony were once again proven correct through this case study. The same happened with Stuart Hall’s ideas on protesters decoding media’s encoded preferred readings (Hall, 1997) with regards to the causes, aims and results of the movement. The *Aganaktismenoi* protesters did seem to utilize the different qualities of social media compared to traditional media regarding their cause and showed a distinct preference to the former.

Eventually, concluding with this issue, I looked at the ideological role social media played as carriers of the dominant ideology and how this affected the protest movements they nourished. Here Fuchs and Sandoval (2015) point out and underline the two antagonistic theoretic approaches towards the role of social media in contemporary political and revolutionary movements. On one side of the theoretical debate they consider scholars like Castells who claim that “contemporary revolutions and rebellions are social media movements or networked protests of connective action” (Castells, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; see Fuchs, 2014c: chapters 4 and 8 and 2014b for a detailed criticism). On the other side of the argument, they position themselves and other academics who have warned that social media are not only activists’ tools, but are also shaped by state and capitalist power (Fuchs, 2012, 2014b, 2014c; Morozov, 2010, 2013). According to Fuchs and Sandoval the former scholars reflect the populist

and techno-determinist sentiments of the tabloid press about the “Facebook and Twitter revolutions”. In particular, as mentioned in the theory chapter: Morozov is fiercely against the idea that social media can bring about revolutions and he characterizes the talk of Facebook and twitter revolutions as “a naïve belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside” (Morozov, 2010, xiii). Gerbaudo agrees with Morozov, adding that,

> social media do not seem to result in democratic networked organisation structures, but are embedded into hierarchies, internal power structures and the formation of elites within social movements. (2012: 86)

This research took the side of the latter in the argument, and held its post-constructivist stance by the use of a combination of critical theories of media and sociology with a reflexive empirical research.

Another area of theoretical interest for this research has been the notion of the public sphere and, more specifically, the alterations the public sphere has gone through in the era of mediatization. The relevant literature has been discussed at length, from Habermas’ (1962) contribution to the understanding of the public sphere, to the latest, critical additions in the debate. More precisely, there has been a distinction made between Habermas’ early work, where he draws from the critical tradition of the Frankfurt school, describing the public sphere as a bourgeois pluralistic space and where the actors are equally sophisticated and influential; and Habermas’ later reflective self-criticism, where he turns his attention towards communicative rationality or the deliberate character of communication, networking, new technologies and the disproportion of embedded power relations within the public realm.

Following the debate on the relation between media, democracy and the public sphere, we then look at Hannah Arendt’s ideas about the modern public realm, drawing from a critical and feminist tradition. In her signature article ‘’The Human Condition” Arendt (1958) points out that in pre-modern society the private realm was related to family and economy and the public one to politics. Later, within modern society the capitalist economy became disconnected from the private sphere and emerged as an autonomous sphere, based on commodity production and

wage-labour, loosely interconnected to politics. However, Arendt emphasizes that there is no theory of natural rights to guarantee the principle of political equality in the political realm. No ''natural human condition'' pre-exists the socially constructed political scene to ensure that every citizen participates equally. For Arendt individuals acquire an attribute of citizenship upon entering the political realm and this attribute can only be secured by democratic political institutions. This thesis' argument, consequently, is that significant actors of the modern economy, as media organizations undoubtedly are, are then publicly relevant and we need to investigate their role in the public sphere through a political economy of the media approach. More specifically, questions of democracy within the internet platforms and the users' society, regulation and political economy of the social media platforms are essential. Hannah Arendt's contribution to the role new media technologies play in political participation, the public sphere and the rapid mobilization of large numbers of citizens comes through her prophetic words,

> Politically, this means that the larger the population in any give body of politics, the more likely it will be the social rather than the political that constitutes the public realm… Large numbers of people, crowded together, develop an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule; …In reality, deeds will have less a chance to stem the tide of behaviour, and events will more and more lose their significance, that is, their capacity to illuminate historical time (1958:44).

Taking the debate one step further, we then looked at contemporary scholars who revisit, expand or oppose the classic theories, especially the Habermasian, as mentioned above. Peter Dahlgren (2005) joins the exchange with his categorization of the three analytical dimensions of the public sphere: the structural, the representational and the Interactional (Dahlgren, 2005). Regarding the internet, structural issues refer to what he calls cyber-geography and web-architecture features. These factors are relevant in so far as they affect the internet's accessibility for civic action. He concludes that a healthy institutional dimension of the public sphere requires strong democratic tendencies in a society. The second aspect of the public sphere according to Dahlgren, the representational one, which refers to the output of the media, focuses the

discussion on issues about political communication, accuracy, fairness, pluralism, agenda setting (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and ideological tendencies, framing (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Scheufele and Tewskbury, 2007) and modes of address. He particularly sees the representational dimension as highly relevant for online contexts of the public sphere as well. Lastly, the interactional dimension highlights the importance of citizens who engage with issues and debates, interact and participate rather than atomized individuals who consume media products. In regards to interaction as a dimension of the public sphere, Dahlgren sees two aspects: citizens' encounters with the media and encounters between citizens themselves. He goes on to stress that "interaction has its sites and spaces, its discursive practices, its psychocultural aspects; in this sense, the public sphere has a very fluid, sprawling quality'' (2005:159). I have argued therefore that relevant studies should move beyond the actual sites of media reception and probe the circulation of meaning in broader micro-contexts of everyday life, which is becoming more obvious and relevant with the advent of the internet and new media technologies. This point proves again the necessity for multi-paradigm approaches in contemporary research in the field of digital media and civic participation.

Another contemporary scholar whose work was discussed in this section was Andrew Chadwick. He proposes that today's media system is a hybrid one, providing some opportunities for democratization of the public sphere but restricted by its political economy and organizational limits. According to Chadwick the hybrid media system,

> is built upon interaction among older and newer media logics –when logics are defined as bundles of technologies, genres, norms, behaviours and organizational forms- in the reflexively connected social fields of media and politics (2016:8)

He continues to describe how power relations are developed in this hybrid media system, which inevitably transforms the public sphere following the technological breakthrough in the field of communications,

> Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever-evolving relationships based upon adaptation and interdependence and concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify,

> enable or disable others' agency across and between a range of older and newer media settings. (Chadwick, 2013:4)

According to Chadwick, the greatest contribution of hybrid system thinking is that it rejects dichotomies and offers a powerful way of thinking about politics and society because it foregrounds complexity, interdependence and transition. However, Chadwick's discussion of the hybrid media system and its relation to politics and the public sphere concludes in a key point: although the renewed media emerge as a stepping stone to a "mediated pathway to political engagement", the hybrid media system does not lead directly to a more inclusive form of democracy.

> ''Hybridity presents opportunities for non-elites to exert power, but media and political elites can, and do, adapt to these new environments. However, as media systems become more hybrid, the power of elite organisational actors has generally weakened". (Chadwick et al. 2016:21)

Closing this theoretical reference to the public sphere we looked at the direct criticism of Habermas' initial notion of the public sphere. One of the early counter debates comes from Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge in 1972, in their book *Public Sphere and Experience: towards an analysis of the bourgeois and the proletarian public sphere*, where they talk about counter-public spheres. Here they discuss the existence of alternative proletarian public spheres within the dominant public sphere. They look for identification of alternative zones for radical debate and reflection, in other words expressions of the interests of the dominated, within present day society and public debate. Other scholars have also considered the existence of alternative or counter public spheres, such as Downing, who suggests that certain forms of political activism in the United States, centering on the quite novel alternative computer uses, could be termed examples of an alternative public sphere (Downing, 2001:29). While Fraser (1993) discusses the variety of alternative public spheres in and around social movements and also recognizes the value of the notion of counter public spheres.

Moving on to the second part of the theory chapter the relation of internet, media and democratic politics was discussed. The debate was presented from the initial excitement of the

digital democracy aficionados, including voices about possible urban civic networks that technology will enable and would enhance democracy (Tsagarousianou et al, 1998); or deliberations about e-Government success around the world (Blumlers and Gurevitch, 2001); to Perry Barlow's *Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace* (1996), where Barlow boldly manifests the creation of a world without privilege or prejudice, racism or class divisions; a world of freedom of speech and equal opportunities, without property and identity as hitherto known to humanity; a world not based on matter but existing virtually in the cyber-sphere.

Unsurprisingly, this initial enthusiasm was confronted by reality and critical voices emerged, mainly from the radical left and gender studies, pointing out the hierarchical, capitalistically structured and (largely) "Western elites' owned" nature of the overall web infrastructure and operation (Hall, 1980, Hesmondhalgh, 2007, Fuchs, 2014, Dahlhren, 2005) and how it affects democratic participation and political process. The questions raised involved the importance of the political economy of the internet and the new media technologies, the fragmented and destructive nature of information dissemination via the social media, as well as political participation and democratization of society via digital media. Even fewer radical scholars like Papacharissi (2010) argue that the web environment in its current form promotes a transformation of political practices and social relations, which are found to be metamorphosed and are amalgamated with the practices and logic of privatized consumption. Moreover, Papacharissi goes on to claim that although digitally enabled citizens may be skilled and reflexive in many ways, they are also generally removed from the civic habits of the past. She sees this as causing what she calls "civic vernacular" or according to Dahlgren (2014) "the solo sphere'', what he sees as a historically new habitus for online political participation, a new platform for political agency.

At this point, I looked at the political aspect of this newly formed reality. Here I noticed the contribution of the New Left to the main western political discourse, regarding arguments concerning participatory democracy. According to Margaret Scammell (2000) it was the leading writers of the New Left, such as Pateman (1970) who first articulated their critique of modern pluralist and elite theory. Pateman criticizes the modern pluralist and elite theory for its minimal

inclusion of the concept of participation and she characterises this theory as the "contemporary model" of Democracy. In that very limited reference to the concept of participation she sees "fears of the dangers of popular active participation" (Scammell, 2000: xxxv). Another classic theorist of the New Left, C.B. Macpherson (1977), built on Pateman's thoughts and argued that the (then) contemporary model of democracy had abandoned a central doctrine of the classic democratic theory, that of the insistence on participation. As Scammell puts it "for 'participationists', however, participation is itself a goal" and they make a point out of the fact that low levels of knowledge and participation are not compatible with genuine democracy. Held takes this argument further by stating that participation,

> fosters human development, enhances a sense of political efficacy, reduces estrangement from power centres, nurtures a concern for collective problems and contributes to the formation of an active and knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a more acute interest in government affairs (Held, 1996: 267-78).

One very interesting aspect of the process of democratic participation, namely the notion of political efficacy, is mentioned by Held as a key element. This somewhat "silent" notion of the field of political communication is crucial for this research too, as it allows for intellectual interest to be realigned towards a social media "prosumer-centric" approach. Political Efficacy is commonly misunderstood as political sophistication. While it includes political sophistication amongst other things, the notion of "political efficacy" refers to a person's ability to understand the operating political system she lives in and interact with it. Political efficacy has been studied since the 1950s, with the first attempt to define it aging back to 1954, when Cambell, Gurin and Miller gave their definition as follows: Political efficacy is,

> the feeling that individual political action has, or might have an effect in the political process, meaning that it is worth it to exercise one's rights as a citizen. The feeling that political and social change is possible and that every citizen can play a role in the coming of this change. (Cambell, Gurin and Miller, 1954: 157)

At the beginning of the attempts to measure it, political efficacy was thought of as a mono-dimensional phenomenon and was basically correlated with the prediction of voting behavior. Today political efficacy is addressed as a multi-dimensional barometer of democratic systems.

Here I argue that there is a significant connection between a person's political efficacy and her participation in the new type of media-led protest movements. This research goes beyond theoretically describing the relation between political efficacy and political civic participation: it proves the existence of this relation via its empirical data. Moreover, it does so using a novel combination of a multi-paradigm theoretical approach served by mixed methodology; taking a tool from the field of political communication and using it in an ethno-methodological participant observation combined with an e-survey, in a research focused on media sociology. The originality of this research, filling the relevant gap in the literature, is that it considers the dynamic relation between an individual's political efficacy and her participation in the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. Moreover, it looks at how this participation feeds back into her political efficacy and affects her potential future understanding of the political system and voting behaviour. The dynamic, conversational process, proven by this study, can become the base for a new round of research on political mobilization and the use of media and new technologies. It will offer fresh opportunities for policy suggestions as well as for political communication analysis, both by the institutionalized political agents (i.e. national political parties, unions, universities etc) and the national or transnational social protest movements.

One last element touched in the theoretical chapter of this research is the role of media theories for the understanding of this new type of social media-led protest movements under question. There are three main parameters discussed here: first, the paradigms of mediation and mediatization shaping the current media environment, which inevitably affects the public sphere and democratic participation; second, the metaphor of media ecology, and third, issues of audiences choices in the use of different types of media and specifically their ability to choose rationally and in order to gratify their needs at a given time.

Regarding the first point, there is a contemporary debate in media studies with scholars taking sides in favour of mediation or mediatization as to which term better describes the current

complex media environment. In this debate mediation is described as an uneven yet dynamic process in which organized media institutions penetrate the general circulation of symbols in social life (Silverstone, 1992), whereas mediatization is described as the colonization of everyday life by the logic and the practices of the media (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, Livingstone, 2009, Krotz, 2009). This thesis argues a novel theoretical point: That, contrary to the above debate, mediation and mediatization co-exist, rather than exclude each other, as a two-leveled dynamic process, with every one of the two levels functioning autonomously, following its own rules and logic. On the first level, mediation operates as a conversational, non-linear, two way process, between the media and everyday life, where one feeds –unevenly- into the other and changes the way it operates (the uneven power leaning on the media's side). On the second level mediatization exists as a superstructure, a non-linear, one-way process of convergence with the rules and practices of the media. In other words mediatization exists as a process of the increasing deepening of technology-based interdependence" (Couldry and Hepp, 2017:53). Beneath this super-process lie multiple and simultaneous sub-processes of mediated circulation of cultural symbols, creation and exchange of meanings take place. But digital media technologies unique tempo-spatial capacities allowed for mediatization to grow during the past decades into what Couldry and Hepp (2017) now call deep mediatization

> Deep mediatization derives from the interaction of two very different types of transformation: a changed media environment characterized by increasing differentiation, connectivity, omnipresence, pace or innovation and datafication; and the increasing interdependence of social relations (2017:215).

Exploring the role of media theories in the comprehension of the new type of digital media-led protest mobilizations one needs to discuss the metaphor of media ecology; that is, seeing media as environments as opposed to autonomous, technological outputs. As Lekakis (2017) puts it "media ecology, in other words, aims to illustrate the ways in which media institutions and practices influence social and political life" (Lekakis, 2017:31). Here it becomes apparent that ecological perspectives of media technologies highlight the importance of addressing media from a holistic perspective, thus appreciating the complexity of media as empirical phenomena and unpacking their role in the new type of digital media-led mobilizations.

Last to be discussed was the issue of the audience's emancipation and ability to choose media platforms, in order to enhance political participation via the development and visibility of the new forms of protest movements. The position supported in this research is based on a combination of the wide version of the *rational choice theory*, the one that assumes "bounded rationality", the *uses and gratifications theory*, under a critical perspective. According to the Rational Choice Theory (Becker 1976; Frey 1999) the preferences of the individuals are conditions for their behaviour. In other words, their goals, motives or desires define their behaviour deterministically. On the other hand, rational choice theory acknowledges that individual actors' behaviour is dependent upon certain constraints or opportunities. In the case of the protests and social movements in Greece, and indeed in many other places around the globe, use the above theoretical frame to look at constraints and opportunities new media technologies bring into the equation (Hacker, 1996; Fuchs, 2011, 2014; Loader & Mercea 2011; Mercea, 2013, 2014; Shirky 2000; Bastos, Mercea & Charpentier 2015; Papacharissi, 2011;), combined with the classic media theory of uses and gratifications (katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974; Lazarsfeld, 1940), which supports the idea that people use different media platforms or products in order to gratify some particular need, which might change depending on time or circumstances. According to Dahlgren,

> politics is entwined with people's desires, anxieties, visions and hopes, and all such subjective elements feed affective charges into their engagement, mingling with rational, analytic elements. (Dahlgren, 2014: 196)

It is clear that the participants in the new type of social media-led protest movements define their goals in accordance with the actual effects of the imposed policies and austerity measures. Both the political and the economic fields of everyday life are considered, but citizens' understanding of political agenda and economic practices is largely based on the way the media present and analyse the current situation, which is, for the most part, biased and deprived of any political-social-historic context. Hence, while online participation, participation in the media and via the media, becomes political participation for many (Carpentier 2011), there is still the need to look at it with a critical eye, taking into consideration the embedded power relations in traditional and digital media structures and the democratic deficit which leaves many citizens

lacking the necessary information and analysis in order to make educated decisions about the media they choose to use and the reasons why.

Focusing on the Greek case study, changes to the socio-political and media environment of the country have been discussed, with regards to the economic crises and the heavy austerity measures imposed. Habermas highlights the great importance of the national Press for a healthy public sphere. This makes the critical position of the Greek Press, due to lack of funds, very significant for political participation and for the level of the national debate. All the traditional media platforms in Greece find themselves in a similar position; with television and radio organizations suffering big losses, the advertisement market on a historic low, and professional journalists hit by unemployment, as a result. Amidst these conditions digital media have risen in Greece. This coincidence allowed for an extremely deregulated environment in the digital media labour market, with consequences in the quality of information provided and the overall operation of the field. This destabilized media scene briefly preceded a destabilized political scene, as discussed. The traditional political parties have collapsed or lost power under the weight of the financial situation. This environment clearly does not favour independent journalism, nor does it nourish the theoretical and professional models of journalists, that of the "watchdog" or the "advocate" (Janowitz, 1975). Professional standards are compromised by existential agonies and media ownership is reaching its institutional limits as a carrier of vested interests. This situation made the role of new (at the time) digital media in Greece even more critical with regards to participatory democracy and protest mobilization. In this environment, digital media's political capacity to communicate and share a wealth of information across social and temporal divides has been a political asset (Bennet 2002), adding to the political capacity of the new type of social media-led protest movement under research. Theorists have named the first type of internationally connected social movements like those that resisted armed interference in Iraq in 2002 and 2003 "mobilization 2.0'', following the example of computer science and the web 2.0. The convergence between new media technologies, which followed the web 2.0, and the new organizational, communicational and transnational capacities of social media like Facebook and twitter has been unprecedented. I argue that there is solid ground for distinguishing these new

type of social media-led protest movements with regards to political capacity, as defined by Bennett.

The research questions asked in this research project touched two main areas; that of social mobilization in a mediatized environment, and that of the role of traditional media/social media platforms in the development of the new-type of movements and their potential co-dependency. These have been investigated using a mixed methods design, namely an emergent sequential exploratory triangulation design. This design was clearly suggested by and inextricably connected to the research questions, aims and objectives mentioned above. The rationale for using a mixed methods research design is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to answer the research questions in depth and to capture the details and fine shades of both the media-led movement at hand and the role various media platforms, traditional and new, played in it. However, when used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The field-work was conducted using the qualitative participant observation method, coming from enthomethodology. Qualitative methods are broadly used when it comes to social phenomena where the views of the actors are of high importance and their subjective understanding of the situation could actually be one of their motives for further action or indeed for the lack of it. The above corresponds completely to the nature of the current research as it addresses what mobilized the participants of the "*Aganaktismenoi*" movement within the mediatized environment and how they perceive the role of the traditional and new social media with regards to their movement. However, after the field-work came to a sudden end due to the displacement of the movement from the square a reflexive, multi-paradigmatic approach was chosen to use the objective merits of a quantitative tool to complement the qualitative findings. For this reason an e-survey was designed and used very precisely, with targeted questions, as a means of confirmation or rejection of the original observations, without the aim of investigating the phenomenon in its totality. The questions were separated into three sections; the first asked about whether and how the participants participated in the movement, the second about the media and the movement and the last exclusively focusing on the participants' political efficacy, so as to show the direct links between the empirical work and the

theory.

The results of the combined methods have been analysed and presented in the empirical data chapters. There, participant observation data showed some main themes concerning the development and operation of the movement. The main themes observed and discussed in the qualitative data chapter were: the particular geography of the movement on and around Syntagma Square, practically separating the participants into two groups, that later appeared to have distinct political characteristics as well. Moreover, the two phases of the mobilization were each dominated by a different group, giving its characteristics to the mobilization. The initial phase was characterized by the massive a-political crowds acting out their frustration without expressing political sophistication in their aims and objectives: this was the typical identity of the upper square, mainly social-media mobilized crowds. The second phase of the mobilization, after the summer break, was characterized by the increased degree of political dialogue, ideological discourse and sophistication that was nourished in the lower square, by practising direct democracy and combining physical (analogue) presence in the protest with online (digital) participation.

Another theme that appeared from participant observation was the nexus of mobilization and political naivety, which characterized the initial large crowds of participants. Anger, frustration and a will to shape their own future brought people to the streets. This conscious or unconscious rage against the establishment and the elites' policies, in response to the global economic crises, was the common cause for mobilization. Although socially embedded power relations and cultural hegemony were not discussed, one could observe the sociological concepts of power and counterpower (Castells, 2009). However, this display of counterpower was largely unsophisticated and unrealized in its theoretical grounds and this was supported and maintained by the non-partisan, non-ideological character of the social media-led mobilization itself. I claim this should be seen critically with regards to the "actual counterpower" capacity of these new types of movements. Opposing Castells, who sees the free public space of the internet as beyond the control of elites and monopolized channels of power, I argue that the digital, autonomized, a-

political nature of the social media who played the role of the ‘’organizing grounds’’ of the movement actually affects the participants’ capacity to display actual and effective counterpower.

Regarding the *Aganaktismenoi* movement’s relations with the traditional and the digital media, the findings were lurid: the vast majority of the participants believed the traditional media to be carriers of the established power relations, representing local elites, so they had no friendly feelings towards them. This was true especially of the national television channels, which on their part did not exactly embrace the movement either. From the media’s side it was more a relation based on profit. They covered the protest claiming plurality and putting pressure on the government in the interest of sectors of the elites, however, their framing of the movement was reluctant, even phobic and sometimes ironic, trying to understate the social and political dynamics appearing for the first time in decades. On the contrary, the relation of the movement to digital media was fundamental, from the initial call for mobilization to the way the movement used social media and web-based platforms to coordinate and develop actions. An interesting observation at this point was the combination and rich interconnection between very “low-tech”, print-media with very high-tech electronic media devices and platforms. Traditional leaflets initiated a broad dialogue among the protestors, which led to many new groups being formed, who then went on to produce their own electronic media, namely facebook pages or blogs. The process of media production and distribution then came full circle, with new “low-tech” traditional print leaflets being handed out at the “analog” field of protest; those new leaflets included the digital media addresses of the new groups and were distributed in order to attract more interest to their cause and continue the dialogue online.

However, whereas during the first weeks of the mobilization the general feeling was that of rage and indignation, the movement evolved and the dominant mood during the second phase of the participant observation changed. This happened when the movement regrouped in a celebratory way at the 3rd of September 2011, after the summer seize up of protest. During this second, more mature phase of the mobilization, more cohesion, lesser volumes of people and more organized actions and daily routines were observed. The focal daily routine was the 9pm general assembly at the square, which gave the *Aganaktismenoi* their direct democracy identity.

Contrary to the logic of connective action, with little hierarchy and organization coordination, where social media take "the role of established political organizations" (Bennet and Segerberg 2012, 742), the main forces that kept the mobilization alive, after the social media fascination and sensualisation of the protest died out in August, and organized its return in big numbers on the 3rd of September were already established political parties and civil rights organizations, together with politically active and ideologically sophisticated, un-affiliated individuals. At this point of its existence, the movement was a large, social experiment of direct democracy, organized and propagandized via the digital media, as the minutes of the general assemblies, the decisions and the agendas were uploaded for information and discussion on the webpage of the movement, named appropriately: www.realdemocracy.gr. At this point there was a very distinct move from the a-politicized initial character of the movement towards adopting the ideology of the anti-capitalist left. This observation supports the argument against the deterministic view of media technology being more than a medium, but the actual message instead. Opposing McLuhan's proposition, one could say that in this case the medium, i.e digital social media, has not been the message. On the contrary, a systemically integrated medium, namely facebook, communicated a message to large crowds and managed to mobilize them with its unique tempo/spatial capacity, but the actual political fermentation in the field conveyed this message as something largely anti-systemic, however attractive to smaller audiences. So, as the *Aganaktismenoi* movement gained in ideological coherence and deepened its politicization by means of the direct democracy process, it lost in numbers. So it can be argued that for these new types of digital media-born movements, large numbers of participants come at a cost of low levels of politicization and vice versa.

However, parallel to the collective ideological maturity of the movement, one could observe great transformations of people's individual perceptions as a result of their participation in this modern, large and long-lasting movement. A very interesting pattern emerging on that field was the de-legitimization of several state institutions, the Police and the House of Parliament and Parliamentary Democracy as well as the traditional Media. When these citizens escaped the Media interpretation of politics and had a first-hand experience they seemed to have discovered the "political beast" within. And this was the direct effect their participation in this new type of

protest movement had on their political efficacy. On the issue of political efficacy, the results of the e-survey were also very telling, giving solid evidence of a unique relation between internal and external political efficacy of the participants and their participation in this new type of grass-root, new type of social media-led movement. This was a combination of high-very high internal political efficacy and very low external political efficacy. In other words, this research has managed to show that the participants of this new type of social media-led movements have a very high sense of understanding of the political system and how it operates and they feel positive about their ability to affect the political system with their actions. At the same time their belief in the system's responsiveness is very low. So, one answer to what mobilizes people via social media is their strong sense of understanding the political system combined with a sense of empowerment and optimism regarding their personal potential for affecting change to it. This direct relation between participating in this new type of social-media led mobilizations and political efficacy has been shown for the first time in the relevant academic research, to my knowledge. This is a unique contribution of this research to the multi-paradigm approach of the fields of media sociology, media studies and political communication.

The empirical research also showed the emergence and establishment of a unique, operating community within the initially large but vastly heterogeneous crowds mobilized under the vague title of the "*Aganaktismenoi*". However, what is really noteworthy is that this sense of community and the community itself did not disappear after the physical exhaustion of the movement, about 6 months after its uprising. One of the most valuable legacies of the *Aganaktismenoi* were the local assemblies, or "Neighbourhood Assemblies" as they are called. These were created by the people who participated in the movement, who took the movement's knowhow from the central square of Athens and brought it to their individual neighbourhoods, incorporated it into the everyday lives of the neighbourhood and turned them into a vehicle for addressing local concerns. Organized Neighbourhood Assemblies became the hearts of the new movements and anti-austerity activism in the following years. However, this is another chapter in the evolution of urban protest mobilisation movements altogether, with strong national characteristics, which lies outside the focus of this research and calls for further investigation in the future.

The young community had its own non-linguistic communication codes as well. In a pioneering exchange, the non-linguistic codes of the Aganaktismenoi movement, mainly during the general assemblies, were "imported" from the sister-movement of the Spanish *Indignados* and also used a few months later by the Occupy movements in the USA and Europe. They comprised of hand gestures to signify agreement/disagreement and other positions in the dialogue. Within a short period of time they became the new global language of these new type of media-led, grass-roots movements. What makes this development more significant is that the movements mentioned above identified with each other as actually belonging to a transnational political mobilization, and this common gesture "language" enabled them to make decisions immediately comprehensible and accessible to an international audience. I claim that this new codified language has been established as a very powerful tool for future movements internationally. There are two reasons supporting this: First, because this set of signs has been charged with an activist, anti-systemic, movement connotation for the future mobilizations, in the future these gestures will not just be signifiers in the creation of meaning but rather heavily charged signifieds. Second, because they stand for a new, international language of protest movements. The potential for a global protest movement with common strategies and politics would be much easier to materialize if local protest movements "spoke" the same language and operated in the same way, given how tempo/spatial obstacles can be tackled by the digital media technologies. And this new set of meaningful signs provides that much desired common communicational ground, essential for the potential existence of a global movement.

However, my analysis also found some less optimistic potential in this new type of social media-led mobilizations, namely the dangers of mobilizing large crowds within an ideological void. Lately, the field of digital media and collective action has provided fertile ground for many scholars to problematize. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) discuss the digital media and the personalization of collective action. As I explained in the discussion chapter, these scholars interpret digital media platforms as coordinating mechanisms and as spaces where disparate individuals are brought together. Thus, formal organization mechanisms, such as political parties, unions or other platforms, are bypassed in the coordination of the protest mobilizations, together with the need for a coherent collective identity amongst the participants. According to Bennet

and Segerberg such action is considered to be “connective” rather than collective. I argue, based on my participant observation findings, that this new reality is not only academically interesting but also socially alarming, as it nourishes many understated potential dangers for a democratic and tolerant civil society. Perceived solidarity on the grounds of the aforementioned connective rather than collective identity, combined with an observed democratic deficit in mature democracies (Webster, 2011) create an unstable ground for meaningful civic protest mobilizations, social movements and their potential to make a difference to the policies they oppose. At the same time they expose critical masses of politically non-sophisticated crowds to any given propaganda or extreme opinion carried by groups who find legitimization mingling with the crowds, due to the comradely psychology created by the “connective” action, as described above. During my field work it became apparent that the instant, unidentified calling for mobilization via the social media, the anonymous crowd and the lack of a collective identity, a coherent ideology and some common organizational reference made it difficult for the movement to protect itself from reactionary ideologies and helped crypto-fascists to approach a large audience.

The realization follows naturally, that digital media, in this case social media, created their own heritage regarding mediated mobilization (Lievrouw 2011). With regards to this research’s case study, the Greek *Aganaktismenoi* movement, I argue that the experience of direct expression and personal, unedited dialogue, via the new alternative and in many cases radical –mainly electronic- media outputs, has been emancipating for a large number of the movement’s participants. This was constructed along three pillars: 1) Legitimization of collective decisions via their publication in the new digital media, which made the *Aganaktismenoi* general assemblies’ decisions part of the official, national, public sphere dialogue. By being openly part of the public debate, the movement’s collective decisions penetrated the agenda setting of the traditional media and was, thus, legitimized as part of the public sphere’s debate in the eyes of conventional civic society. 2) The personal responsibility every participant took for her written stated opinion, which she was afterwards called to defend in public and in writing to her immediate social circle and the more distant societal environment via the comments and discussions in the social media. I argue that this very process elevated citizens to become active political beings, active members

of the public sphere and participants who shape the current debate, as opposed to the role of the receiver/listener/judge of the public debate, promoted by the traditional media. 3) The establishment of a culturally diverse, alternative political proposal, organization and action, which was formed gradually and was inherent to the use of new digital social media, leading to the realization of the potential of a latent direct-democratic prospect, inherit in the digital media.

I argue that the aforementioned three pillars of emancipation are the social media's heritage with regards to the *Aganaktismenoi* movement. The results of such emancipation should be investigated more thoroughly by future research, looking into how this newly acquired sophistication and empowerment could possibly play out in future mobilizations and in the political communication - civic engagement nexus. Thus, new areas of investigation invite researchers to assess digital media as both tools and spaces of mediated mobilization, looking at the implications regarding mediatization, political efficacy and the quality of the political discourse produced by this new type of social media-led mobilizations.

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Methods Appendix 1.

E-survey questions

1) Did you participate in the “Aganaktismenoi” movement in any way?

   Yes

   No

2) In which way did you participate in the “Aganaktismenoi” movement?
   - I participated by going every day to the gatherings.
   - I participated by going 2-3 times a week.
   - I participated by going around once a week.
   - I participated by going less than once a week.
   - I was observing through the media and I supported.
   - Other (open).

3) Did you vote in the 2009 elections and if you did, for which party?
   - PASOK
   - Nea Dimokratia
   - KKE
   - SYRIZA
   - I did not vote
   - Other

4) Did you vote in the May 2012 elections?
   - Yes
   - No

5) If you did vote then what did you vote? (Answer for the May 2012 elections).

- New Democracy

- Syriza

- PASOK

- Independent Greeks

- Golden Dawn

- DHMAR

- KKE

- LAOS

- Creation Again!

- Ecologists Green

- I'm not Paying

- ANTARSYA

- Society – Kapodistrias' successors

- Union of the Centrals

- Other

5) Was the party that you voted for in the May 2012 elections the same you had voted in the previous elections of 2009?

- Yes

- No

7) Did you vote in the June 2012 elections?

- Yes

- No

8) If you voted then what did you vote? (Answer for the June 2012 elections).

- New Democracy

- Syriza

- PASOK

- Independent Greeks

- Golden Dawn

- DHMAR

- KKE

- LAOS

- Creation Again!

- Ecologists Green

- I'm not Paying

- ANTARSYA

- Society – Kapodistrias' successors

- Union of the Centrals

- Other

9) Was the party that you voted for in the June 2012 elections the same you had voted for in the previous elections of 2009?

- Yes

- No

B. Participation and Media

10) Do you believe that your participation in the movement of "Aganaktismenoi" affected the way you voted? If you did not participate in the movement of the "Aganaktismenoi" do you believe that despite that the events taking place in Syntagma Square affected the way you voted in the May-June 2012 elections?

- Yes

- No

11) If you were affected by the "Aganaktismenoi", in which way/ways do you think you were affected?

- Through my participation I have been in contact with a different way of political thought and action and with different ideologies that I did not know very well until then.

- Through my participation I met people who convinced me of another political way.

- Through my participation I observed a new dynamic and a hopeful rallying which foreshadowed /promised a change of the political establishment, something I did not think was possible before coming in touch with the “Square”.

- I followed the new wave that seemed militant and I voted against what I had voted in the past, in order to express my indignation.

- I voted the same as before for fear that the new wave I saw in the “Square” will upset balances and bring chaos.

- Other.

12) How did you learn/find out about the movement of the “Aganaktismenoi” and/or how did you contact them?

- From the internet/social media.

- From the traditional media TV/radio/newspapers.

- From colleagues/Union.

- From friends/word of mouth.

- Other.

13) In your opinion what was the relation between the “Aganaktismenoi” movement and the new/social media?

- Fundamental/structural relation, the movement would not have been the same without the new/social media and the landscape in the new/social media would not have been the same without the movement of the “Aganaktismenoi”.

- Friendly relation, one helped the other develop.

- Relation of mutual interest.

- Hostile/bad relation, one was being hostile and traducing or avoiding the other.

- They did not have any relation between them – neutral relation.

- Other.

14) In your opinion what was the relation between the “Aganaktismenoi” movement and the traditional media TV/radio/newspapers?

- Friendly relation, one helped the other develop.

- Relation of mutual interest.

- Hostile/bad relation, one was being hostile and traducing or avoiding the other.

- They did not have any relation between then – neutral relation.

- Other.

C. Aganaktismenoi and Political Efficacy

15) Would you say that you are interested in politics? (On a 0-10 scale)

16) How often do you feel that politics are too complicated for you to understand what is going on? (On a 0-10 scale)

17) Do you believe that your personal (political) action could affect the political system of the country in some way? (On a 0-10 scale)

18) How difficult or easy is it for you to form an opinion on political issues? (On a 0-10 scale)

19) Do you think that the Greek political system is responding to the actions and expectations of the citizens? (On a 0-10 scale)

Demographics

20) Sex

-Female

-Male

21) Age (open)

22) Education level

- Secondary

- Graduate

- Postgraduate

- Other

Residency

- Athens/Thessaloniki or capital city of another country.
- Other urban area (more than 50.000 people in Greece or abroad).
- Semi-urban area (5.000-50.000 people in Greece or abroad).
- Rural area (up to 5.000 people in Greece or abroad).
- Other.

Flyers Appendix 2.

Original language: Greek

ΑΜΕΣΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ τώρα!
ΟΛΟΙ ΕΞΩ ΣΤΙΣ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΕΣ!

Πρόσκληση Συμμετοχής

Από τις 25 Μαΐου που ξεκινήσαμε τις λαϊκές συνελεύσεις, παραμένουμε στην πλατεία, παρ' όλο που η κυβέρνηση, κάνοντας επίδειξη δύναμης, εξαπέλυσε με βαρβαρότητα χημικό πόλεμο στις 15, 28 και 29 Ιουνίου, χρησιμοποιώντας και προβοκάτορες.
Εδώ όμως σπάμε τον φόβο και την απομόνωση και ξαναχτίζουμε τις ανθρώπινες σχέσεις με αλληλεγγύη.
Στην πλατεία Συντάγματος μπορείς να συμμετέχεις ελεύθερα σε όλες τις διαδικασίες.
Συνδιαμορφώνουμε τη νέα πολιτική που στόχο της έχει να αντικαταστήσει το ολιγαρχικό καθεστώς που ζούμε. Έτσι γεννιέται ένας νέος πολιτισμός σε όλα τα επίπεδα της ζωής.
Σε δεκάδες πόλεις και δήμους σε όλη την Ελλάδα υπάρχουν λαϊκές συνελεύσεις, από τη Θεσσαλονίκη και την Ικαρία, έως τον Έβρο και τα Χανιά.
Ο 20ος αιώνας ανέδειξε δύο συστήματα δημοκρατίας που ήρθαν σε σύγκρουση: αυτό της **άμεσης** που είναι *αδιαμεσολάβητη* και όπου οι αποφάσεις παίρνονται από εμάς για εμάς, και εκείνο της **έμμεσης** , όπου οι αποφάσεις παίρνονται με αδιαφάνεια, *με διαμεσολάβηση* των κομμάτων, όπου ο λαός δεν ελέγχει τίποτα και μια φορά στα τέσσερα χρόνια έχει δικαίωμα να ψηφίσει τους επαγγελματίες πολιτικούς του ενός ή του άλλου κόμματος. Η **έμμεση** «δημοκρατία» των κομμάτων βγήκε κερδισμένη, διότι η πολιτική και οικονομική εξουσία είχαν την οργάνωση και τα μέσα να επιβάλουν την θέλησή τους.
Μήπως λοιπόν έφτασε η ώρα για αλλαγή;
Όποιο πολιτικό σκεπτικό κι αν έχεις, αν νοιώθεις πως η κατάσταση δεν πάει άλλο, έλα να πεις τη γνώμη σου, να ανταλλάξουμε απόψεις, για να φτιάξουμε όλοι μαζί το δικό μας αύριο.
Η ισότιμη συμμετοχή σου είναι που κάνει άμεση τη Δημοκρατία.
Μέχρι τώρα, εδώ που γεννήθηκε η έννοια της Δημοκρατίας, ζούμε σ' ένα καθεστώς ολιγαρχίας, κοινοβουλευτικής δικτατορίας.
Η δημοκρατία, αν δεν είναι άμεση, δεν είναι Δημοκρατία.
Η άμεση Δημοκρατία έχει ξεκινήσει στο Σύνταγμα και στις συνελεύσεις των πλατειών, είναι μια διαρκής διαδικασία που εκτείνεται σε όλες τις σφαίρες της κοινωνικής ζωής, φέρνοντας μαζί της την συνεργασία όλων των ανθρώπων χωρίς αποκλεισμούς.
Όλες μας οι αποφάσεις, όπως και αυτή η πρόσκληση, διαμορφώνονται και επικυρώνονται από τις λαϊκές Συνελεύσεις.
Εκτός από την Ελλάδα ο ίδιος αγώνας δίνεται σε πολλά μέρη της γης.
Εμπνεόμαστε και συνδεόμαστε με τις μεγάλες λαϊκές κινητοποιήσεις όλου του κόσμου.
Ο αγώνας που δίνουμε είναι κοινός ενάντια στη φτώχεια, την εκμετάλλευση, τους διαχωρισμούς και την κοινωνική ανισότητα.
Καλούμε τους πολίτες της Ευρώπης και όλου του κόσμου, να δράσουν μαζί μας για αυτούς τους κοινούς πανανθρώπινους στόχους.

ΑΜΕΣΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ ΤΩΡΑ

Ο μόνος αγώνας που χάνεται είναι αυτός που δεν δίνεται ποτέ!

ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ – ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ – ΙΣΟΤΗΤΑ – ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ

Λαϊκή Συνέλευση Πλατείας Συντάγματος, Κυριακή 17 Ιουλίου 2011

ΕΞΕΓΕΡΣΗ ΤΩΡΑ!

Ο ΑΓΩΝΑΣ ΣΥΝΕΧΙΖΕΤΑΙ ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΗ ΝΙΚΗ

Για να ανατρέψουμε την κυβέρνηση και το πολιτικό καθεστώς της πείνας, της διαφθοράς, και της εθνικής μειοδοσίας!

Είναι καθήκον μας να υπερασπίσουμε την Πατρίδα μας, την αξιοπρέπειά μας και το βιός μας. Η νίκη θα είναι δύσκολη. Θα είναι όμως δική μας!

ΟΛΟΙ ΣΤΟ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑ ΤΗΝ 3Η ΤΟΥ ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΡΗ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΘΕ ΜΕΡΑ. ΝΑ ΠΟΛΕΜΗΣΟΥΜΕ ΜΑΖΙ ΓΙΑ:

- Την ανάκτηση της εθνικής μας κυριαρχίας, την υπεράσπιση της εδαφικής μας ακεραιότητας, και του Ελληνισμού στον ενιαίο χώρο Θράκη-Αιγαίο-Κύπρος.
- Την μονομερή Διαγραφή του δημόσιου «Χρέους», την κατάργηση του Μνημονίου και των δανειακών συμβάσεων της οικονομικής λεηλασίας και ξένης κατοχής.
- Την άμεση διεκδίκηση των πολεμικών οφειλών της Γερμανίας προς την Ελλάδα (Πολεμικές Επανορθώσεις, Κατοχικό Δάνειο, Αποζημιώσεις των θυμάτων των ολοκαυτωμάτων, επιστροφή των κλεμμένων αρχαιολογικών θησαυρών), οι οποίες υπερβαίνουν κατά πολύ το δικό μας «Χρέος».
- Την εθνικοποίηση των τραπεζών, και επιχειρήσεων στρατηγικής σημασίας για την Οικονομία (ΔΕΚΟ), και διαγραφή των χρεών των μικροοφειλετών στις τράπεζες.
- Το ΟΧΙ στο ΕΥΡΩ και την Ο.Ν.Ε. Τη θέσπιση Εθνικού Νομίσματος και πολιτικών Ανάταξης της πραγματικής Οικονομίας και της Παραγωγής. Ανάπτυξη με την αξιοποίηση των πλουτο-παραγωγικών πηγών και δυνατοτήτων του τόπου μας.
- Την αποκατάσταση όλων των οικονομικών και εργασιακών κατακτήσεων και δικαιωμάτων που αφαιρέθηκαν από τον Λαό με την εφαρμογή του Μνημονίου.
- Την παραδειγματική τιμωρία και την δήμευση των περιουσιών των ενόχων της προδοσίας του Ελληνικού έθνους, και της λεηλασίας του εθνικού πλούτου της χώρας, με αναδρομική άρση της ασυλίας που καλύπτει τα εγκλήματά τους.
- Την υπεράσπιση της εθνικής μας ταυτότητας, και της πολιτιστικής και κοινωνικής συνέχειας και συνοχής με μέτρα για τη Μετανάστευση. Σταδιακή επαναπροώθηση των λαθροεποίκων και Εθνική Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική.
- Λαϊκή Συντακτική Εθνοσυνέλευση, για δημοκρατικό Σύνταγμα. Για να αποφασίζει επιτέλους ο Λαός για τον Λαό στον τόπο που γέννησε τη Δημοκρατία.

ΕΙΜΑΣΤΕ ΟΙ **ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ** ΤΗΣ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑΣ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ (Άγνωστος Στρατιώτης).

Αγωνιζόμαστε για μία κυβέρνηση βγαλμένη από το Λαό, την πλατεία Συντάγματος και τις πλατείες όλης της Χώρας!

ΕΛΑΤΕ ΣΤΟ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑ, ΤΗΝ 3Η ΤΟΥ ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΡΗ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΘΕ ΜΕΡΑ.

ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ

[redacted]

ΝΑ ΑΝΑΣΤΗΣΟΥΜΕ τις ΓΕΙΤΟΝΙΕΣ!

ένωση που δημιουργήθηκε μεταξύ μας οφείλεται, ανάμεσα στα άλλα, στο ότι
ε η αλάνα, η αυλή, ο ελεύθερος δρόμος, τα χαμηλά σπίτια και από την άλλη
χησε η νοοτροπία "κοίτα την πάρτη σου" που καλλιέργησε το τοκογλυφικό
σύστημα.
ός είναι να τελειώνουμε με αυτά ! Να ξανανιώσουμε τη ζεστασιά και την
ότητα του γείτονα. Να ξεφύγουμε από το καταστροφικό χαζοκούτι και να
ξαναβρεθούμε για να συζητάμε και να γλεντάμε ΑΠΛΑ.
Να μερικές προτάσεις:

υργούμε σε κάποιο χώρο κιόσκι ή χρησιμοποιούμε άλλο στεγασμένο χώρο για
συγκεντρώσεις – εκδηλώσεις.

με πίνακα χωρισμένο σε τμήματα : αλληλεγγύης, κοινών δράσεων, προτάσεων,
ανακοινώσεων, ενημέρωσης κλπ.

ο τμήμα αλληλεγγύης δημιουργούμε πίνακα με τρεις στήλες : α)' Ονομα β)
φέρω, γ) Έχω ανάγκη. Η προσφορά υπηρεσιών ή και πραγμάτων μπορεί να
γίνεται και χωρίς αντάλλαγμα.

4. Ψυγείο κοινόχρηστο για διάθεση φαγητού που περισσεύει.

5 Μέρος αποθεματικού δίνεται για βοήθεια σε άνεργους, ανάπηρους.

λογική καλλιέργεια σε κοινόχρηστους χώρους (ταράτσα, ακάλυπτος, αυλή).

νικά κατάλοιπα σε κάδο ή λάκκο για δημιουργία λιπάσματος (κομπόστ) για τις
καλλιέργειες.

ι συνταξιούχοι ορίζονται για ένα χρονικό διάστημα (εβδομάδα, μήνα) σαν
εφημερεύοντα άτομα προς τα οποία απευθύνεται όποιος έχει ανάγκη.

9. Προσπάθεια συντονισμού στη χρησιμοποίηση Ι.Χ.

ιουργία κεντρικής σύνδεσης στο διαδίκτυο και εξοικείωση, για να ξεφύγουμε
από την κατευθυνόμενη ενημέρωση των ΜΜΕ.

11. Παζάρι ανταλλαγής.

12. Μια φορά το μήνα τρώμε όλοι μαζί και γλεντάμε.

κή συνέλευση κάθε μήνα και ορισμός εκπροσώπων για τη λαϊκή συνέλευση της
γειτονιάς ή του Δήμου.
οι αποφάσεις της γενικής συνέλευσης παίρνονται με ψηφοφορία όπου το κάθε
έρισμα έχει μία ψήφο εκτός από τα θέματα που εμπίπτουν στον υπάρχοντα
κανονισμό της πολυκατοικίας.

5. Δημιουργία κουμπαρά για βοήθεια σε άνεργους και έχοντες ανάγκη.

ΕΝΙΑΙΟ ΨΗΦΟΔΕΛΤΙΟ ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΩΝ



Γιατί το Δίκαιο Ενιαίο δεν είναι κόμμα και αξίζει να το ψηφίσει όλη η Ελλάδα;

Τα κόμματα έχουν δεξιές, αριστερές, σοσιαλιστικές, κεντρώες και άλλες τέτοιες απόψεις.

Το Δίκαιο Ενιαίο έχει ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΕΣ απόψεις.

Ενδιαφερόμαστε για όλους τους Έλληνες, όλες τις Ελληνίδες, όλους τους Φιλέλληνες

και τα περισσότερα θέματα θα αποφασιστούν με **δημοψηφίσματα.**

Απλά, εμείς βάλαμε την βάση, για να χτίσουμε ξανά, μία

Δίκαιη Ελλάδα με Ευτυχισμένους ανθρώπους.

Μόνο αν ακούσουμε τις συμβουλές των Σοφών μας

και πράξουμε τα όσα σωστά και δίκαια έλεγαν, θα καταφέρουμε να ξεφύγουμε από την κατάντια και τη μιζέρια που έδωσαν και δίνουν, τόσα χρόνια οι κυβερνώντες με διαφθορά, κλεψιά και προδοσία!

Έλληνες, Ελληνίδες και Φιλέλληνες όλων των χωρών,

ελάτε να δημιουργήσουμε ένα καλύτερο μέλλον για μας, τα παιδιά μας και την Ελλάδα μας!

Όλοι μαζί μπορούμε, αρκεί να θέλουμε!

Μόνο αν πράξουμε αυτά που λένε οι Σοφοί μας, θα σώσουμε την Ελλάδα μας!

Πλάτων!
1.Η Πολιτεία είναι αυτή που είναι, επειδή οι πολίτες είναι αυτοί που είναι!

2.Μία από τις τιμωρίες που υφίστανται οι σοφοί, που αρνούνται να λάβουν μέρος στην κυβέρνηση, είναι να ζουν κάτω από την κυβέρνηση χειρότερων ανθρώπων!

3.Η ανθρώπινη συμπεριφορά πηγάζει από τρεις κύριες πηγές:
Επιθυμία, Συναίσθημα και Γνώση!

4. Εκείνος που κάνει την αδικία, γίνεται πάντα πιο ελεεινός, από εκείνον που την υφίσταται!

5. Οι καλοί άνθρωποι δεν χρειάζονται νόμους, για να ενεργούν υπεύθυνα, ενώ οι κακοί άνθρωποι θα βρουν τρόπους, να τους παρακάμψουν!
Η δικαιοσύνη στη ζωή και στη συμπεριφορά της πολιτείας είναι δυνατή, μόνο εάν πρώτα κατοικεί στις καρδιές και στις ψυχές των πολιτών!

6. Οι καλές πράξεις παρέχουν δύναμη στον εαυτό μας και εμπνέουν και καλές πράξεις και στους άλλους!

7. Το να υπερνικήσει ένας άνθρωπος, τον (κατώτερο) εαυτό του, είναι η πρώτη και η πιο ευγενής, από όλες τις νίκες!
Το να ηττηθεί, από τον (κατώτερο) εαυτό του, είναι το πιο αποτροπιαστικό και επονείδιστο πράγμα!

8. Όλος ο χρυσός, που βρίσκεται, πάνω ή κάτω από την γη, δεν είναι αρκετός για να δοθεί σε αντάλλαγμα, για την Αρετή!

9.Οι μόνοι που είναι ικανοί να κυβερνήσουν είναι αυτοί, που κυριαρχεί το νοητικό μέρος της ψυχής: Οι φιλόσοφοι!
Ο αληθινός φιλόσοφος, έχει γνώσεις , είναι δίκαιος, δεν έχει ιδιοτέλεια, δεν αναζητά τα πλούτη και την δόξα, δεν λατρεύει την εξουσία και δεν θέλει να κυβερνήσει!
Επομένως, αν αναγκαστεί, θα το κάνει από αίσθηση καθήκοντος και για το γενικό καλό!

10. Στις πόλεις μας οι άρχοντες, ανταγωνίζονται με πάθος ο ένας με τον άλλον, ποιος θα πάρει την εξουσία!
Η αλήθεια είναι, ότι σε όποια πόλη, αν αυτοί που μέλλουν να γίνουν άρχοντες, δείχνουν ελάχιστη αγάπη για την εξουσία, αυτή η πόλη θα ζήσει ευτυχισμένη και χωρίς διαμάχες και προστριβές!

11. Μην ψηφίζετε τον πολιτικό που έχει εμμονή με την εξουσία, αλλά αυτόν που έχει μεν τις ικανότητες, αλλά το θέμα της εξουσίας τον αφήνει, εντελώς αδιάφορο!

12. Ο λάτρης της εξουσίας με αρχηγικά, μεν προτερήματα, αλλά καταφερτζής και λαοπλάνος, θα δημιουργήσει ένα κράτος άρρωστο, προβληματικό και εν τέλει ελεεινό!

13.Η ψυχή διακρίνεται σε τρία μέρη:
Το επιθυμητικό, που σχετίζεται με τις σωματικές επιθυμίες,
το θυμοειδές, που σχετίζεται με την ανδρεία, την δόξα και τις τιμές και το λογι
που σχετίζεται με τον νου και τις λειτουργίες του.

14. Το ζητούμενο είναι, ο κάθε άνθρωπος να κάνει αυτό, για το οποίο έχει τις ικανότητες!
Τότε μόνο θα είναι ευτυχισμένος και θα έχουμε μία σωστή και δίκαιη κοινωνία
Τότε μόνο θα υπάρχει ψυχική ισορροπία και αρμονία!

15. Ούτε ο υπερβολικός πλούτος, ούτε η υπερβολική φτώχεια, είναι συστατικά
Ευτυχίας!
Η υπερβολική φτώχεια χτίζει ακραία συναισθήματα, όπως το μίσος, τη μισαλλ
(εχθρότητα και συνεπώς έλλειψη ανοχής για κάθε αντίθετη άποψη, θεωρία κα
ιδεολογία), την εγκληματικότητα.
Ο υπερβολικός πλούτος, οδηγεί στην υπεροψία, (υπερόπτης: χαρακτηρισμός π
που με τη συμπεριφορά του δείχνει να περιφρονεί και να υποτιμά τους άλλους
σκληρότητα, τον εγωισμό και την μαλθακότητα.

Και οι δύο αυτές ακραίες καταστάσεις, εξανεμίζουν αρετές και αξίες και κάνου
ανθρώπους απομονωμένους, χωρίς ειλικρινείς φίλους.

Σόλων:
16. Όταν εκείνοι που δεν έχουν αδικηθεί, αναλαμβάνουν την υπεράσπιση των
αδικημένων και προωθούν την υπόθεση με τον ίδιο ζήλο, σαν να είχαν οι ίδιοι
τότε η πολιτεία διοικείται σωστά και ισχύουν και εφαρμόζονται δίκαιοι νόμοι.

Ευριπίδης:
17. Η χώρα κινδυνεύει από αυτούς που την κυβερνούν, όχι από τον λαό!

Όμηρος:
18. Η σωτηρία εξαρτάται από εμάς!

Σοφοκλής:
19. Τίποτα πιο κακό από το χρήμα, δεν έχει φανεί μεταξύ των ανθρώπων!

Σωκράτης:
20. Καλύτερα να αδικείσαι, παρά να αδικείς!

Πλάτων:
21. Η παιδεία δεν είναι συσσώρευση γνώσεων!
Έχει στόχο την ολοκλήρωση του ανθρώπου, πρέπει να τον οδηγήσει να κατανο
φύση του, τη σχέση του με τους άλλους και να δώσει νόημα στη ζωή του!

ΕΝΙΑΙΟ ΨΗΦΟΔΕΛΤΙΟ ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΩΝ. Πληροφορίες στο τηλέφωνο
[redacted] και στο facebook.

ΑΓΩΝΑΣ ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΕΛΟΥΣ — ΑΠΟΚΛΕΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΔΕΘ

— ΝΑ ΦΥΓΟΥΝ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΗ –ΤΡΟΪΚΑ – ΜΝΗΜΟΝΙΑ

— ΔΙΑΓΡΑΦΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΕΟΥΣ

Κοντά δύο χρόνια τώρα, η δοσίλογη κυβέρνηση του ΠΑΣΟΚ παραμένει γαντζωμένη πραξικοπηματικά στην εξουσία, μια που άλλα υποσχέθηκε για να υφαρπάξει την ψήφο του ελληνικού λαού και τα ακριβώς αντίθετα εφάρμοσε. Μέχρι τώρα, το Μνημόνιο Ι, τα διάφορα «επικαιροποιημένα» Μνημόνια, τα έκτακτα μέτρα, οι προϋπολογισμοί και το Μεσοπρόθεσμο Πρόγραμμα έχουν επιφέρει ανυπολόγιστες καταστροφές στους εργαζόμενους, τη νεολαία, τα λαϊκά στρώματα και την ίδια την κοινωνία μας:

— Μια πτώση των μισθών κατά 40-60% μέσα από αναρίθμητες φοροεπιδρομές, αυξήσεις του ΦΠΑ, μείωση του αφορολόγητου, έκτακτες φορολογίες στο πετρέλαιο, τσιγάρα κ.α. Με μηδενικές αυξήσεις στους μισθούς εδώ και δύο χρόνια, με την επίσημη μείωση 25% κάτω από το βασικό μισθό για τη νεολαία. Με αυθαίρετες και «παράνομες» μειώσεις των μισθών από τους εργοδότες. Με καθυστερήσεις μισθών από τους εργοδότες για πάνω από τέσσερις ή έξι μήνες, με τη μείωση των ωρών απασχόλησης ή την κατακόρυφη άνοδο της ανεργίας. Με την κατάργηση ή δραστική περικοπή των διαφόρων επιδομάτων, δώρων κ.α.

— Έναν εξευτελισμό των εργασιακών σχέσεων και την σταδιακή μετατροπή των εργαζομένων σε δουλοπάροικους, με τη σχεδόν και τυπική κατάργηση των κλαδικών συμβάσεων, την ελαστικοποίηση του χρόνου εργασίας και την κατάργηση της προσαύξησης στις υπερωρίες, τη συνεχή πίεση για μετατροπή των συλλογικών συμβάσεων σε ατομικές, την έναρξη των μαζικών απολύσεων στο Δημόσιο και ευρύτερο δημόσιο τομέα, την καθιέρωση του θεσμού της «εργασιακής εφεδρείας» σαν προστάδιο της απόλυσης, τη συγκαλυμμένη κατάργηση της μονιμότητας στους δημόσιους υπαλλήλους κ.α.

— Την επιταχυνόμενη κατάρρευση της Παιδείας, της Υγείας και της Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης. Με την κάθετη μείωση των δαπανών. Με την ψήφιση του νόμου Διαμαντοπούλου για τα ΑΕΙ, που βαζει τέλος στο Πανεπιστήμιο, στις επιστήμες, στους πτυχιούχους και στο Άσυλο και επιβάλλει εξοντωτικά δίδακτρα. Με την κατάργηση των σχολικών βιβλίων για φέτος, με την ουσιαστική κατάργηση των προσλήψεων εκπαιδευτικών και την τρομακτική έλλειψη σε λειτουργικές δαπάνες για σχολεία και Πανεπιστήμια κ.α. Με το κλείσιμο νοσοκομείων, κλινικών, την επιβολή εισιτηρίου για εξετάσεις κ.α. Με μια σειρά αντιασφαλιστικών νόμων και διαταγμάτων που ουσιαστικά ανεβάζουν το όριο συνταξιοδότησης στα 68-70 έτη και κατεβάζουν τις συντάξεις στα 300 ευρώ. Με το κόψιμο του ΕΚΑΣ, την δραστική συρρίκνωση έως κατάργηση των επικουρικών συντάξεων κ.α.

— Το κολοσσιαίο πρόγραμμα ξεπουλήματος της δημόσιας περιουσίας, των δημοσίων επιχειρήσεων, του νερού, του ρεύματος, των συγκοινωνιών, των δρόμων, των λιμανιών, των πάρκων, των μνημείων, των νησιών κ.α. Δηλαδή όλης εκείνης της περιουσίας και υποδομής που στήριζε μέχρι τώρα το βιοτικό μας επίπεδο, που έκανε «ανθρώπινη» και υποφερτή τη ζωή μας και που χρειάστηκαν δεκαετίες για να τη δημιουργήσουν με τον ιδρώτα τους οι εργαζόμενοι.

Η κρίση όχι μόνο δεν θα σταματήσει αλλά θα βαθύνει ακόμη περισσότερο...

Όλη η μέχρι τώρα βίαιη, πρωτοφανής και κολοσσιαία αναδιανομή πλούτου, όλες αυτές οι θυσίες, όχι μόνο δεν μας βγάζουν από την κρίση, όχι μόνο δεν την σταματούν, αλλά μας οδηγούν στην πλήρη πλέον κατάρρευση της κοινωνίας, στην απόλυτη καταστροφή.

Την τριετία 2009-2011 το Ακαθάριστο Εθνικό Προϊόν (δηλαδή η αξία όλων των προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών που παράγουμε μέσα σ' έναν χρόνο) θα έχει μειωθεί μέχρι το τέλος της χρονιάς κατά 13%. Η βιομηχανική παραγωγή πάνω από 22%. Τα Δημόσια Έργα έχουν πρακτικά σταματήσει, η πτώση στην οικοδομή έχει ξεπεράσει το 50%.

Η ανεργία επίσημα είναι στο 16%, όμως όλοι ομολογούν ότι είναι πολύ παραπάνω, ότι οι άνεργοι είναι 1,2 εκατομμύρια και μέχρι το τέλος της χρονιάς θα φτάσουν το 1,5 εκατομμύριο. Άλλο 1 εκατομμύριο είναι υποαπασχολούμενοι (με ελαστικές μορφές εργασίας, ανασφάλιστοι κ.α.). Σχεδόν ένας στους δύο νέους είναι άνεργος. Ο αριθμός αυτών που ζουν κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας έχει ξεπεράσει το 25% και αυξάνει αλματωδώς.

Αυτή η πολιτική της κυβερνησης, ευρωπαίων μεγαλοεπιχειρηματιών και τραπεζιτών, όχι μόνο μας εξαθλιώνει, όχι μόνο καταστρέφει την κοινωνία, αλλά είναι και εντελώς αναποτελεσματική, αδιέξοδη και αυτοκαταστροφική. Θα οδηγεί συνεχώς στο όλο και μεγαλύτερο βάθεμα της κρίσης, σε όλο και περισσότερα μέτρα που θα ξαναεπιδεινώνουν περισσότερο την κρίση - και αυτό δεν έχει τέλος. Αν τους αφήσουμε, θα γίνουμε μια βομβαρδισμένη κοινωνία ερειπίων, όπου μέσα της θα περιφέρονται σκελετωμένοι άνθρωποι και μια χούφτα επιχειρηματιών θα συγκεντρώνει ό,τι πλούτο απομένει.

Αγώνας μέχρι τέλος: Αποκλεισμός της ΔΕΘ – Κάτω η κυβέρνηση

Το δίλημμα είναι ωμό και άμεσο: Ή αυτοί ή εμείς. Γι' αυτό πρέπει να διώξουμε όλο αυτό το χρεοκοπημένο οικονομικό και πολιτικό σύστημα, για ν' αρχίσουμε να παίρνουμε πίσω τον πλούτο που παράγουμε και όσα μας έχουν ήδη αρπάξει για να φτιάξουν τις αμύθητες περιουσίες τους, όπως τα 600 δις των καταθέσεων των ελλήνων πλουσίων στις ελβετικές τράπεζες.

Να συνεχίσουμε με ακόμη μεγαλύτερη ένταση τον αγώνα μέχρι να ρίξουμε αυτή την άθλια και ετοιμόρροπη κυβέρνηση των δοσίλογων, μέχρι να διώξουμε την Τρόικα και να καταργήσουμε όλα τα Μνημόνια.

Δεν έχουμε να περιμένουμε τίποτε από την επίσημη ρεφορμιστική αριστερά (ΚΚΕ και ΣΥΡΙΖΑ), που παράλυτη μπροστά στις ανάγκες της οργάνωσης και γιγάντωσης του αγώνα μας, το μόνο που κάνει είναι να ζητιανεύει εκλογές. Ειδικά από το ΚΚΕ, που όχι μόνο αδιαφορεί για ό,τι δεν ελέγχει, αλλά και εκτοξεύει κάθε είδους συκοφαντία ενάντια στο κίνημά μας.

- Να μαζικοποιήσουμε και να ενισχύσουμε το κίνημα των Πλατειών. Δεν πρόκειται να φύγουμε από καμία πλατεία, δεν πρόκειται να φύγουμε από την Πλατεία Συντάγματος μέχρι να φύγουν όλοι αυτοί και οι πολιτικές τους.
- Να ενισχύσουμε το κίνημα των Πλατειών, δημιουργώντας λαϊκές συνελεύσεις στις πλατείες όλων των συνοικιών, για ν' αποτρέψουμε την εφαρμογή των Μνημονίων και του Μεσοπρόθεσμου στην πράξη, αλλά και για να αντιμετωπίσουμε τις επιπτώσεις της κρίσης. Οργανωμένοι στις λαϊκές συνελεύσεις κάθε συνοικίας, να εμποδίσουμε το κλείσιμο σχολείων, πανεπιστημίων, την επιβολή διδάκτρων, το κλείσιμο νοσοκομείων ή κλινικών, το κόψιμο του ρεύματος ή του τηλεφώνου ή του νερού, να βοηθήσουμε τους άνεργους, τους φτωχούς με μια διανομή προϊόντων, να εμποδίσουμε το κλείσιμο εργοστασίων και επιχειρήσεων, να σταματήσουμε τις απολύσεις ή όποια προσπάθεια μείωσης των μισθών.
- Να χρησιμοποιήσουμε κάθε μορφή πάλης, αποκλεισμούς δρόμων, καταλήψεις δημοσίων κτιρίων κ.α. Να προετοιμάσουμε μια πολιτική Γενική Απεργία Διαρκείας ώστε να τους στείλουμε στον αγύριστο.

Αυτή η κυβέρνηση πρέπει να πέσει και μπορούμε να τη ρίξουμε. Όλοι στον αποκλεισμό της ΔΕΘ το Σάββατο 10 Σεπτέμβρη, για να μην επιτρέψουμε σ' αυτή την κυβέρνηση και σ' αυτό τον πρωθυπουργό ούτε να μιλήσουν, ούτε να εγκαινιάσουν την Έκθεση, ούτε να ανακοινώσουν την κυβερνητική τους πολιτική.

— Διαγραφή του χρέους. Δεν χρωστάμε, δεν πληρώνουμε. Εθνικοποίηση όλων των τραπεζών, μεγάλων επιχειρήσεων και ΔΕΚΟ χωρίς αποζημίωση και κάτω από εργατικό έλεγχο.

— Απαγόρευση των Απολύσεων. Κατάργηση κάθε ελαστικής εργασίας. Σε κάθε επιχείρηση που κλείνει ή απολύει, δήμευση της περιουσίας των ιδιοκτητών και λειτουργία της κάτω από εργατικό έλεγχο. Λιγότερη δουλειά, δουλειά για όλους, με 35ωρο-5νθήμερο-7ωρο.

— Κατάργηση του ΦΠΑ στα είδη λαϊκής κατανάλωσης. Εργατικός έλεγχος στις τιμές.

— Αυξήσεις σε μισθούς-συντάξεις. Στόχος μας 1.400 ευρώ κατώτερος βασικός μισθός για όλους. Κανένας εργαζόμενος χωρίς συλλογική σύμβαση εργασίας.

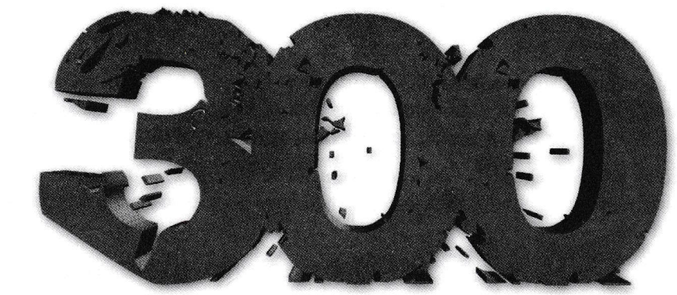
— Αύξηση των κοινωνικών δαπανών, δημόσια και δωρεάν υγεία και παιδεία, πρόγραμμα οικοδόμησης σχολείων, νοσοκομείων, εργατικών-λαϊκών κατοικιών και προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος.

— Άμεση επιστροφή στα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία όλων των κλεμμένων και των οφειλών κράτους και εργοδοτών. Κατάργηση όλων των αντιασφαλιστικών νόμων.

Οργάνωση Κομμουνιστών Διεθνιστών Ελλάδας

www.okde.gr [redacted]

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Συμπατριώτη/ισσα,

Είμαι ο αδερφός σου, ο φίλος , ο συγγενής,ο συνεργάτης σου,ένας σαν εσένα, που πλέον δεν έχω δουλειά, χάνω το σπίτι μου, κλείνω το μαγαζί μου, μου έκοψαν το μισθό και την σύνταξη μου.

Είμαι αυτός που δεν κάνει πια όνειρα και δεν έχει πλέον τα απαραίτητα και ίσως ούτε φαγητό για τα παιδιά του.

Είμαι αυτός που κοιμάται και ξυπνάει με το στομάχι δεμένο κόμπο και το άγχος και το φόβο μόνιμη παρέα για το αύριο.

Δεν είμαι όμως μόνος μου. Είμαστε πολλοί και είμαστε εδώ για να ζητήσουμε τα αυτονόητα.

Για να φωνάξουμε για το ΔΙΚΙΟ που μας πνίγει,γιατί "δεν τα φάγαμε μαζί" με κανένα, γιατί δεν μας ρώτησαν ποτέ για τίποτα και τώρα μας καλούν να πληρώσουμε για άλλη μια φορά τα σπασμένα ΑΛΛΩΝ.

Δεν είμαστε συνδικαλιστές , δεν ανήκουμε σε κανένα κόμμα δεν μας υποστηρίζει κανείς και τίποτα. Από τον ΜΟΝΟ που μπορούμε να περιμένουμε βοήθεια είναι από ΕΣΕΝΑ.

Ομως είμαστε πλέον ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣΜΕΝΟΙ να ΠΑΛΕΨΟΥΜΕ και να αποδείξουμε ότι όσο και αν μας έχουν τσακίσει, υπάρχουν ακόμα ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ με ΨΥΧΗ . Ετσι αποφασίσαμε να κατέβουμε στο ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑ και να παραμείνουμε εκεί μέχρι να γίνει αυτό που θα έπρεπε να έχει γίνει,πριν από οποιαδήποτε σημαντική απόφαση.

ΖΗΤΑΜΕ ΑΠΛΟ ΚΑΙ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΟ

ΔΗΜΟΨΗΦΙΣΜΑ

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ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΚΥΡΗΞΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΟΖ ΣΤΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟ

ΕΝΩΣΕ ΤΗΝ ΦΩΝΗ ΣΟΥ ΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΔΙΚΗ ΜΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΒΟΗΘΗΣΕ ΜΑΣ ΒΟΗΘΩΝΤΑΣ ΤΟΝ ΕΑΥΤΟ ΣΟΥ .

ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΗΣΕ ΜΑΖΙ ΜΑΣ ΣΤΟ [redacted] ή στο [redacted]

Η ΠΡΟΣΠΑΘΕΙΑ ΜΑΣ ΞΕΚΙΝΗΣΕ ΤΗΝ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ **22** ΜΑΙΟΥ **2011**

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Μένουμε σταθερές στην απόφαση μας με τη σημερινή μας δράση να περάσουμε το **ΕΙΡΗΝΙΚΟ** μας μήνυμα!

Συνεχίζουμε σταθερά κι αποφασιστικά και ποντάρουμε στο επικοινωνιακό κομμάτι της κίνησης αυτής!

Απευθυνόμαστε στις γυναίκες που είδαν και ξέρουν, σ' αυτές που έμαθαν κ φοβούνται: <u>Είμαστε σαν κι εσάς, με τους ίδιους φόβους αλλά και το δικαίωμα να ονειρευόμαστε γι' αυτό και θα παλέψουμε!</u>

Απευθυνόμαστε και σε αυτούς που θέλουν να μας διαλύσουν: <u>Δεν φοβόμαστε και ειρηνικά συνεχίζουμε να διαδηλώνουμε.</u>

Δεν διαχωριζόμαστε από κανέναν, αντιθέτως θέλουμε να ενώσουμε όλες τις γυναίκες και ειδικά εκείνες που ακόμα διστάζουν, φοβούνται, ή δεν γνωρίζουν τα αιτήματα του κινήματος των πλατειών!

<u>Θέλουμε και μπορούμε να τα αλλάξουμε όλα!</u>

ΕΜΠΡΟΣ ΝΑ ΔΙΩΞΟΥΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΧΡΕΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ ΜΕ ΕΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ

ΕΝΙΑΙΟ ΠΑΛΛΑΪΚΟ ΜΕΤΩΠΟ

Δύο μήνες μετά την μεγάλη μάχη του Συντάγματος που έδωσε ο λαός για να προστατέψει τις κοινωνικές κατακτήσεις, τα δημόσια αγαθά, την ίδια την δημοκρατία και να αποτρέψει την εκποίηση της χώρας στην τρόϊκα και στους τραπεζίτες, η δυναμική του λαϊκού ξεσηκωμού συνεχίζεται.

Τώρα, σε μια κρίσιμη συγκυρία, όπου η καταστροφική λαίλαπα των πολιτικών του Μνημονίου έρχεται να αφανίσει όλα τα λαϊκά στρώματα με τα νέα χαράτσια και να βυθίσει στη φτώχεια και το χάος την κοινωνία για πολλές δεκαετίες, η αντίσταση πρέπει να ενταθεί και να κλιμακωθεί.

Ο ίδιος ο λαός έχει πλέον την ευθύνη να απαλλαγεί από τον ζουρλομανδύα του ΔΝΤ, να εμποδίσει την διάλυση της χώρας, και να πάρει τις τύχες του στα χέρια του.

Μετά την αρχική φάση της απόγνωσης και ύστερα της αγανάκτησης, ο φετινός Σεπτέμβρης πρέπει να σηματοδοτήσει την αναβάθμιση της αυτοοργάνωσης των αντιστασιακών δυνάμεων και την συγκρότησή τους σε βάθος χρόνου μέχρι την τελική νίκη.

Είναι καθήκον όλων να παλέψουμε για να διευρυνθεί η απονομιμοποίηση του κυρίαρχου πολιτικού συστήματος που είναι υπεύθυνο για το ξεπούλημα, να μην αφήσουμε να εφαρμοσθούν οι συμφωνίες του «μεσοπρόθεσμου», να προστατέψουμε την κοινωνία από τον εμφύλιο που θέλει να πυροδοτήσει η ξενόδουλη ελίτ με την προπαγάνδα που διασπείρει και την ανέχεια που φέρνει.

Δεν έχουμε άλλη επιλογή από του να ανοίξουμε μόνοι μας τον δρόμο για το μέλλον, ανατρέποντας το σάπιο σημερινό κατεστημένο μέσα από ένα παλλαϊκό πατριωτικό αγώνα.

Να αρνηθούμε τα επαχθή χρέη, να βγούμε από τα δεσμά του ευρώ, να ανασυγκροτήσουμε την οικονομία με εθνική στρατηγική, να κατακτήσουμε την αληθινή δημοκρατία, να φέρουμε την αναγέννηση και την ελπίδα ξανά στη χώρα.

Δεν θα κάνουμε πίσω, δεν φοβόμαστε τίποτα, δεν μας διασπά καμμιά διαχωριστική γραμμή, δεν αγωνιζόμαστε προσωρινά με εκλογικό ορίζοντα, δεν θα δεχθούμε καμμιά λύση «εθνικής σωτηρίας»... χωρίς τον λαό και το έθνος.

Εμείς ερχόμαστε, αυτοί φεύγουν. Είμαστε πολλοί και παντού. Είμαστε εκατομμύρια. Είμαστε ο ελληνικός λαός!

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ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΑΝΕΞΑΡΤΗΣΙΑ - ΛΑΪΚΗ ΚΥΡΙΑΡΧΙΑ
ΠΑΤΡΙΩΤΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΓΕΝΝΗΣΗ

Σπίθα
Κίνημα Ανεξάρτητων Πολιτών
Μίκης Θεοδωράκης

www.mikis-theodorakis-kinisi-anexartiton-politon.gr



Η Συνταγματική Τάξη της χώρας έχει καταπατηθεί

Η Κυβέρνηση έχει ουσιαστικά απολέσει την «έξωθεν καλή μαρτυρία», που είναι η στήριξή της από την πλειοψηφία του λαού.

Η ευθύνη για την τήρηση του Συντάγματος και των Νόμων έχει περάσει στην ευθύνη της πλειοψηφίας του Λαού

Για μας έχει μπει σε εφαρμογή η ακροτελεύτια διάταξη του ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ άρθρο 120

1. Το Σύνταγμα αυτό, που ψηφίστηκε από την Ε΄ Αναθεωρητική Βουλή των Ελλήνων, υπογράφεται από τον Πρόεδρό της, δημοσιεύεται από τον προσωρινό Πρόεδρο της Δημοκρατίας στην Εφημερίδα της Κυβερνήσεως, με διάταγμα που προσυπογράφεται από το Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο και αρχίζει να ισχύει από τις ένδεκα Ιουνίου 1975.
2. Ο σεβασμός στο Σύνταγμα και τους νόμους που συμφωνούν με αυτό και η αφοσίωση στην Πατρίδα και τη Δημοκρατία αποτελούν θεμελιώδη υποχρέωση όλων των Ελλήνων.
3. Ο σφετερισμός, με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο, της λαϊκής κυριαρχίας και των εξουσιών που απορρέουν από αυτή διώκεται μόλις αποκατασταθεί η νόμιμη εξουσία, οπότε αρχίζει και η παραγραφή του εγκλήματος.
4. Η τήρηση του Συντάγματος επαφίεται στον πατριωτισμό των Ελλήνων, που δικαιούνται και υποχρεούνται να αντιστέκονται με κάθε μέσο εναντίον οποιουδήποτε επιχειρεί να το καταλύσει με τη βία.»

Πού είναι ο Πρόεδρος της Δημοκρατίας; Πού είναι τα Κόμματα της Αριστεράς; Το Συμβούλιο Επικρατείας; Ο Άρειος Πάγος; Η Ακαδημία Αθηνών; Τα Πανεπιστήμια; Τα Συνδικάτα; Οι Ενώσεις;

Λαός προδομένος! Λαός προδομένος! Λαός Προδομένος!

Θεωρούμε ως απολύτως νόμιμη δημοκρατική άμυνα τις όποιες ενέργειές μας ενάντια στην ουσιαστική και πραγματική βία που εκπορεύεται ενάντια στη χώρα και στο Λαό μας από τις αποφάσεις μιας κυβέρνησης ουσιαστικής μειοψηφίας, που έχει καταντήσει πειθήνιο όργανο στις αποφάσεις των ξένων.

Και δεν υπάρχει μεγαλύτερη βία από το να οδηγείς ένα Λαό στην Ανεργία, στη Φτώχεια, να απολύεις δεκάδες χιλιάδες υπαλλήλους. εργαζομένους, να κλείνεις βιομηχανίες και βιοτεχνίες, να βάζεις λουκέτο στα καταστήματα πετώντας στο δρόμο ιδιοκτήτες και υπαλλήλους να αναγκάζεις τη νεολαία να μεταναστεύει, να παραχωρείς (το κυριότερο) την εθνική μας αυτοτέλεια, να ξεπουλάς τον πλούτο της χώρας, να σκοτώνεις την ανάπτυξη, να ζητιανεύεις για νέα δάνεια και να φορτώνεις τις επόμενες γενιές με νέα δημόσια χρέη, να έχεις καταντήσει τη χώρα μας χώρα ντροπής μέσα στη διεθνή κοινότητα κλπ. κλπ. και τέλος να αναγκάζεις να αυτοκτονούν για λόγους οικονομικούς και ανεργίας, 500 συμπολίτες μας κάθε χρόνο! Αν όλα αυτά δεν είναι βία, τότε πώς αλλιώς θα πρέπει να χαρακτηριστούν;

« ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΣΗ στη Βία »

του Κινήματος Ανεξάρτητων Πολιτών ΣΠΙΘΑ Του Μίκη Θεοδωράκη

Αγωνιζόμαστε για:

1. **Να απαλλαγούμε από το Μνημόνιο, την Τρόικα και το ΔΝΤ.**
2. **Να χαρακτηρίσουμε Άκυρες όλες τις δεσμευτικές συμβάσεις-συμφωνίες που υπέγραψε η Κυβέρνηση του Μνημονίου.**
3. **Να απαλλαγούμε οριστικά και τελεσίδικα από τα χρέη και τους τόκους.**
4. **Να απαιτήσουμε τις πολεμικές επανορθώσεις από την Γερμανία.**
5. **Να συνάψουμε Δάνεια και Επικερδείς Συμφωνίες με κάθε χώρα, Ανατολική, Δυτική, Βόρεια ή Νότια, που θα δεχτεί να μας δανείσει με χαμηλό επιτόκιο και με λογικούς όρους..**
6. **Να διεκδικήσουμε το status της Ουδετερότητας με την καθιέρωση ισότιμων σχέσεων με όλες τις χώρες του κόσμου και με την επιδίωξη να μη διαταραχθεί η θέση μας στην Ευρώπη. Όσον αφορά το ΝΑΤΟ, το Status της Ουδετερότητας οδηγεί σε αναθεώρηση των σχέσεών μας. Τέλος οι διεθνείς εγγυήσεις που θα συνοδεύουν την Ουδετερότητα της χώρας, μάς απαλλάσσουν οριστικά από τα βάρη των εξοπλισμών.**
7. **Να επιβάλουμε τα Κυριαρχικά μας Δικαιώματα στους τομείς των διεθνών σχέσεων και της Άμυνας της Χώρας.**
8. **Να αξιοποιήσουμε τον ορυκτό και υποθαλάσσιο πλούτο της χώρας ξεκινώντας με την ΑΟΖ.**
9. **Να αναθεωρήσουμε τον Συνταγματικό μας χάρτη με νέους θεσμούς που να εξασφαλίζουν το Πολίτευμα της γνήσιας-πραγματικής και άμεσης Δημοκρατίας. Και τέλος**
10. **Να εφαρμόσουμε ένα Νέο Πρόγραμμα Οικονομικής Ανάπτυξης-Κοινωνικής Ανόρθωσης-Εκπαιδευτικής Μεταρρύθμισης και Πολιτιστικής Αναγέννησης με στόχο την ραγδαία άνοδο του οικονομικού-κοινωνικού-μορφωτικού και πολιτιστικού επιπέδου του ελληνικού λαού με την παράλληλη ανάδειξη του κύρους της χώρας στον διεθνή χώρο.**

Η Λευτεριά δεν χαρίζεται αλλά κερδίζεται.

ΟΡΓΑΝΩΘΕΙΤΕ στο Κίνημα Ανεξάρτητων Πολιτών «**ΣΠΙΘΑ**» του Μίκη Θεοδωράκη

Η επίσημη ιστοσελίδα του Κινήματος: http://www.mikis-theodorakis-kinisi-anexartiton-politon.gr

[redacted]

email: [redacted]

ΤΗΛ. ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑΣ

[redacted]

Τυπώστε το και μοιράστε το