

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RISE OF SYRIZA IN THE CONTEXT OF CRISIS OF
NEOLIBERALISM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
EUROPEAN STUDIES

OCTOBER 2017

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Rise of SYRIZA in the Context of Crisis of Neoliberalism

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October 2017, 127 pages

This thesis analyzes the rise of Greek radical left party, SYRIZA within the context of the 2008 economic crisis and the subsequent Eurozone crisis. The rise of SYRIZA will be discussed in relation with the atmosphere that arose in Greece specifically after the country's emergent debt crisis and the following harsh austerity measures. In the process, the social movements as a reaction to such strict measures became widespread all across the country. SYRIZA was able to establish ties with these movements and able to become the main parliamentary force that support these movements actively. In this respect, it will be argued that the party's main strength became its active participation and support of the social movements. The crisis of neoliberalism and Eurozone crisis provide the general framework of the analysis. Historical evaluation of the party and the country's political atmosphere along with a political and economic background will also be referred in the scope of the thesis.

Keywords: SYRIZA, crisis, neoliberalism, Eurozone, social movements

ÖZ

Neoliberalizmin Krizi Bağlamında SYRIZA'nın Yükselişinin Analizi

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Ekim 2017, 127 sayfa

Bu tez, Yunan radikal sol partisi SYRIZA'nın yükselişini 2008 ekonomik krizi ve onu izleyen Eurozone krizi bağlamında analiz etmektedir. SYRIZA'nın yükselişi özellikle Yunanistan'ın borç krizi ve onu izleyen sert kemer sıkma önlemleri gölgesinde oluşan atmosfer ile ilişkili olarak tartışılacaktır. Bu süreçte katı kemer sıkma politikalarına tepki olarak sosyal hareketler ülke genelinde yaygınlaşmıştır. SYRIZA bu hareketlerle bağ kurabilmeyi başarmış ve bu hareketleri aktif bir şekilde destekleyen ana parlamenter güç olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, SYRIZA'nın asıl gücünü sosyal hareketlere aktif katılımı ve desteğinden aldığı tartışılmaktadır. Neoliberalizmin krizi ve Avro Bölgesi krizi bu analize genel bir çerçeve sağlamıştır. Partinin tarihsel gelişimine, ülkedeki politik atmosfere ve ülkenin politik ve ekonomik arka planına da ayrıca değinilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: SYRIZA, kriz, neoliberalizm, Eurozone, sosyal hareketler

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express her deepest gratitude to her supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galip Yalman for his patience, his valuable guidance and advices, his constructive and as well informative criticisms and encouragements during the process.

The author would like to thank the examining committee members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Bedirhanoğlu for her valuable comments and suggestions and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitris Tsarouhas for his guiding and enlightening comments and critiques that gained the research a direction.

The author also acknowledges all of her family members and friends who supported her and encouraged her all the time within the process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Subprime mortgage crisis appeared in the USA hit the world at short notice and transformed into a global crisis. Indeed, its effects' severity changed in each country. In the European context, the most prominent example can be regarded as the Greek case. In 2010, when the Greek crisis became apparent, the country had to knock at the doors of the creditors for a relief from the crisis. In the process while the Greek people were overwhelmed by the draconian austerity measures inside, they faced with harsh criticisms outside since they were held responsible as the main cause of this crisis. It is possible to claim that the most cruel and provocative comments were belonged to the Germany. In its February 2010 issue, a weekly newsmagazine Focus' cover was displaying the sculpture of goddess Aphrodite by giving the finger to the rest of the Eurozone with the heading of "Swindlers in the Euro family" (Spiegel, 2011). Moreover, in 2012, Bild, a well-known German newspaper, had a front cover with the heading of "Bye Greece, Today We Can Not Save You" (Weisenthal, 2012). In an interview with the deputy editor of the newspaper, Nikolaus Blome, he expressed that "The ideal outcome would be that from one day to the other, the Greek government and the Greek people would be able to rebuild their state [and] to rebuild their society. But that's not realistic" (Taylor, 2012). Also, regarding the language their newspaper used about the Greek issue, he indicated that "I don't think calling a problem a problem can be offensive" (Ibid, 2012). These are just few examples that show the Germans' attitude towards the Greek crisis. The German side is obviously not very willing to rescue Greece. They, at least the conservative circles, believe that this is their fault to get caught up in a debt trap; therefore, they should suffer the consequences. Germans do not have to pay the price over their place. In fact, the Greek people suffered and are still suffering dramatically by literally shouldering all the burden of the crisis. They were the

ones asked for the heaviest bill even though it is the political elite who are the actual responsible. Indeed, the Greek people was aware the fact that while they were crushed under the bailout packages, which mainly focused on to rescue the banking system and favor the upper strata of the society by freeing them to pay the price along with the rest of the society. In this atmosphere, Troika (IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission) maintained its control over the Greek governments and prevented any attempts that could overrule their authority in the process. To illustrate, when the former Greek president Papandreou declared to hold a referendum for these austerity measures, the creditors immediately got involved and hindered it. Papandreou resigned and a technocratic government was established under the leadership of Papademos, who is an economist, served in both the Bank of Greece and the European Central Bank. This development actually revealed how bad the situation was since even the democracy and the will of people did not matter. Greek people had no right to speak up for themselves other than taking up the streets. Eventually, people of Greece took the streets to protest the injustice that they encountered. They resisted against their angels of death. These austerity movements were the reflection of the Greek people's frustration and outburst. They no longer wanted to be the victims of this crisis. On the other hand, they lost their confidence to the existing political system. In the Aganaktismenoi movement, they expressed that they demand the elimination of the corrupt political system and replacement of it with the direct democracy. They also physically exercised the direct democracy within the movement itself through the assemblies that they formed in the squares.

In the political context, Greek people punished all the politicians that supported the austerity measures. The two biggest parties of the country, PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement) and ND (New Democracy), experienced dramatic declines in their vote shares. Long-lasting two-party system of the country came to a full stop with SYRIZA's showing up. In 2012 elections, SYRIZA made a breakthrough and appeared as the second party in the elections with a small difference in between the vote shares of the party and the first party, ND. This rise continued in the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections, in which SYRIZA appeared as the first party. After this success, Alexis Tsipras, the leader of SYRIZA, in his statement expressed that national elections should

be held immediately, and added that “outcome of the vote robs government of any 'political or moral legitimacy' to continue with austerity policies” (Smith, 2014). Indeed, SYRIZA’s strict position against the austerity measures would certainly increase the appeal of the party among the Greek people. After the 2012 elections, the party took up its position against any coalition possibility with a party who supported the austerity measures. This act of the party enabled it to gain the confidence of Greek people. They on one level proved that they did not chase the governmental power, and they were sincere about their anti-austerity stance. In this respect, SYRIZA’s success in the European Parliament was not a coincidence but a purposeful act. Greek people clearly send a message to the EU by choosing the SYRIZA as the first in the EP elections. They want to show that they do not give their consent to austerity measures imposed on them with a top-down understanding, and they intended to resist against it with every channel that they could use. On the one hand, SYRIZA’s success in the 2014 elections was also regarded as success in the leftist spectrum after PASOK’s decay as a center left party that mostly lost its remained leftist position after the enactment of the austerity measures.

With the rise of SYRIZA the discussions regarding the Greece’s exit from Eurozone (also named as Grexit) and even an exit from the EU membership for the country flamed up. Especially, The Economist, London-based weekly magazine, carried the issue to its cover for several times. Firstly on June 2011 issue of the magazine, the cover was “*If Greece goes*” with the comment of “The opportunity for Europe’s leaders to avoid disaster is shrinking fast”. Then in 12th of May 2012 the cover was “*Europe’s Achilles heel*” with comment of “Amid growing risk of a Greek exit, the euro zone has yet to face up to the task of saving the single currency”. In 19th of May 2012, the cover was “*The Greek run*” with the comment of “It is not a good idea for Greece to leave the euro. But it is time to prepare for its departure”. In 2015 with the SYRIZA’s victory in the national elections, the magazine made four Grexit covers. While SYRIZA expressed that even if they are an anti-austerity party, they do not support an exit from Eurozone or EU all together.

In 2015 elections, SYRIZA succeeded to come first. This triumph of the party had broad repercussions in the major international media outlets. The Guardian gave the headline of “Syriza’s historic win puts Greece on collision course with Europe” (Traynor & Smith, 2015). Financial Times’ cover was “Greek leftists’ victory throws down challenge to euro-establishment” (Barber & Hope, 2015). The Times had a headline of “Europe rocked by Greek revolt against austerity” (Carassava & Bremner & Castello, 2015). All these statements show that SYRIZA was realized as a threat to the integrity of the Eurozone and EU in general. Indeed, the party’s radical left appearance can be considered as one of the main factors that directed these authorities to such opinion. At this point, it can be helpful to make a definition for a radical left party in order to clarify the image of it. In this regard, Luke March (2011) gives a clear definition for it;

“Radical Left Parties (RLPs) are radical first in that they reject the underlying socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism and its values and practices (ranging, depending on party, from rejection of consumerism and neo-liberalism to outright opposition to private property and capitalistic profit incentives). Second, they advocate alternative economic and power structures involving a major redistribution of resources from existing political elites. RLPs are left first in their identification of economic inequality as the basis of existing political and social arrangements and their espousal of collective economic and social rights as their principal agenda. Second, anti-capitalism is more consistently expressed than anti-democratic sentiment, although a radical subversion of liberal democracy may be implicit in the redistributive aims of many parties. Finally, this left is internationalist, both in terms of its search for cross-national networking and solidarity, and in its assertion that national and regional socio-political issues have global structural causes (such as ‘imperialism’ or ‘globalization’)” (p.8-9).

There are also concerns in the major international media outlets about whether the Greek case has a domino effect in the other EU countries, as the Spain has already experienced a similar case. In this regard, Al Jazeera gave the headline of “Is Syriza’s victory a shift for Europe?” accompanied with a subheading of “Will other southern European countries heed the Greek call for resistance to non-democratic rule?” (Marder, 2015). Indeed, Greece was not the only country in the euro area that affected the crisis dramatically. On the contrary, Greek crisis enabled the Eurozone crisis to become visible.

SYRIZA's success got different reactions from the different leftist circles. For instance, Takis Fotopoulos¹ (2015) expressed;

“both SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain, given their commitment to the EU and the Euro, simply exploit the desperation of the victims of the New World Order of neoliberal globalization in these two countries, as there is no possibility whatsoever that they will take any of the radical steps required to really alleviate the appalling economic condition of the majority of the population in both countries and particularly in Greece, within the constraints imposed by the EU and the constitutional Treaties that institutionalized neoliberal globalization at the European level”(p.15). On the other hand, Stuart Munckton² (2015) reported that “we offer our support and solidarity to SYRIZA and Greece- their struggle is part of our struggle, part of the global struggle for a new world that serves people and the planet, not corporate profit”.

SYRIZA's radical characteristics frightened the more conservative circles related to a change that it can bring. On the other hand, some orthodox circles of the left from the very beginning criticized the methods and strategies of the party within this process. Moreover, party was defined as populist both in academic circles and in the mainstream politics. Indeed, these populism attributions contain both negative and neutral connotations. The success of SYRIZA as a relatively new radical left party is indeed impressive. In this context, the party became an open target for all kind of criticisms. Nevertheless, before convicting the party it is important to make a detail assessment regarding this miraculous rise. Therefore, in this thesis sorting out this process in order to build an opinion became the key object. Besides, such an analysis can be benefitted by other radical left parties in their own journey to the power.

At this point, I want to be more specific about my thesis subject. In my thesis, I will try to make an evaluation concerning the SYRIZA's rise. In this sense, the main argument of this thesis is that SYRIZA as a radical left party owes its rise to its active social movement support. Party rather than being populist in nature exhibited its difference through being part of social movements without taking a vanguardist stance. Especially in the early 2000s, party's engagement to the World Social Forums and accordingly reshaping its strategy in line with active social movement participation changed the

¹ Takis Fotopoulos is an economist and the writer and the editor of the international journal "Democracy & Nature", the international journal for inclusive democracy.

² Stuart Munckton is the co-editor of Green Left Weekly.

party's outlook. Indeed, the crisis atmosphere obviously became a contributing during their journey to the office since the increasing number of social movements raised the visibility of the party among the Greek people. Moreover, their former experiences was guiding about how they should behave in these movements and how they should approach people. In this regard, they recognized the autonomous characteristics of the movements and avoided to realize a vanguardist role. Therefore, their main strength in the process stems from their active social movement participation.

This thesis tried to support this argument by elaborating the issue in a detailed contextual analysis. Thesis consists of five chapters. First chapter provides a brief introduction to the topic. In the second chapter, the crisis of neoliberalism will be explained. Within this scope, how neoliberalism dominated the global economic system and its reformulation after the 2008 crisis will be specified. In the third chapter, I will try to give a framework regarding the economic and political evolution of the country until the 2008. There will be three main categorizations under this chapter including the period until 1974, the period between 1981 and 1995 and finally the period between 1995 and 2008. In the fourth chapter, the rise of SYRIZA will be explained. In order to provide an insight about the context, I will talk about the social uprisings. Then, I will clarify the process of SYRIZA's rise and march to power. In my final chapter, I will give my conclusion concerning the topic. The limitations of this thesis include the problem of some resource accessions since the author does not know the Greek language.

CHAPTER 2

CRISIS OF NEOLIBERALISM

2.1. A Brief Introduction to Neoliberal Transformation

It is very probable that when talking about neoliberalism, we may first remember the figures like Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Indeed, they are important and the most visible figures of neoliberal transformation. Yet if we want to form a detailed and holistic view about the theory and its repercussions worldwide, we should move beyond focusing on the policies of these two figures.

David Harvey (2006) defines neoliberalism as follows:

“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade” (p.145).

According to Harvey, this was the first formulation of the theory yet this was changed in the practices of it in time. Harvey (2005) also added that “the founding figures of neoliberal thought took political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom as fundamental, as ‘the central values of civilization’” (p. 5). In this regard, the theoretical foundation of neoliberalism goes back to late 1940s. The neoliberal ideas germinated among a handful of academics including economists, philosophers and historians. It was Friedrich von Hayek initiated the Mont Pelerin Society³ in 1947. Through these meetings of the group, they had the opportunity to exchange ideas and developed the neoliberal theoretical base. At the time, these ideas did not get noticeable attention. After the two World Wars what needed in the developed Western was the restructuring of the

³ Mont Pelerin is the name of the spa located near to the Montreux in the Switzerland where they first met.

whole economy which was torn apart. This restructuring process was carried out by the US under the threat of socialism. The US hegemony at the time more or less brought stability and facilitated the acceleration of the growth in the war-torn Western world. Keynesian logic at the time was considered as the “right blend of state, market, and democratic institutions to guarantee peace, inclusion, well-being, and stability” (Harvey, 2005, p.10). This logic in general focuses on the full employment and increasing the aggregate demand for growth. The state is big in the Keynesian model; in other words, state is the intervening party in every aspect of life including the economy. Government deficits and the high inflation rates are the commonly observed characteristics of this model. It was regarded as the main provider of basic services like health and education. In addition to that, it was the regulator of economy and it could intervene the economy if necessary. There is a ‘class compromise’ between the capital and the labor within this model. Moreover, labor was strong as the trade unions were very active and effective, and the labor rights were guaranteed under the system. The developed world experienced high growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, the so-called “golden age of capitalism” ground to a halt in the late 1960s. The crisis of capital accumulation became apparent in every part of the world. High unemployment and inflation rates signaled a global stagflation phase. In 1971, Bretton Woods system⁴ collapsed, which was the manifestation of US hegemony until then. In 1973 with the oil crisis⁵, the crisis of the system got deepened.

Within this framework, the neoliberal transformation mainly became visible in the late 1970s especially in the Western world and gradually spread over the world. While it was the Western world’s experience made introduction of this transformation to the world stage, the first neoliberal experiment took place in a Latin American country, Chile under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. At the time, the so-called ‘Chicago boys’ that consisted of a cluster of economists known with their commitment to the neoliberal ideals of Milton Friedman and instructed in the University of Chicago reformulated the

⁴ Bretton Woods system is a monetary system with fixed exchange rates based on the US dollars’ convertibility to the gold.

⁵ 1973 oil crisis was caused by the OPEC’s countries’ oil embargo, which was followed by a dramatic increase in the price of oil.

Chilean economy, in accordance with the neoliberal thought. In this context, the nationalizations were inverted, the public assets were privatized, natural resources were opened up for the use of private sector, social security system was privatized, foreign direct investment was made easier and the trade was liberalized. Labor market was gained a more flexible structure. The import substitution model was replaced by the export-led economy understanding.

In the USA, with the arrival of Paul Volcker to the presidency of the Federal Reserve, the change in the monetary policies became apparent. Volcker took some contradictory measures to keep the inflation under control. In this respect, he raised the interest rates dramatically and in parallel, the unemployment increased, the income of the people and the output of the manufacture decreased significantly, which is named as ‘Volcker Shock’. The incoming president, Ronald Reagan supported the Volcker’s enforcements. He further strengthened his neoliberal position through embracing policies targeting to decrease the labor’s effectiveness, to deregulate the industry and the agriculture and resource extraction and to liberate the financial sector (Harvey, 2005). In the UK, the election of the Margaret Thatcher as the Prime Minister brought the neoliberal transformation to the country. Thatcher specifically focused on to reduce the trade union’s strength and to terminate the inflation-based stagnation.

Indeed, the neoliberal transition was also supported in the other spheres. The universities and think tanks especially in the USA were dominated by those with the neoliberal thought. Those with the neoliberal ideals came to the top positions in the key economic institutions and even in the media. Moreover, organizations like IMF (International Monetary Fund), WTO (World Trade Organization) and the World Bank intensely contributed to the process.

Neoliberal practices in general include privatization, deregulation of the economy and the minimalist state that keeps its hand off the many fields of the social provision. In this context, neoliberalism favors the price stability, productivity, efficiency, competitiveness and the protection of the private property from the distributional

tendencies (Centeno & Cohen, 2012). With the ‘Washington Consensus’⁶, the neoliberal pathway was clearly manifested especially for the developing countries that are mostly forced to embrace such ideals under this hegemonic pressure.

2.2. The Neoliberal State

The Welfare State that flourished under the Keynesian model is regarded as the main provider of the basic needs including health, education services and social security provisions. It can interfere in the economy to fulfill the full employment principle. It guarantees the labor rights, which was followed by the high wages and a relatively inflexible labor market in which the removal of the workers was something difficult. In this regard, Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1996) indicated that

“welfare state construction implied much more than a mere upgrading of existing social policies. In economic terms, the extension of income and employment security as a citizen’s right meant a deliberate departure from the orthodoxies of the pure market. In moral terms, the welfare state promised a more universal, classless justice and solidarity of ‘the people’... The welfare state was therefore also a political project of nation-building: the affirmation of liberal democracy against the twin perils of fascism and bolshevism” (p. 2).

This exhibits that the state is in more of conciliative position rather than privileging the interests of the few. Nevertheless, with the increasing rights of the common under this system disturbed more and more to the capitalist classes. Especially in a crisis atmosphere in which the profits further melted away within a protectionist environment for all.

The neoliberal state is able to put the effective functioning of the market before the well-being of the people. Indeed, in the theoretical sense, what offered was the protection of the private property rights, guaranteeing the rule of law and the provision of a free market in which the state intervention is minimized (Harvey, 2005). The main logic is that the individuals can enjoy real freedom only through a free functioning market in real terms. Therefore, within such settlement the state’s main function is to protect the market’s freedom no matter what. From now on, it is not the duty of the state to be the main provider of the basic needs. Private sector can get their share from this provision,

⁶ Washington Consensus refers to a set of economic policy prescriptions, which was supported by the organizations including IMF and the World Bank, and by the G8 countries; and firstly suggested to the Latin American courtiers, and then became a general phenomenon especially for the developing countries.

which will be much more efficient than the ones that state is providing. Moreover, people will have plenty of options to choose from within. As personal freedom is provided within the market place, it is the individuals' responsibility to provide their own well-being, rather than relying on the state. If you fail to do that, the state will not be there for you to support since you are the one to be in charge of your own actions including your failures as the required environment to fulfill your own individual freedom has been already provided.

The state is seen as the main guarantor of a competitive market place. The necessary measures for its provision should be taken by the state. State should make the necessary institutional arrangements within this context, and if it is necessary, state should establish new institutions while abolishing the ones that block such process. The state should also take due precautions for the free mobility of the capital both inside and outside of the borders. It should reduce the barriers which hinder such mobility. There is even cooperation among different states to coordinately eliminate these barriers before such mobility in the global arena (G8 countries including USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia).

While the neoliberal state which does not cut in to save the individuals after their failures in the market can intervene to save the banks, the financial, commercial institutions to prevent an alleged economic breakdown. As an individual you are by yourself within the market yet if you are a bank or any other financial corporation, you are worthwhile to be saved by the state. It is the money of individuals which enables states to save these financial establishments while it leave the people to their faith when they are getting more and more impoverished. Thus, there is some kind of hypocrisy in here. Theoretically, the state defined in the minimalist sense and is seen as something foreign to the market; therefore, it should not interfere to the market for the sake its freedom. Moreover, state does not deal with the individual failures and not attempt to save these individuals. Nevertheless, when it comes to the failures of the big financial institutions, state got involved to save them, which even in some cases extends all the way to nationalization.

By looking at this emergent portrait, it can be asserted that the state while privileging the interests of the capitalists, ignoring the well-being of the people in general. Indeed, within such an atmosphere, the situation of the labor is at stake. State approaches skeptically to any kind of collaborative action through hiding behind the individuality emphasis. The so-called flexibility of the labor market in effect brings rising unemployment, job insecurity, precariousness, lower wages and loss of benefits rather than asserted efficiency. There is a great effort to curb the power of the trade unions and labor in general. In other words, while the flexibility of the labor market is benefitted by the capitalists in the form of increasing profits since they have the leash of the laborers, it is the labor victimized under this system in which they are robbed of their once given rights.

There is shift from the government to governance understanding in the neoliberal system (Ibid, 2005). In this respect, while the role of the technocratic structures is increasing more and more, especially in the decision-making process of the economic matters, there is less of a political aspect in the process. The autonomous bodies free from the state intervention became more influential in the certain areas, namely in the economy. Even in some cases even democracy becomes something sacrificeable for the realization of neoliberal ideals. In the Greek case, we witness the technocratic Papademos government after the resignation of Papandreou who faced with great resistance from the Greek people that demanded the cessation of the draconian austerity measures' implementation. Papandreou lost his legitimacy in the eyes of Greek people yet he replaced by a technocratic figure with the support of the so-called Troika (IMF, European Commission and the European Central Bank) - the creditors of the country. In this respect, all these creditors also are far from having a democratic structure either. Therefore, rather than relying on the democratic institutions to take important decisions concerning the society, there is a strong emphasis on the decisions of the undemocratic and unaccountable institutions. In this context, it is possible to say that there is also skepticism towards the democracy itself within this system while the decisions and perspectives of the technocrats, the experts of the issues, are prioritized even if their legitimacy is problematic.

2.3. Neoliberalism as a Global Project

It is indicated that the neoliberalism was offered as a way out of the crisis of the Welfare State dominated by the Keynesian logic. Yet, it is also underlined that neoliberalism reflects the USA's attempt to reestablish its hegemony which was challenged in the 1970s. USA forced many developing countries to open their markets for free trade opportunities and at the same time exploited these infant market formations. Many US based corporations invaded these markets without facing a real competitive challenge. Within the process, the greatest associates of the country are the IMF and the World Bank. IMF and the World Bank offer loans to the developing countries under the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which require neoliberal reformulation of the structural policies. In this context, many developing countries got under a debt that they cannot possibly pay. Therefore, these debtor countries had to give more concessions. They let the big US firms to dominate their markets and make arrangements in accordance with the interests of these firms. They let them to exploit their rich natural resources and the environment. In this context, the wealth was flowing out from the developing countries to the USA. Nevertheless, these attempts were exhibited as the something necessary for the modernization of the country and for their economic growth although the real story was quite different. At last, these extensive top-down reforms that prescribe the same policies to each country rather than providing country-specific solutions created a more or less homogenous system with the same appearance in the different parts of the world. Nevertheless, we should still avoid standardizing explanations of the system since the practices still varies.

2.4. The Crisis of Neoliberalism

In the Marxist sense, capitalism has crisis-ridden nature. Capitalism entered a crisis in the 1930s with the Great Depression and in the 1970s which brought a shift from the previous model to the neoliberal system. In this context, the 2008 crisis was not a surprising one. The system was already giving the alarm way before the 2008 crisis. The 1997 Asian crisis brought the first concerns regarding the system's functioning. The 2001 recession was strengthened these concerns. Especially the policies of the FED at the time including reduction in the interest rates which was directed the people to invest in housing with receiving loans and created housing bubble.

When we came to the year of 2008, the subprime mortgage crisis initiated in USA turned into a global crisis. From this point onwards, US rolled up its sleeves to save the financial sector. In this context, the US government's initial reaction to the crisis appeared in the form of a bailout package with the 700 billion dollars budget (Demir, 2013). The US Congress approved the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act which was authorized to carry out operations under the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). Through this program, the Treasury was able to buy the shares and debts of those financial institutions that were in trouble and to make them capital support. FED's intervention was in the form of direct cash money transfers to the troubled financial institutions. The most prominent financial institutions that generously utilized from these bailouts include Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Ginnie Mae, Citigroup, American International Group (AIG) and Bank of America Corporation (Duménil & Levy, 2011). Indeed, these are only forming part of these bailouts. Within the process, the operations of the FED were not subject to any kind of investigation, which led to concerns. FED's purchase of the Bern Stern's mortgage backed securities in the value of 29 billion dollars, which were basically worthless in the financial market in order to facilitate the JP Morgan Chase's buying of Bern Stern was regarded as one of the most controversial acts of it within the process. It was not until 2010 that the operations of FED in the process were subjected to scrutiny (Demir, 2013).

Such extensive financial sector bailouts were the case in many other developed countries. Nevertheless, the real victims of the crisis, that is the people, were basically left to their own fate. While the cost of saving the financial sector was charged to the people, they also had to deal with high unemployment and melting income. On the one hand, in the crisis period it became apparent that the state rather than saving the people, who were the real sufferers of the crisis, chose to bailout the financial sector while it was the people that shouldered the biggest burden. On the other hand, within the process many people ended up homeless or started to live under the poverty line or simply impoverished dramatically yet state was not there for them to save.

2.4.1. Global Contagion of the Crisis

In the process of neoliberal globalization, USA played an important role, especially in the opening of the trade and financial border of the states. In this regard, USA is a country that has tremendous economic ties with the rest of the world. It is estimated that nearly 50% of the bonds issued in the US financial sector before the crisis was sold to the rest of the world and in 2008 in the value of almost 3 trillion dollars of corporate bonds issued in the US financial sector were in the hands of the rest of the world (Duménil & Lévy, 2011). Indeed, the crisis originated in the USA yet it is not possible for the rest of the world to isolate themselves from this crisis. In the process, those who held the US securities experienced great losses.

Deindustrialization and the following financialization of the markets which became a global trend increased the vulnerability of the neoliberal system. As now the finance capital can easily move beyond the frontiers, it can easily create a fictitious wealth yet it can also easily reverse this situation either. In this regard, it is possible to say that the financialization which was considered to provide great opportunities for economic growth became the weakest point of the system. Financialization continuously brought crisis, which required state intervention in the forms of bailout. In this respect, the system could not survive without the necessary state interventions. State has to somehow involve the process in order to save the system from consuming itself.

At this point, it can be appropriate to discuss the winners and the losers of the crisis. This global contagion obviously affected all the world economies yet it affected some more than the others. In this respect, Harvey (2006) highlighted that

“if the main achievements of neoliberalism have been redistributive rather than generative, then ways had to be found to transfer assets and redistribute wealth and income either from the mass of the population towards the upper classes or from vulnerable to richer countries” (p.153).

The way neoliberalism found that Harvey indicates is the ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2004). Harvey (2006) explains the conceptualization as the reproduction of the accumulation practices that Marx defined as primitive in the capitalism’s rising process, which includes

“the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; conversion of various forms of property rights (e.g. common, collective, state) into exclusive private property rights; suppression of rights to the commons; commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial, neocolonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; the slave trade and usury, the national debt, and the use of the credit system” (p. 153).

What Harvey emphasizes there is that neoliberal system rewarded the developed countries and the capitalists in general. It creates new ways for accumulation through benefitting from the old understandings as Harvey revealed in his conceptualization of the ‘accumulation by dispossession’. Even if the failure belongs to the financial sector, it is the people, the lower strata of the society rather than the upper strata who had to pay the price. Therefore, there is a reverse redistributive process, which basically takes from the poor to give the rich.

2.4.2. The Discussion of the Crisis in Neoliberalism and the Crisis of Neoliberalism

It should be pointed out that the 2008 crisis brought a discussion regarding the nature of the neoliberalism’s crisis. In this regard, some would oppose the identification of this crisis as the crisis of neoliberalism. Their main argument is that even if the accumulation system’s reproduction was challenged dramatically in the context of this crisis; still there is no provision of a systemic alternative that can dethrone neoliberalism (Saad-Filho, 2011). Therefore, they underline that rather than defining it as the crisis of neoliberalism, we should name it as the crisis in neoliberalism. Indeed, in the current situation the neoliberal system mainly restored. Those who favor ‘There is no alternative’ understanding outcompeted the others who realize an anti-neoliberal stance. Especially the leftist forces’ lack of ability to offer a fresh systemic alternative would lead to the maintenance of the old one. In other words, despite the magnitude and accordingly destructiveness of this crisis, neoliberalism is still continuing to dominate as a systemic alternative, and there is still no concrete systemic rival against it. In this respect, it is possible to state that the arguments of the former gained the upperhand. Nevertheless, there is no built consensus among these different circles regarding the issue; thus, both of the definitions are maintaining their validity.

2.5. Austerity Societies

When the crisis broke out, there was no variety of options to eliminate it. In this respect, Aaron Major (2014) indicated that they could choose their ancestors' way by accelerating the choked economic system through strong fiscal measures or they could continue to proceed from the neoliberal path by restoring the order in the financial markets. In the global context, the second option became dominant. It is more of a reflection of the 'There is no alternative' logic. There is no alternative system that could replace neoliberalism in the current situation. This is the main thesis of the neoliberalism advocates. Therefore, we should do whatever it takes to save this system.

Austerity proponents regard austerity as the only way to get through this crisis, and they underlined that everyone should shoulder responsibility for the system's recovery, which was actually never the case since it would be the lower segments of the society who had to pay the cost of it. Indeed, for the austerity camp, high government debts are the result of the actions of the irresponsible politicians who splurge with high welfare transactions provided to the importunate public that always want more. In this regard, economic growth can only be attainable through "robust private investment in a context of monetary and price stability" (Ibid, 2014, p. 2).

Mark Blyth (2013) defines austerity as "a form of voluntary deflation in which the economy adjusts through the reduction of wages, prices, and public spending to restore competitiveness, which is (supposedly) best achieved by cutting the state's budget, debts, and deficits" (p.1). Blyth highlighted that by applying such measures what's targeted is to rebuild the 'business confidence' so that they can invest. It is important for an economy to have a promising future image that gives enough trust to the business to invest. Austerity measures obviously create an environment in which the business interests are prioritized while the labor is held in leash.

After the crisis harsh measures to establish this 'business confidence' was applied in many countries, specifically in the European context. It was the Papandreou government firstly giving start to the process (Major, 2014). Then it was followed by Ireland, Portugal, Spain and many others. These measures mainly include a reduction in welfare benefits, cutback of the minimum wage, public-sector pay reductions or freezes, and

lowering of the salary bonuses, pension cuts and increased retirement age, reduction in holidays, an easing of restrictions on dismissals, unemployment benefits' reduction both in amount and duration, inhibiting the collective bargaining agreements, the promotion of precarious works such as part-time jobs or temporary works, increasing tax levels (mainly in VATs and income taxes) and the privatization of public services and assets (Fazi, 2014).

In the European context, Greece became the country in which the austerity measures were most severe. The country basically became a guinea pig for the creditors to test the sustainability of more radical neoliberal policies. It is now nearly a decade that the country living under the shadow of the austerity policies. In the process, while their economy was contracting rather than growing, country's sovereignty was put a hold on by the creditors. In the country tax hikes and budget cuts reached to €32 billion within the 2010-13 period and it was estimated that this amount would reach €42 billion in 2015 (Ibid, 2014). This is obviously more of a shock rather than therapy for the country. Indeed, in such economic crisis atmosphere, a political crisis would be inevitable. This will be explained further in the following chapters.

2.6. The Reactions against the Neoliberal System

Neoliberalism inherently deepened the gap between the lower and upper strata of the society. In the USA, within the period of 1979 and 2004, the income percentage of the richest 5% of the households reached from 15.3% to more than 20% while this share decreased from 5.5% to 4% for the poorest 20% of the households (Saad-Filho, 2011). There is a similar portrait in the UK, too. The rate of the CEO incomes compared to the employees' pay was 47% in average in 1999 yet this ratio reached to 128% after a decade (Ibid, 2011). This framework exhibits that while the richer got richer, the poorer's conditions got worse. Indeed, such huge gap made the people question the system itself. In 2000s, the World Social Forum tried to put an alternative to the neoliberal logic. It is an international cooperation platform in which people from all backgrounds and nations are welcomed to express their opinions against the unjust nature of the neoliberal globalization. In the annual meetings, variety of civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in general gather around to discuss

alternatives against neoliberalism and to form a consciousness about the impositions of the neoliberal system. Other than the World Social Forum, there were also country-specific reactions to the harsh neoliberal politics. To illustrate, the Occupy Wall Street movement, Spanish Indignados movement and the Greek Aganaktismeni movement are all reactions to the neoliberal policy applications accompanied with mainly the demand of the real democracy. Indeed, it is possible to highlight that such democracy demand also displays the clash between the neoliberal logic and the democracy.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY UNTIL 2008 CRISIS

The 2008 economic crisis that hit Greece calamitously would make many question the overall economic structure in the country. In this regard, they tried to find the answer in the country's economic history. They analyzed the country's development within the process that Greece would gradually be the member of EU and Eurozone. Such analysis would show that while the country was able to display a great economic performance in the immediate post-war period, this development could not be sustained in the aftermath. Yet, in mid-1990s within a very short time while the European Monetary Union (EMU) negotiations was proceeding, the Greek economy was able to record a great success through fulfilling the convergence requirements despite the big gaps between the Greek economic indexes and its European partners'. Even until the 2008, the growth recorded in the country was maintaining. However, when the crisis broke out, this process became reversed. Although it is believed that from the time the country's membership to the Community in 1981, Greece came a long way in terms of economic enhancement and convergence to her Western European counterparts, after the outbreak of the crisis, Greece's membership to EU and Eurozone were both questioned critically. In this respect, the quality and the sustainability of the country's growth are the ones that questioned among the firsts. Moreover, the country's political culture was harshly criticized due to its corrupted structure and clientelistic tendencies. Indeed, this economic crisis did not appear out of nowhere. Clearly, there are embedded problems within Greek economic structure which would contribute to the destructiveness of the crisis. Therefore, it is essential to make an assessment regarding the issue in order to develop more accurate and comprehensive point of view. Nevertheless, the aim in here is not to convict the country of this economic devastation. Instead, what's targeted here is to reveal the conditions that prepared the ground for such devastation and made it

nearly impossible to scale down its negative effects to a more tolerable level. In this context, I tried to elaborate the issue in three sub-categories concerning the time periods that witnessed important political events affecting the Greek economy directly or indirectly. The first period mainly covers the post-war era until 1974. This period includes the military coup in 1967 and ends with the transition to civilian rule in 1974. This periodization exhibits how the Greece economy got back to its feet after the civil war's catastrophe. Furthermore, it reflects any existing difference between economic practices of the civilian government and the military dictatorship. In his paper "Two Faces of Janus" (1995) George Alogoskoufis emphasized the importance of the end of military rule and the country's return to the democracy in terms of the Greek economy, and he characterized the Greece economic development as having two faces like Janus⁷ which have appeared before and after 1974. In this respect, this period deserves to be explained in order to get a historic outlook. Second periodization covers the era between 1981 and 1995. 1981 is the year that the country became the member of European Economic Community. 1995 may not have a political meaning yet definitely has an economic one. In this regard, until 1995 the country mainly had no bright growth figures. Nevertheless, nearly in 5 years the country was able to fulfill the challenging macroeconomic targets required to be the member of Eurozone, which was defined as a 'miracle' by M.J. Artis (2001) and the country was admitted to the euro area in 2001; therefore, the last periodization covers the period between 1995 and 2008 as a period that started with high and promising figures yet ended in an economic tragedy with the 2008 crisis.

3.1. General Economic Performance of the country until 1974

In broad strokes, 1945-55 was the period that the Greek state highly involved in economic sphere as in the case of many other European countries. Such expansion mainly linked to the management of the Marshall Plan funds and indeed, to the required industrialization which was late already. In this respect, the state's hot agenda mainly included to make investment to the infrastructure for economic base, guarding the national market through tariffs and offering incentives to the foreign capital investments. If we enlarge upon the topic, after the emancipation of the country from the German

⁷ a Roman god who has two faces

forces in 1944, Greece entered a new conflictual period within itself. The followers of the left and right would drag the country into a civil war.⁸ In 1949, the war was ended through the backing of UK and USA. It resulted against the leftist forces. Even though the war was over, the country had to deal with the hostilities inherited from the war times. Until 1952, Greek government mainly consisted of ‘weak coalitions’ (Alogoskoufis & Giavazzi & Laroque, 1995). Nevertheless, in 1952 Alexandros Papagos, a former Field Marshall and a so-called war hero, was able to win the elections and formed a majority government. At this time, the country was dealing with high inflation rates. In this context, the priority was given to make the Greek economy which was devastated between wars get back on its feet. Some rearrangements including certain liberalizations were made to regain a monetary stability. To illustrate, many price and import controls, especially for the foreign investment capital, were removed; a sharp devaluation of drachma, former Greek national currency, was achieved and interest rates were able to be scaled down. The Greek government extended its investment programs while running budget deficits which were mainly balanced by the American financial aids lasting until 1957 (Michas, 1980). On the one hand, such liberalizations took place; on the other hand, the government applied strict controls over the labor markets⁹ and the credit¹⁰ (Alogoskoufis et al., 1995). After Papagos died in 1955, Karamanlis came to office as Papagos’ successor. Karamanlis government continued the task of economic recovery and made further arrangements. In this respect, the government tried to rebuild the trust in the drachma and the private banking sector, placed importance on

⁸ For more information see Marantzidis, N. (2013). The Greek civil war (1944-1949) and the international communist system. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 15(4), p. 25-54. See Selçuk Özgür, P. (2015). Yunanistan iç savaşı ve dış güçlerin rolü. *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, pp. 101-129.

⁹ The official heads of labor unions were chosen among the candidates determined by the state, the determined wages for the labor were somehow reflected the state’s will. For instance, a law enforced in 1955 was gave the right to the Ministry of Labor to decline the collective agreements which foresaw wage increases that exceeded the official figures by 3%, and also in the periods between 1945 and 1952, and between 1969 and 1974, the government directly specified the minimum wage (Markantonatou, 2012).

¹⁰ The banking system in the country was strictly tied to the decisions of Bank of Greece and Currency Committee, which was established in 1946 and played an important role in the determination of the bank credits’ volume and distribution. The Currency Committee was responsible to approve all bank lending. Identifying the aim for why choosing that specific lending, the sector that credit will be given, the percentages or exact amounts of the money funded by the lending and the interest rates are within the scope of this duty.

strengthening the economic infrastructure and bolstering industrialization. Although Karamanlis was able to remain in office for a relatively long time, his popularity while he was in power gradually died away. Especially, political issues including Cyprus problem¹¹ and a disagreement with NATO concerning to deploy nuclear weapons' in Greece were contributed this decline dreadfully (Michas, 1980). Moreover, the growing unemployment which was mainly triggered by the increasing gap between urban and rural income would put the boot in the situation for Karamanlis. A significant development in the Karamanlis era can be regarded as the signing of the "Association Agreement" with the European Economic Community (EEC) which would be seen as a step finalizing with the Greece's membership to the community in 1961. Indeed, this agreement required the country to improve itself in the economic sphere. There are different point of views about this period in between 1960s and early 70s. Nicholas A. Michas in his dated from 1980 article asserted that 1960s' conditions in the country were not suitable to make such progress since the Cyprus issue sowed the seeds of war between Greece and Turkey. Even a gossip about war can easily affect the economy of a country which was also the case in the country. Thus, according to his words, the foreign investment was intimidated and the tourists were dismayed by this war-toned atmosphere. On the other hand, an article written by Maria Markantonatou and dated from 2012 interpreted the period differently. She indicated that the drachma's successful devaluations, the strategy formed for EEC admission and the capitalist system's stepwise stabilization would bring economic development which became concrete in the World Bank's development indicators with an annual average of 7.9% within the period in between 1961 and 1973. Besides, she emphasized the industrial growth by pointing out the increasing share of manufacturing within the GDP from 16.5% to 20.2%. In this

¹¹ In the history, Cyprus was under the control of Ottoman Empire and United Kingdom respectively. In these times, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots lived together in the island. In 1960, the island declared its independence while Greece, Turkey and UK signed several treaties that designated them to the guarantors of the Republic and its constitution, which means that if it is necessary, they can do a military intervention. In 1963, certain conflicts aroused in between the two communities. In 1974, the Greek Cypriot president Makarios was overthrown by the Greek junta and the Greek side announced the annexation of the island. Therewith, Turkey through putting forward its right based on agreements they signed, send its troops to the island. Since then, island separated to two parts named the Greek Cypriot administration and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. For more information see Müftüler, M. & Güney, A. (2005). The European Union and the Cyprus problem 1961-2003. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41(2),p. 281-293.

period, among the OECD countries, the fastest-growing labor productivity belonged to Greece, the foreign capital inflows were on rise and the branches like machinery and chemicals which can be characterized as more technology-intensive duplicated their cut. As a matter of fact, Markantonatou through addressing Louri and Pepelasis (2002) using the words “golden years” of capitalism in Greece while identifying the period. In the macroeconomic sense, the general government budget gave surplus by about 1% of GDP in 1960s, the inflation rates were low especially compared to 80s’ figures, the real rates of interest for bank deposits were positive, but still the share of exports in GDP was very low in 1960s (Bosworth & Kollintzas, 2001).¹² Indeed, such split in opinion can be linked to the time gap between two articles as more researches about the topic could bring different results. After an electoral defeat, Karamanlis was replaced by Georgios Papandreou in 1963. In this year, the largest trade deficit since 1950 was recorded mainly due to an excessive increase in the imports compared to exports despite the fact that the remittances from the emigrant workers¹³ and the growing tourism incomes provided a balance of payments (Michas, 1980). In Papandreou’s tenure, low tuned welfare state understanding can be claimed to come to the forefront. The government expenditures increased dramatically in this period. The free compulsory education was extended three years which means that the government had to spend more for education (Michas, 1980). There were also increases in the health allowances. Papandreou government worried some conservative circles since until his government, the state mainly focused on an economic development supported with a strong industrial growth at the cost of social gains. Nevertheless, there was no fair distribution of these obtained surpluses brought by the economic development. While the profits were not properly taxed, certain enterprises were supported by the government via concessions like shipping sector (Ibid, 1980). In general, the tax system of the country to a great extent

¹² Louri, H. & Pepelasis-Minoglou, I. (2002). A hesitant evolution: industrialization and deindustrialization in Greece over the long run. *Journal of European Economic Studies* , 31(2), p.335

¹³ In 1960s, a considerable amount of migration from rural to urban areas was recorded in the country mainly due to the growing unemployment and damaged agricultural production in the 50s (Markantonatou, 2012). In this context, the growth rate of industry was not fast enough to absorb such growing numbers of people coming from the rural. Therefore, these labor force surpluses were directed to the Western countries. The Greek state encouraged the emigration via signing bilateral agreements with host countries. In the period between 1955 and 1970, almost 10% of the population was emigrant in the Western European countries, USA and Australia (Markantonatou, 2012).

depended on the indirect taxation while the tax evasions were very common. Therefore, the real burden was on the shoulders of the lower classes. In the case of Papandreou and his milieu, they could understand that the people no more wanted to shoulder such burden for long-term economic gains yet they wanted to get social gains. However, the foreign loan influx and the growing private investment could not prevent a downfall in the support of Papandreou government due to the issues including the radical leftists within the followers of Papandreou, the ongoing inflation increase and the imports' further surpassing of the exports. At the end, Papandreou's term of office did not last very long. His conflict with the monarch put an end to his term and, he had to leave the office in 1965. If we make a brief comparison between the term of Karamanlis and Papandreou, we can start with saying that while Karamanlis government favored businessmen, certain agricultural sectors and the military, Papandreou government tried to appeal lower classes. In this regard, he gave some salary benefits to the civil servants, urban labor that was highly repressed in the Karamanlis era, the lower clergy members and the military (Ibid, 1980). In the Karamanlis era, the government utilized from the state instruments like subsidies and tax privileges in order to get the support of certain groups. The improvements in the social service benefits and in the educational system were very little while in Papandreou's era the social service benefits and the agricultural subsidies show relatively high increase (Ibid, 1980). Unfortunately, the shortness of the Papandreou era would cause many agendas of this government to be put aside. After Papandreou's resignation, minority governments took over the office. Yet, some army officers took advantage of this fragile environment and staged a coup in 1967. In between 1967 and 1974 that the year military dictatorship was ended; the economic policies were mainly the continuation of the former civil rule's practices while the labor had to face with much stricter controls compared to earlier. Eventually, with the deteriorated economic performance due to the 1973 oil crisis¹⁴, 1973 student uprisings and with the resurrection of the Cyprus crisis, military could no longer maintain its rule and returned the power to the civilians.

After this entrance regarding the general atmosphere of the country, we can now focus on the specific economic characteristics of the period. The economic development of the

¹⁴ OPEC's (Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries) declared oil embargo

country since 1950s has proceeded smoothly due to the fact that the war was reset the economy and this new initiation point was in way below. Moreover, the transfers like in the context of the Marshall Plan would enable the country to realize such growth much more easily. In general, within the period between 1954 and 1973 the country's average annual output growth was around 7% while the annual inflation was nearly 4% (Alogoskoufis et al., 1995). The country's average annual growth was above the OECD average yet still its inflation levels were continued in the same rates with OECD average (Ibid, 1995). Geronimakis (1965) analyzed the Greek economic growth for the decade starting from 1950, and the author focused on three main sectors within the economy including agriculture, industry and services. As a sector agriculture embodies "agriculture, animal breeding, forestry and fishing" (Geronimakis, 1965, p.260). Industrial sector contains "mining; manufacturing; electricity, gas, water; and construction (Ibid, 1965, p.260). Finally, services include "transport, trade, banking, dwellings, public administration and defense, health, education and other professional services. According to the Geronimakis' article, while Greece gave great emphasis to the industrialization, still agriculture occupied an important place in the Greek economy. In this context, when we look under the hood to the agricultural growth in this decade it is seen that it was recorded as the second highest growth rate after the industrial growth. Especially for the first half of 1950s, the numbers of growth for the sector was very close to the industrial growth numbers which was attributed mainly to the introduction of new methods to the sector like more mechanization in the field, much qualified fertilizers, seeds and insect control techniques (Ibid, 1965). Regarding the industrial growth of the country, the highest growth rate belonged to the mining and quarrying as a subsector of industry while the lowest rate belonged to the manufacturing (Ibid, 1965). This increase in the growth of mining sector can be attributed mainly to the very low mining activities in the war times. Nevertheless, when the country gained some stability in 1950s, the demand for the source material both within and outside of the country accelerated. Such increase in demand in the domestic sphere can be linked to the growing energy need coming with the industrialization in general. Yet, the real boom in the mining mainly took place in the first half of the decade while in the second half the numbers were relatively more moderate (Ibid, 1965). Contrary to the mining sector, the

growth in manufacturing was much more modest. Geronimakis (1965) mainly attached this to the small size of domestic market; in other words, there is no enormous pressure coming from the demand side of the market for the sector's aggressive growth. The growth rates in electricity and construction would also show good performances beside the growth in mining. While the electricity growth mainly attached to the increasing number of electricity companies in the country with the introduction of electrification program, the construction sector's growth can be regarded as a result of increasing public investment especially in the second half of the decade (Ibid, 1965). In the service sector, high growth rates are mainly observed in the second half of the decade. This could be attached to the speeding up urbanization since the industrialization would increase the number of people employed in the industry and as a result, migration from rural areas to urban areas would bring the need of further urbanization which ended up with the enhancement of service sector.

Until 1974, the Greek state could be characterized as a strong and an oppressive state. In this context, while the political and civil rights were highly scrutinized and restricted, the economic sector including finance and banking was under heavy state control. In terms of economy, the system was far from being a liberal one. Likewise, in the social realm due to the limited nature of benefitting from the civil and political rights labor unions were subjected to harsh constraints since the state did not want a strong labor force that could question the policies of it while playing by ear when it comes to shape the economic sphere. Greece joined the Bretton Woods system. Within this period until the collapse of Bretton Woods system in early 70s, the inflation rates of the country were mainly low, below the OECD average (Alogoskoufis et al., 1995).¹⁵

Indeed, it is important to note that at the time, the world trend was also more or less in the same track. State was pretty much involved to the economic sphere. On the other hand, at the end of this period, it gradually became apparent that the things would change in the global economic trend since the existing one was giving the alarm.

¹⁵ In 1944, in the wake of the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in the village of Bretton Woods, it was accepted as an economic and financial system. Essentially, the US dollar which was the only currency indexed to the gold became the determinant currency within the world money system.

3.2. The Economic Performance of the country between 1981 and 1995

In 1981, Greece became a member of the European Community, process of which was initiated with the Association Agreement but paused in the military junta period and resurged with the transition to the civilian rule. Before analyzing the period initiating with the Greece's entrance to the EC in 1981, it can be helpful to focus on the process that ended up with membership. After the transition to democracy in the country, Karamanlis reappeared in the political scene of the country again and established the 'New Democracy' (ND) which is a center right party. ND became one of the major parties in Greece, alongside of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), which was also formed newly at the time. Karamanlis restarted the uncompleted European project and applied for full membership to the community. Indeed, while EC assessed the application positively, it conditioned some economic reforms. In this context, there was a gradual abandonment of the tariffs and other protection instruments applied within the goods markets. Meanwhile, the state took some bold steps and performed certain nationalization operations. Reforms in the areas like education and public transport was financed by the community. In this period, with the effect of the Cyprus crisis, the spending on defense increased dramatically. An industry over national weaponry was formed. While the Keynesian policies gradually lost its popularity due to the inflationary pressures in the developed world which would result in the rise of political right, in the Greek case, PASOK, a leftist party, was able to come to power in 1981. Embracement of welfare policies was something run late in the country. Nevertheless, there was such demand coming from the people which eventually made them vote for PASOK. From 1981 to 2001, the date Greece entered to the European Monetary Union (EMU), PASOK was mainly in power by itself, except from the period between 1989 and 1993.

The political atmosphere within this period in the country seems stable. On the other hand, the economic conditions were much more complex. Indeed like many other country, the 1973 oil crisis had a negative effect over the Greek economy. Yet for the country, the problem was doubled with the contributions of Cyprus issue. In order to make an entrance, we can briefly analyze the general characteristics of the economic system within the country.

Louka T. Katseli (1989) characterized the Greek state as a corporatist state. In this regard, she benefitted from the Katzenstein's definition of neocorporatism which is

“State corporatism is the voluntary cooperative regulation of conflicts over economic and social issues through a highly structured and interpenetrated set of political relationships by the state, banks and business augmented at times by unions and political parties. Strong corporatist structures have a pervasive ideology of social partnership shared by the leaders of government, banks and business; they rely on the cooperative efforts of relatively centralized institutions representing those interests and they usually lack in worker militancy” (p.238).

In her opinion, there is a very thin line between public and private sectors due to the intertwined interests of the state and business circles. In this context, she emphasized the public sector ownerships and the state's control mechanisms over the market. In this period, as mentioned above the government carried out nationalizations. Especially, businesses which were unprofitable and for this reason, faced with the danger of being kicked out of the market were nationalized in order to prevent further unemployment and the resultant social unrest. In this respect, for the period of 1979-1986 the rate of the loss-making businesses was 40% yet the bankruptcy declaration was only around 7%. When we look at these businesses size, we see that they were mainly small firms. Big businesses were not generally allowed to be shut down due to the above mentioned reason. She mentioned the Provopoulos' (1985) research concerning the public sector's place in the Greek economy. His study showed that in 1983 approximately 267 thousand people were employed in businesses directly or indirectly controlled by the state. This number goes up if one added the central and local government employments; that is, more than 26% of the total wage and salary earners within non-agricultural sectors were employed in a sector controlled by the state. These numbers show that the government got under a heavy burden by extending the public sector. Unfortunately, in this period this would become an electoral campaign instrument for the governments that wanted to guarantee the next election. Indeed, such attitude would make people choose to work in public sector and in this period there was an excess supply of labor to the sector. When we make a comparison between private and public sector in terms of employment growth rates, the public sector's growth was 44% higher than the private sector. While in the periods of low economic growth the public sector recruitments were increasing, in the periods of high economic growth the recruitments were hold relatively more

moderate levels. As another indicator of the state corporatism, Katseli pointed out that the ‘family-run firms’ which have powerful political bonds could easily attain the subsidized credits. In addition, the domestic market was not very open to internal competition since there was a lack of new entries to the market in between 1950 and 1980. In other words, the industrial class that the state interacted was definite; therefore, at the end, the private sector was not that private since the relations between the two parties were very much traceable. Finally, Katseli indicated that the presence of the unofficial sector alongside of the official one is a characteristic of the corporatist model. She mentioned that the service sector had the highest percentage of the underground economy, particularly in the housing, in the trade and in construction which were categorized as the sectors having limited access to the credits and as a result, having high costs of production. On the other hand, the manufacturing sector which had the highest capacity to access credits within the system had the lowest rates of underground economy. According to Katseli, the country’s state corporatism started to be challenged when the country became a member of EC since now there is a certain economic path that the country had to follow if it wants to be part of this economic integration. Indeed, it is possible to assert that the real motor behind the economic transformation of the country was its determination to participate to the EMU.

The financial system of the country had certain features within the 1970s and early 1980s that should be mentioned. As many other economy at the time, it was also highly regulated. The system was subject to tangled set of rules and regulations including “general portfolio allocation requirements on commercial banks to earmark specific fractions of their deposits for the financing of the public sector and small and medium-sized firms, and for long-term loans to industry (Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). In 1985, 78% of the commercial bank deposits’ distribution was restrained due to such requirements with additional primary reserve requirement on the total deposits by 7%. Furthermore, in order to support particular sectors the terms and quantity of commercial bank lending to the specified sectors were included in the scope of credit controls and regulations. The specialized credit institutions’ total credit expansion was contingent upon the quantitative ceilings. Many of these institutions did not have an independent budget; that is, they relied heavily on the funds coming from the Central Bank. The

Country's banking system was mainly dominated by specific institutions. For instance, in 1985 three biggest banks of the country owned around 64% of total private deposits and 63% of loans to the private sector (Ibid, 2001). Among the thirty three commercial banks, eight of them including the three biggest ones were controlled by the state. Interest rates applied to all categories of bank deposits and loans were determined by the administrative institutions. The capital market was not expanded enough. Non-bank money market did not exist, which means that there is no intermediary institution operating alongside of the banks. The banking system and the foreign borrowing mainly served the purpose of financing the public sector deficits. The transactions in the foreign exchange were also regulated. In this respect, the Greek residents' long term and short term international capital transactions were forbidden.

Until 1982, the state was able to implement its decisions through the medium of the Currency Committee which consisted of five ministers and the governor of the Bank of Greece. The Committee was dissolved yet the government continued to make arrangements over the monetary and exchange rate policies. Wage related actions, especially in the late 1970s and the 1980s became a significant determiner of the inflation outcomes. In between 1975 and 1981, the blue collar workers' weekly wages for the manufacturing sector increased by nearly 23%. In 1982, an automatic indexation system (ATA), in which with four months intervals there was an indexation of the nominal wages fully and the medium and high wages partially to the past inflation. During the period between 1983 and 1990 the annual ATA adjustment in average was nearly 16% while the weekly wages in the manufacturing sector increased by around 23% (Ibid, 2001).

The annual growth rates within the period of 1974-1979 was mainly around 3.4% on average, which can be considered as low in comparison to 1961-73 period (Markantonatou, 2012). While in general the total fixed investment was decreasing in the late 1970s, the housing sector became the driving force of the economy since it has a large labor absorption capacity and the reducing effect of imports within the GDP is relatively lower for the housing sector. In this regard, between 1975 and 1980, the housing sector's share within the total investment increased by nearly 7.5% (Bryant,

Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). Nevertheless, the rise in the housing sector's share unfortunately could not be performed in the technology-intensive areas which are seen as the main motors of the economic development such as the machinery and equipment. Instead, a decline was observed within their shares. In addition, the public expenditures increased; however, these are not in the form of investment but in the form of transfer payments. On the one hand, the public investment experienced a fall from 7% to 5% in 1980; on the other hand, the share of transfer payments within the expenditures gradually rose from 9.5% to 21% in the late 1980s. Spending on health, human-capital formation and R&D was relatively low nearly in entire period, apart from the period between 1981 and 1985. The transfer payments consist of net transfers to households, subsidies and the public debt's interest. In 1970s and 1980s, the share of net transfers to households including pensions, unemployment benefit, sickness and other benefits or allowances in GNP was higher than 60%. PASOK government that came into power in 1981 increased the amount of pensions; thus, this percentage also increased. Private sector payments like cost rebates for exports and subsidies for farmers and industry had periodical variance. Particularly, in the election times they hit the top. In terms of the public debt's interest, it is seen that there was an increase in the interest rate payment, which reveals that the public debt increased in time, especially after 1983. In this sense, the Central Bank in order to meet the part of the public sector's financing need practiced a multifaceted credit allocation system in which the private sector benefited from the credit expansion constrictedly as mentioned above. In 1980s, the share of the agricultural exports within the total exports was around 24% while the industrial exports were generally carried out in more traditional sectors like food, textiles and yarns, shoes and clothing, chemicals, refinery products and basic metallurgy rather than technology-intensive products (Katseli, 1989). In terms of the sectoral shares' distribution within the GDP, there was no noticeable progress for industrialization as the share was mainly stable at the rate of 30% both in 1970 and 1980 while the agriculture also maintained its share at the 15% range. The period was also marked with high inflation rates. Rising costs of the business investment were registered as the main inflationary pressure. In this respect, the country's average unit labor costs in the manufacturing sector increased by about 21% yet this rate was only 6% for the European Union member countries at that

time (Bryant, Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). This would be followed by an increase in unemployment. In the Greek case, the central bank which was under the pressure of government in terms of financing the fiscal deficits could not form an independent monetary policy corresponding to the needs of the economy. As a result, the inflation went up to 19% in 1979 from the 12% within two years (Ibid, 2001). After the second oil shock in 1979, Greece chose to apply accommodative macroeconomic policies.¹⁶ Nevertheless, these policies could not prevent a decline in real GDP in 1981. Relatedly, the rate of public sector borrowing rose to around 15% from 6.5% in this year which speeded up the domestic credit expansion. Moreover, the inflation reached to a level around 25%. The country's insufficient infrastructure increased the business transaction costs and prevented the further private investment. The management of public enterprises was not carried out as efficiently as demanded by the market despite being greatly subsidized. There are certain rigidities in the labor market. Specifically in a period when the labor flexibility became something more and more demanded in the rest of the Europe. At the time, the automatic wage indexation system (ATA) brought dramatic increases in the wages and cut the profits. Actually, such vision of the period basically reflects the liberal circles' explanation. They mainly focused on the competitiveness of the country, which according to their opinion regressed dramatically. While the developed world experienced a neoliberal turn, for them Greece was proceeding in the opposite direction, which was something moving away the country from being part of this developed world and being liberalized in the real sense. Indeed, their sense of competitiveness is at the expense of the working class. Besides, their explanations mainly ignore the political dimension. After the transition to civilian rule labor unions that were under strict control and pressure for a very long time reformulated itself as strong actor and especially with PASOK's victory, they could make their selves heard. In this sense, it should be underlined that although the party is highly criticized due to its extravagant and clientelist practices in the public sphere due

¹⁶ When the economic growth is slowing, if a central bank tries to expand the aggregate money supply to vitalize the economy, this is regarded as accommodative monetary policy. In this context, the targeted aim is to make people consume more and to make money less expensive for the businesses to borrow through decreasing the interest rates.

to the electoral concerns, PASOK made the lower classes visible, which mainly remained ignored and enable these lower strata to reach the welfare.

3.2.1. The Stabilization Programme in the Period between 1986 and 1987

When the new government came into power in 1985, they faced with a growing external insecurity towards the country. In this context, they decided to focus on macroeconomic stabilization in order to stop the rot and they introduced the two year stabilization programme. The programme foresaw “a 15% devaluation of the drachma; a temporary advance deposit requirement on a wide range of imports; a modification of the wage-price indexation mechanism to reflect the projected as opposed to the past rate of inflation; a reduction of 4 percentage points in the public sector borrowing requirement relative to GDP in both 1986 and 1987; and a tightening of monetary policy through a reduction of the growth of domestic credit and the gradual establishment of positive real interest rates for all borrowers” (Bryant, Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). The main targets of the programme were to bring down the inflation to a level that is close to the country’s trading partners and to return the sustainable balance of payments status. The programme firstly concentrated to the income policy. In this regard, the target was to reduce the labor costs. A tightening in the fiscal and monetary policies followed the former. Also, a relative increase gained in competitiveness through 1985 devaluation of drachma was aimed to strengthen via an exchange rate policy. The results of the programme were mainly positive in terms of reaching the goal of the program. There was an achievement in terms of ceasing the decaying macroeconomic instabilities. In this sense, in these years there was a dramatic drop in the real wages and accordingly, a rise in the business profits first time in years. The share of borrowing requirement of the public sector within the GDP regressed to around 13% in 1987 from around 18% in 1985 (Ibid, 2001). The applied monetary policy in the scope of the programme managed to curb the increase in the bank credit and was able to turn the interest rates to positive for the bank loans and deposits in time. The current account deficit was also reduced to around 2% of the GDP in 1987 while it was around 8% of GDP in 1985 (Ibid, 2001). It was mainly funded through capital inflows that were free and clear; therefore, such action did not exaggerate the foreign debt. The inflation rate dropped to about 16% from nearly 20% although the target was 10%. Nevertheless, about 4% of this rate was related

to the introduction of value added tax (VAT); thus, it is likely to say that the real rate was 12% (Ibid, 2001).

After the stabilization programme, the government decided to switch its objective from adjustment to development. This caused a loosening in the macroeconomic policies and the gains of past two years for the sake of the macroeconomic stability were mainly reversed. The real wages increased by around 5% which was highly above the increase in productivity. Besides, the drachma appreciated. But still, in the following years the positive effects of such achievements gained through the programme can be observed as the external attitude towards Greece was relatively moderate, which enabled the country to maintain its economic development. Nevertheless, this lasted short. The political uncertainty after the 1989 elections would sweep away such moderate external position.¹⁷ Also, there was a further relaxation in the macroeconomic policies in this period, which resulted in growing macroeconomic instabilities. The consumer price inflation rose to 15%, the current account deficit expanded, the public sector borrowing requirement was more than 18% of the GDP in 1989 and the general government debt was accounted as nearly 70% of GDP. The new government came to power after 1990 elections roll up its sleeves to have a recovery and took some immediate measures. However, these measures were inefficient to satisfy the expectations and did not have a substantial impact. In this context, the government decided to apply another adjustment programme in the years between 1991 and 1993. The programme had relatively optimistic objectives including a deduction in the level of inflation to 8% and in the level of public sector borrowing requirement to 3%. EC supported the programme by providing a three year balance of payments loan of ECU (European Currency Unit) in the amount of 2.2 billion. In general, the period between 1990 and 1993 was mainly immobile in terms of economic progress as the average growth rate of GDP was not even 1%. A progress was recorded in the rate of inflation with its reduction from around 20% to nearly 12%. Moreover, the current account deficit reduced to less than 1% of

¹⁷ In 1989 elections, no party gained majority. New Democracy, the former opposition party, and the Alliance of the Left and Progress formed an interim coalition government. New elections were held on 5th of November yet again no party could constitute a majority to come to power by itself. Therefore, another interim government was formed by PASOK, New Democracy and the Alliance of the Left and Progress. This government continued to be in office until April 1990 when the general election was held after the parliament's failure to elect a president. New Democracy came out victorious from this election.

GDP in 1993. Nevertheless, while a decrease in the rate of inflation was based on income policy and realized within the context of economic stagnation, main reason behind narrowing of the current account deficit was low domestic demand. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was signed. The Maastricht Treaty foresaw certain convergence criteria for a Member State's participation to the Eurozone. When the Stage II of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) was initiated in 1994, Greece fell behind its counterparts and if the country could not achieve to manage the necessary convergence, it was not possible for it to participate the following phase of EMU. In this context, the Greek officials prepared a convergence programme for the period of 1994-1999, which was presented to ECOFIN Council and approved by the council.¹⁸ Main objectives of the programme were to reduce the general government deficit to 1% of the GDP until 1999, to decrease inflation to 3.3% in 1999 and a revision in wage policies in the form of moderation.

3.3. The Economic Performance of the country in the period between 1995 and 2008

From the mid-1990s, the state policies' main objective became the participation to EMU. While the social state rhetoric was set aside, a strong modernized Greece became the central discourse. In this regard, the more radical fractions of the PASOK were isolated and the supporters of modernization were able to come to the forefront within the party under the leadership of Costas Simitis.

While the EMU participation loomed large for the country, the preparation period was clearly a challenge for it. In this respect, it could be helpful to reveal the economic transition by mainly focusing on the monetary aspect. In 1995, the Bank of Greece realized a "hard drachma policy" in which the exchange rate was put account as a nominal anchor (Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). This was the first time, the central bank declared a particular exchange rate target. In the first three years of the hard drachma policy, inflation was reduced to half of its previous level while the nominal and real interest rates preserved its high levels. Despite a decline in inflation, the real growth gained speed. In this respect, the average real GDP growth was nearly 3% during the

¹⁸ ECOFIN Council consisted of the Economy and Finance Ministers of all the Member States.

period in between 1995 and 1997 while such growth was only 1% during 1991-1994 (Garganas & Tavlas, 2001). In this period, the level of fiscal deficit decreased to around 10% of the GDP in 1995 and in 1997 to around 4% of the GDP. The importance of seigniorage as a source of revenue was declined with the recorded improvements in the tax collection.¹⁹ Moreover the public sector borrowing requirement was no longer monetarily financed, which would enhance the extent for monetary control. Already from 1995, the Bank of Greece acted more freely while intervening and by this means, was able to decrease the operating expenses of monitoring and controlling. In 1997, the Bank of Greece gained its independence and it was given the authorization to ensure price stability. According to some academic circles, such independence delivery to the central bank is related to the elimination of governmental pressures over the bank to apply expansionary monetary policies. Greece participated to Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) which required the drachma's devaluation against ECU by 12.3%. This participation met the condition of Maastricht Treaty that member states should join ERM first for two years and then, they could join the euro area. Also, further fiscal and structural measures were put in practice for preparation. The Bank of Greece would maintain the strict monetary policy in order to fulfill the Maastricht inflation condition by using its late coming independence. In this respect, the Bank of Greece specified that in order to reach the stated inflation target the bank would let drachma's appreciation up to a point out of the narrow margins of fluctuation (Bank of Greece, 1998). Within this framework, while earlier in 1998 the inflation rate saw its top level with 5.3%, this level drew back to 3.9% at the end of the year. The interest rates remained in high levels. Some of the inflationary outcomes of the drachma's devaluation were surpassed through the currency's appreciation within the ERM. The Monetary policy of 1999 and 2000 focused on to achieve the convergence criteria of Maastricht Treaty for the eligibility of being a Eurozone member. The strict monetary stance in 1999 would bring further moderation in the unit labor costs' growth, alongside of the further tightened fiscal policy. When it came to 2000, the economic policies still shaped around the convergence criteria including "the inflation convergence, exchange rate stability and long-term

¹⁹ Seigniorage is the profit made by a government through printing money as the face value of the money is more than the cost of physically making it.

interest rate convergence”. Eventually, Greece was accepted to the euro area with ECOFIN’s decision in 2001.

When we focus on the general economic conjuncture of the country, during the period between 1995 and 2008 one of the highest levels of growth was recorded by on average 3.7%, which was also among the highest rates within the EU. Indeed, with the effect of convergence ideals and the will to join the euro area brought further liberalizations, macroeconomic stability targets and an ongoing economic growth effort. In this respect, credit liberalization, public infrastructure investments including highway and bridge constructions, an expanding stock market, a boosting tourism, services and shipping sector and real estate market, more privatization in the services and in the banking system while the nationalizations being gradually reversed were realized under such attitude within this period. The labor productivity which increased to 30% from 1995 to 2004 and ranked among one of the highest levels within the more developed eighteen EU countries and the low interest rates which enabled the state to broaden its borrowing can be realized as the main driving force for this high growth (Markantonatou, 2012). An increase in the former was mainly linked to the widened investment capacity used for the innovative and progressive technologies and technical equipment, specifically when the country hosted the 2004 Olympic Games. The latter was a monetary stance outcomes of which were an extending banking sector, formation of new domestic, international and European origin banks and increasing stock market mobility. Within this framework, the domestic demand increased, which was followed by an increase in the imports of goods and production materials. While labor productivity was growing, the rise of wages could not catch up with the pace of this productivity growth. In fact, the wage levels in the country can be regarded among the lowest rates within the period between 1996 and 2008. To illustrate, while the average annual net income was nearly 17, 2 euros for the EU-15, this amount was nearly 11, 5 euros for the country (Ibid, 2012). Indeed, the liberalizations were also effective in the labor market especially in favor of the employers. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s the labor market was deregulated in order to provide flexibility. Within this scope, easing the part-time employment, laying down the productivity as a criterion for wage adjustments, eliminating the strict working hours implementations in 1990, approval of Territorial

Employment Pacts²⁰ in 1998, bringing personal employment contracts to private sector alongside of collective agreements, cutbacks in the social security contributions that the employers pay in 2000, increase the maximum number of employees that could be discharged per month, extending the part-time employment in the public sector also in both 2003 and 2004 and introducing flexicurity projects were all conducted to achieve such flexibility. Nevertheless, these applications made the employees more vulnerable by pushing them to unofficial sphere and leaving them unprotected. There was a sharp cutback in the labor costs. In this sense, a reduction was recorded in the real wages of manufacturing sector in 1998. The taxation system was also rearranged. The profit taxation was gradually reduced. This would dramatically cut into the tax revenues during 1996 and 2008. In 2000, the public revenues' rate was 43% of the GDP. Yet this rate decreased to around 37% in 2007 (Markantonatou, 2012). Indeed, the tax avoidance, the tax evasion and tax privileges did also contribution to such decline. Public debt gradually increased. In 1995, it was recorded as around 97% of the GDP. In 2007, this rate became 107.4%. Public deficit was also following the same path with the public debt. Especially after the entry to the EMU, the growth of public deficit accelerated. Contrary to popular belief, Greece's public expenditures were not in excessive levels but mainly fluctuating around the levels that were close to or even lower from the EU averages.²¹ An increase in defense related expenditures would make a contribution to these expenditures. Indeed, with the 2008 crisis, the state had to make capital injections to the banks in the amount of 28 billion euros, which was included to the public spending.

On October 2009, PASOK again gained a political victory and came to power. Nevertheless, hard times were ahead of them. While their prediction concerning the rate of public deficit was 6%, they had to declare that it reached to nearly 13%. Starting from

²⁰ "Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs) were part of a trend characteristic of the mid-1990s towards policy initiatives based on the idea of multi-stakeholder partnerships at a local level, designed to tackle unemployment and to promote job creation. The Pact Programme was formally launched in Dublin in December 1996, under the Irish Presidency. The TEPs were provided with technical assistance by the European Commission - up to a maximum of €300 000". See Evaluation of Territorial Employment Pacts: Final Report, October 2002.

²¹ From 2001 to 2009, the education expenses were 3,8% of GDP lower than the EU average (5.3%); the health expenses were at the rate of 5.1% also lower than the EU average (6.7%) and social protection expenses were at the rate of 16.8% and EU average was 18.6%.

the late 2009, the Greek bond yields jumped. Within this atmosphere, the investors initiated to sell off the Greek assets. This dumping is considered as the preamble of the Greek crisis. From this point onwards, the so-called “Troika” including the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) involved the process and have kept a close watch on the country since then.

CHAPTER 4

RISE OF SYRIZA

4.1. Eurozone Crisis and the Social Reactions

When the Greek crisis first broke out, a perception that convicts the country as the sole offender was tried to be imposed. Nevertheless, the more the issue was dug the more it became apparent that rather than the crisis of Greece, it was actually the crisis of Eurozone. Eurozone as a system has many deficiencies that made this crisis inevitable for certain countries, specifically for the peripheral countries. This system serves to the interests of the certain states and certain groups while taking advantage of the others. Besides, the cost of the system's fault had to be shouldered by the unfortunate ones. In the context of this crisis, it came in the form of draconian austerity measures. Indeed, such prescription was not welcomed by the Greek people since they were victimized by the implemented measures and experienced a severe welfare loss. They took the streets to raise their voice and express their demands. In this regard, both Eurozone crisis and the social reactions of the Greek people required to be elaborated further.

4.1.1. Eurozone Crisis

European integration was a project put forward to terminate the enmities between the European states that experienced the devastation of the two world wars. This project was regarded to bring peace to the continent, which ought to come long ago. It started as an economic cooperation and gradually became a political one, too. The founding fathers' federal Europe ideals have always been included in the discussions after every step taken further for more integrated Europe. Some would consider it as something utopic, some found it too ambitious and some claimed it could only be a long-term effort, which is very far from the days we are present at. One way or another, there was always an optimistic vision regarding the issue since the European project itself is very demanding

project which requires dedication and patience of different European states that were once clutched each other's throats. Nevertheless, now we are talking about the ambiguous future of the Europe, which does not give some much of hope. Indeed, as the union enlarged more and more with the inclusion of more states, every act of the union became more complex. In this context, it was important to sustain the effective operation of the union while achieving to treat equally every member state. After the political spill over, for a length of time the political values seemed to matter more for being part of this union. In this regard, Greece's entrance to the union was able to be achieved after the country's transition to democracy from the military dictatorship, which was also the case for Spain and Portugal. On the other hand, the neoliberal transition that was also embraced by the EU started to dominate the functioning of the union in general. This process mainly initiated with the Maastricht Treaty and followed by the formation of Eurozone which imposed single currency for member states that wished to be part of it yet requires strict pre-entrance conditions to be fulfilled. These conditions are mainly the reflections of the neoliberal rules. If you are not neoliberal enough, you cannot be part of Eurozone. Indeed, when in 2008 a systemic crisis occurred, it was not possible for Eurozone to escape from it with light scrapes.

4.1.1.1. Structural Characteristics of Eurozone

It is important to analyze the functioning of the Eurozone within its existing structure in order to understand the Eurozone crisis in the context of the Greece crisis. The main argument regarding the Eurozone's structure is that especially after the crisis it would become apparent the system has great deficiencies, which causes malfunction within it. Bellofiore, Garibaldo and Halevi (2011) defined the European capitalism as a neomercantilist one in which the net export surpluses are seen as the key source of profit. Such emphasis put on the exports freed the corporations from depending on the domestic market. Therefore, in this environment arrangements like lowering wages and pressurizing working classes can be carried out more easily without concerning about the domestic demand. The authors also (2011) indicated that with the beginning of the European integration project the European mercantilism was institutionalized. The European Monetary Union (EMU) became the most developed aspect of this institutionalization. In this regard, three stages were foreseen to reach EMU, which

started in the early 1970s. In the final stage, it was aimed to form a common currency, to centralize the monetary policy, to uniform the policies and rules of the capital markets of the union and to establish a system that unifies the national central banks under the European Central Bank (ECB). Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992 drew a road map for the third stage. In this regard, the treaty foresaw that at latest in 1999 the ECB would be formed and the member states would switch to the euro. The treaty also presented convergence criteria for the Member States that they had to fulfill if they want to be the part of the Eurozone. These include 'the inflation rate cannot be more than 1.5 percentage points above the rate of the three best performing Member States, the level of the long-term interest cannot be more than 2 percentage points above the average interest rate percentage of three EU countries with the lowest inflation, government deficit as percentage of GDP cannot be more than 3%, government debt as of percentage of GDP cannot be more than 60%, and finally the Member State should participate to ERM II at least for two years and under this system the State's currency should fluctuate within the normal margin without devaluated'. Oktar Türel (2013) specified that these criteria put the weight of the convergence to the States that had current account deficits and/or government deficits and therefore, it has been deflationary tendency from the very beginning. On the other hand, a provision that prohibits a Member State to undertake another Member State's debt was put on the treaty. In the last instance, some Member States fiddled over their statistics in order to seem as if they fulfill the criteria.

Peripheral countries have intrinsic current account deficits mainly derived from their lack of ability to develop new technologies and catching up with developed countries' competitiveness. The growth of the peripheral countries mainly depended on the consumption with the increasing household debt or the real estate bubbles (Lapavitsas et al., 2010). While their general indebtedness was increasing, they tried to balance the situation by squeezing the working class more. Nevertheless, in the European context the most successful country in squeezing the working class is Germany. Therefore, the countries of periphery could not compete with Germany in this subject. By addressing this situation, Lapavitsas et al. (2010) identified the peripheral countries' integration to Eurozone as precarious and indicated that they were left open to threat of the crisis, which occurred in the 2008 crisis in the form of sovereign debt crisis.

This system increases the competitiveness of Germany further and enables the country to give current account surpluses. Nevertheless, since the system does not distribute these surpluses to the countries with current account deficits while the Germany's position in the system was consolidated, the peripheral countries' competitive capacity was shrinking. Türel (2013) highlighted that despite the Maastricht Treaty's emphasis on convergence in the process rather than approximating, the gap between the 'center' and 'periphery' countries of Eurozone widened. Türel (2013) schematizes this situation under eight titles. First one is the loss of competitive capacity. Under the current system, the monetary policy is dominated by ECB and the fiscal policy of the Member States is restricted by the Stability and Growth Pact. Therefore, under these circumstances, the competitiveness of peripheral countries mainly base on their ability to decrease the nominal unit labor costs. In this respect, working class was pressurized yet since the productivity was not supported by the technological innovations properly, the peripheral countries could not catch up with the Germany's competitive capacity. Second one is the productivity gap. In this context, the convergence criteria which focus on the monetary and fiscal convergence of the countries were ineffective for the countries' convergence in the industrial productivity supported by technological innovation while the countries' productivity levels differentiate dramatically. Third one is the nominal remunerations. In this context, the increase in the remuneration in peripheral countries was way faster than Germany. In this regard, Greece was one of countries that had the fastest increases in remuneration. Fourth one is the price and wage inflation. While in the peripheral countries the wage increases were parallel with the price increases, Germany was able to achieve to downgrade the real wages. Fifth one is the current account deficits. In the process, the peripheral countries gave current account deficits, especially in the second half of the 2000. However, Germany had current account surpluses. Sixth one is the public deficit. The peripheral countries again have high public deficits. Seventh one is the public debt burdens. Especially in the period of 2007 and 2011, the public debt showed an increasing trend across the Eurozone. In this category, Greece's public debt with its really high proportion comes to the forefront. Nevertheless, it is important to note that at the period due to the financial crisis, many country engaged in operations to save their financial system, which included high level of money transfers to the financial

sector; therefore, rising public debt became inevitable, which appeared as a consequence of the crisis rather than its cause. Final one is the growth driven by speculation. The financialization paved the way for such growth form.

Instability in the capital inflow and outflows caused the boom and bust times in the peripheral countries. Especially in the times of boom, these countries have the idea that they can finance their debts easily through the capital inflows and have the tendency to become indebted further. However, in the long run such fluctuations made these countries vulnerable against crisis. It is also significant to indicate the role of ECB in the process. The monetary policies of the Eurozone are led by the one center; that is, ECB. Indeed, since the countries of Eurozone have different tolerability against the symmetric and asymmetric shocks, this situation would bring problems. ECB does not act like a national central bank. It is autonomous and it has the authority to produce monetary policy for a bunch of country with different financial dynamics. Nevertheless, despite its autonomous character, the influence of some states, particularly Germany, can be explicitly observed. Indeed, Germany is the main contributor of the ECB capital, of which subscription is calculated on the basis of countries' population and GDP share in the EU. In this sense, there was German insistence that the major objective of the ECB should be protecting price stability by keeping inflation down. It is the responsibility of the Central Banks to sustain price stability through blocking a dramatic increase in inflation. Yet, if we look at the US' Federal Reserve, we see that FED also has the responsibility to push full employment (Fazi, 2014). It is something really important since the bank act as the lender of last resort. In this context, if the financial markets refuse to purchase bonds or demand high returns, then the bank can buy these bonds with newly printed money. This would prevent excessive increases in the borrowing cost. Nevertheless, ECB until the euro crisis broke out did not have a mandate to finance governments or to buy their bonds in order to avoid the rise of the borrowing cost (Ibid, 2014). In this context, the euro area countries had to give up on their lender of last resort while being left to the mercy of financial markets. As in the case of Greece, we see that it turned out not well. Moreover, when ECB provided loan to the European countries, it demands governments to fulfill harsh conditionality mainly in the form of austerity, which triggers further the problems like unemployment and economic recession. It

should be also noted that in the initial phase of the 2008 crisis, in order to save the private banks, ECB provided extensive liquidity, in return for controversial forms of papers as collateral (Lapavitsas et al., 2010). In the late 2008, banks have already decreased their loans. They ceased to purchase long-term securities while tending to hold short-term instruments backed by ECB, which ended up with credit shortage for the peripheral countries (Ibid, 2010). This portrait shows that ECB became the main agent within the Eurozone to spread and consolidate the neoliberal trend and appeared as the main protector of the financial system dominated by such ideal within the euro area.

It is possible to assert that there is an obvious vicious circle within this system. System aims to create a powerful European economic sphere against the rest of the world by enabling a convergence among the Member States so that they can all together as union give export surpluses. Nevertheless, under the current system, there is a certain transfer of surplus from the periphery to the core rather than the convergence of the periphery to the core. In order to gain surplus, some have to give deficit in this system. Two third of the German trade is with Eurozone since Germany as a member of the union has certain advantage in the European internal market compared to the rest of world (Ibid, 2010). Besides, the country totally utilizes from the lower competitive capacity of the peripheral countries. Therefore, these countries became an easy market for the country. Indeed, competition outside the limits of the Europe is much more challenging and the rivals are much more powerful in the competitive sense. System does not have a redistribution mechanism from the surplus countries to the deficit ones. Therefore, there is no win-win situation within it. All these indicators exhibit that this system works for the benefit of Germany, in particular and core countries, in general while the peripheral countries have to bear the cost of the system's malfunction.

4.1.1.2. Greece in the Center of the Eurozone Crisis

In 2010, it became apparent that Greece could not handle its debt anymore, and started to knock the doors of the creditors. The initial reactions of the core Eurozone countries were not very promising regarding the country's bail-out. Especially Germany showed the harshest attitude against Greece. Germany was not willing to help Greece. At home in Germany, there was an understanding that why do we have to pay their debts while

they were the ones who were responsible. The reluctance among the Germans to support Greece increased the pressure over the chancellor Angela Merkel. In the early days of the 2010, European leaders promised to aid Greece yet did not specify a clear date for it in the near future. In this context, Merkel made a statement in a Eurogroup meeting in February that

“Greece has never asked us for support” and continued that “all members of the euro zone say clearly that we are committed to the stability of the euro. Not only is the prospect of a bailout of Greece politically unpopular in Germany, but there are also concerns that any such arrangement might be challenged in Germany's Constitutional Court” (Castle, 2010).

While the negotiations were proceeding, the mutual statements coming from the both parties were also puzzling. The economy minister of Germany at the time, Rainer Brüderle stated that “the German government does not intend to give one cent” (Kulish, 2010). On the other side, Papandreou, former Prime Minister of Greece, highlighted that “We have not asked the German taxpayers to rescue us, to pay for our retirements and vacations. We are not asking for money. What we need is the support of the EU and our European partners so that we can receive credit from the market at better terms” (Ibid, 2010). Indeed, these reactions can be totally understandable. In the Germany, Greece was accused of being irresponsible, twisting their economic figures for Eurozone membership, having a corrupt system with high tax evasions and so on; therefore, for Papandreou, this reaction was more of chauvinistic one against the Germans’ accusations. He tried to save the country’s leftover pride after the crisis broke out. On the other hand, the German minister tried to convince German people that they would not take any action against their will.

Indeed, Greece was not the only Eurozone member that had economic difficulties yet probably the one who is closest to the edge. In this respect, countries including Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Italy were all the victims of the crisis. Daniel Gros who is director of Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS) indicated that “if it was just Greece, they could consider letting them go down the drain, but it threatens the entire euro zone” (Kulish, 2010). In this respect, according to the analysts, German people’s desire to have a stable euro outweighed their unwillingness to save Greece (Kulish, 2010). Therefore, on May 2010 a bailout package in the total of 110 billion euros with the IMF loan was

granted to the country. This package came with draconian austerity measures under the guise of structural adjustment program.

At this point, it is important to elaborate further the real dynamics of the crisis in order to form a clearer understanding regarding the positions of the Germany and Greece in particular within this context. The German minister of finance, Wolfgang Schäuble associated this crisis with the excessive government debt. In his statement, he indicated that such government debt is the result of excessive government spending of countries that “lived well beyond their means” (Fazi, 2014, p.97). According to Schäuble, in order to avoid a possible crisis government deficit should be brought under control especially through decreasing the welfare spending. He also highlighted that governments priority should be ‘reassuring the markets’ along with enhancing the competitiveness rather than make investments to stimulate the growth (Ibid, 2014). Schäuble’s such statements are basically the reflection of neoliberal ideals. Rather than going deeper and questioning the structure itself, the blame is simply attributed to the government.

In the immediate post-crisis period, it is actually something normal to see increasing public debts, which was also indicated above. Since the crisis hit the financial market, the governments had to pump up money to the market; otherwise, it cannot survive by its own. According to OECD data, world’s advance countries’ government deficit in average rose to 6.6% in 2011 from 1.4% in 2007 while their public debt in average increased to 102% in 2011 from more than 73% in 2007 (Ibid, 2014). An amount nearly between \$12 and \$15 trillion was injected to the world financial markets within which €4.6 trillion injection belonged to EU countries (Ibid, 2014). However, in this context this increase in the public debt is actually a trend mainly initiating in the early 2000s after the 1990s fiscal consolidations (Ardagna & Caselli & Lane, 2004).

One of the issues that were discussed regarding the Greek crisis was the country’s tax system. It came under heavy criticisms due to high tax evasion rates in the country. Indeed, it is not possible to deny the system’s flawed structure especially in terms of its fairness. In this respect, the country’s shadow economy rate was way above from the EU average, which was 27.5% while the EU average was 22.1% in 2009 (Murphy, 2012). Indeed, shadow economy constituted one side of the problem. In general, the average

level of the tax evasion in Greece is predicted between 6% and 9% of the GDP; that is, between €11 billion and €16 billion for every year (Georgakopoulos, 2016). However, the situation around Europe should also be discussed in detail. Under the single currency, governments of Europe had to find alternative ways to be more competitive within such system. In this sense, tax competition became one of the major trends. European countries decrease their corporate tax levels and the taxes over high incomes and high value properties in order to attract the capital to their own country. In the absence of a common tax system, it is nearly impossible for the Union to tackle such fiscal dumping. In the current portrait, while the US average for corporate tax is around 40%, EU average is lower than 25% until 2005. Moreover, several European countries are regarded as among the leading tax havens²² globally including Ireland, Switzerland, Luxembourg and UK (especially due to the territories under the control of the country like Cayman Islands and Jersey) (Tax Justice Network, 2017). Germany is also in the list as a “home for large volumes of tax evading and other illicit flows and assets from around the globe” (Fazi, 2014, p. 65). Since under this system, the wealthy can avoid giving tax through moving away its money somewhere not requiring any fiscal responsibility and does not share any burden with the lower strata. Even in a crisis situation despite being among the wealthiest of that country, they would become the ones who are untouched and protected. Richard Murphy (2012) also indicated that it is the tax evasion and tax avoidance that paved the way for this current crisis in Europe. Indeed, this exhibits that rather than focusing on austerity, it can be much more effective to form fairer tax system in which the vulnerable segments of the society is protected more rather than the strongest ones. It should be underlined that one of the main focuses of the SYRIZA’s party program was a tax system reform. They foresaw a restructuring which would be based on equity.

Greece along with some other European states was declared as insolvent. This basically refers that the country is not in a condition to pay its debt. What’s odd about this

²² Even though there is no official definition for the tax haven Tax Justice Network identifies that “*tax haven provides facilities that enable people or entities escape (and frequently undermine) the laws, rules and regulations of other jurisdictions elsewhere, using secrecy as a prime tool. Those rules include tax – but also criminal laws, disclosure rules (transparency,) financial regulation, inheritance rules, and more*”. Find out more in <http://www.taxjustice.net/faq/tax-havens/>

according to Kinsella (2013) is actually in practice almost every country is insolvent when they are asked to pay their debts through their available assets. In case of not having the ability to pay the debt, country could defer its payment to a future date, if it fails to do that then it defaults. The term ‘insolvency’ mainly became a common phenomenon, especially after this crisis. Under a single currency system, states have not room for maneuver so they basically have no power to pull their country out of this situation. Kinsella also highlighted that the insolvency turned the debtor states into the satellites of the creditors. He specified (2012) that

“for politicians of debtor states, suddenly vast privatizations make sense, because of course you’re selling some of your remaining assets. Suddenly the will of the people of the debtor nation becomes secondary to the will of the nation’s creditors. Suddenly democracy is an expensive irrelevance in the face of an overwhelming technocratic desire for a speedy, and market-friendly, solution”.

Greece lived through such a process as when Papandreou, former Prime Minister, decided to hold a referendum for the bail-out packages, the creditors became very furious and they immediately warned him. After this event, with also the effect of growing dissatisfaction of the Greek people towards his government, Papandreou resigned. The government formed after his resignation was the living proof of the suspension of democracy at the request of the creditors.

In the process, Germany was the one that made a fuss about the Greece’s bail-out. Nevertheless, the Bank of International Settlements’ data showed that it was not Germany that had the highest exposure to the Greek debt yet it was France and Switzerland. While the Germany’s share remained in the amount of \$43 billion, the share of France and Switzerland was around \$79 billion in each (Treanor, 2010). It should also be underlined that in case of a default of the country, it would be banks of Germany that damaged most. This was also mainly the case for the core country banks. Their exposure to peripheral countries was high (Lapavitsas et al., 2010). Therefore, what they were saving was not the countries of periphery but actually their own banks.

When we look at Greece after the implementation of the austerity measures whether or not they would bring some kind of a recovery to the country, what we encounter is a country in a worse condition. The devastating effects of the austerity measures can be

found in every aspect of the social life of the country. According to OECD data, the poverty ratio became 0.15 in 2011 from the nearly 0.13 in 2009, which became the highest level within the EU countries. In the declared UNICEF report in 2013, it was stated that nearly 600.000 Greek children lived under poverty line (Papantonlou, 2013). Out of that number, more than 300.000 children could not get their basic daily basis nutritional needs. The unemployment rate of the country reached to 27.5% in 2013 which was 9.6% in 2009. Besides, the youth unemployment reached alarming levels in 2013 by almost 60% which was less than 30% in 2009 (Kraatz, 2015). According to unofficial estimates, the number of homeless people reached and amount of 40.000 and the rate of suicides increased dramatically in the post-crisis period (Fazi, 2014). All these austerity measures were imposed for the sake of decreasing the government's debt yet the data shows that in the mid-2013 the debt ratio was 160% of the GDP which was higher than the ratio of 2010 (145% of the GDP) (Ibid, 2014).

In conclusion, while the biggest part of the loan was used to save the financial sector (specifically banks) in general, it was the Greek people who suffered most despite being the least responsible of the crisis. Not only they were betrayed and left alone by their own political elites, they were also forced to shoulder the main burden of the crisis. Their political elites sacrificed them through implementing such harsh austerity measures for the sake of ingratiating themselves into the creditors' favor. Unfortunately, the result was catastrophic for the country. Nevertheless, Greek people punished the political elite and showed their reaction drastically both in the political arena and in the streets. It is also indicated that the Greek crisis could be handled much more smoothly. Lapavitsas et al. (2010) addressed that there was no such an insolvable structural factor that can put Greece in the center of the crisis. Indeed, Greece had a high public debt yet this was also the case for Italy. Also, it is true that the Greek authorities fiddled over the numbers to be the part of the euro area. However, still if the problem had been handled earlier with determination by the European authorities before allowing for speculation in the financial markets, then the crisis could have been prevented to reach such point.

4.1.2. Social Reactions

Greece was shaken up with fierce social reaction in the aftermath of the draconian austerity measures' implementation. These waves of social movements have become the main strength of SYRIZ and eventually enabled the party to rise to the power. In this regard, it is important to analyze the country's protest behavior. Such analysis can be helpful to form an understanding regarding the country's general attitude towards the social movements and relatedly their reaction in the aftermath of the crisis.

4.1.2.1. Protest History of Greece

The modern protest culture of the country can be traced back to the 1940s. EAM-ELAS (Greece National Liberation Front) that is a resistance organization motivated by the communist ideals appeared as the most powerful guerilla group especially after fighting with Germans during the World War II when they invaded the country. They were controlling a big part of the country at the time. The new government demanded the group to disarm yet the group did not accept it. In this context, in December 1944, unarmed people took the streets of Athens for a demonstration led by EAM-ELAS. The Greek government with the support of the British forces dispersed the crowd very violently, which ended up with the death of nearly 30 people including an infant and more than hundred wounded. Indeed, government's such reaction paved the way for the ELAS- the military branch of the group- to give a harsh response.²³ Ceasefire came with the "Varkiza" agreement signed in 1945 and required the complete discharge of the ELAS. This decision brought along the civil war of 1946-1949.

After the end of civil war, the officials mainly took a tougher line against all kinds of protest movement especially the ones with pro-leftist stance. Workers had to face with strict controls against any kind of union activities. When the military junta took over the power from the civilian government in 1967, again a difficult period was ahead of the Greek people in terms of raising their voice and becoming visible. Indeed, such authoritarian rule was followed by the resistance. In 1973, both the international and national conditions (Oil Crisis and the following domestic economic deterioration) gave

²³ The events occurred between 1944 and 1945 is commonly known as "Dekemvriana" as it did happen in December.

the people to courage to question the authority of junta regime, which was highly repressive. Moreover, there were supports coming from different European capitals like Berlin and Roma, which would further motivate people to take an action (Kassimeris, 2005). In the given circumstances, the Greek students occupied the Law School of Athens University in March and then in November 1973 Athens Polytechnic (National Technical University of Athens) was occupied (Ibid, 2005). The Polytechnic events were able to galvanize different parts of the Greek society while challenging the military rule. More importantly, the Polytechnic events became a reference point for the following student movements. Their methods and discourse was took an example and somehow influenced subsequent movements. In the early 1970s, a dramatic increase was observed in the number of university students. On the other hand, the university facilities could not catch up with such increase and fell short. In this regard, Kassimeris (2005) indicated that “Student meetings, strikes and demonstrations about of studies, the lack of dialogue between teachers regulations in the student hostels, the nature of the teaching the courses, the lack of laboratories, inadequate welfare between university bureaucracy and the military regime and police violence leading to wider and more radical protests” (p.747). As with the worsening economic situation, unemployment also rose dramatically. Indeed, as future university graduates, students rightfully believed that they should not be victimized by the system with the fear of not finding a job after completing a difficult university life. Yet they had to deal with such problem and had to compete against each other to be the best in order to get a job in the business life. This feeling of insecurity and isolation led them to the political radicalism towards the leftist spectrum. With the arrival of a socialist party, PASOK, to the power the leftists strengthened their hands. Starting from the 1980s, the early 1990s witnessed a great deal of strikes held by the workers, and demonstrations and occupations held by the workers and also by the students.²⁴ The late 1980s and the early 1990s was a period when the government made welfare cuts. In the 2000s, which could be regarded as a period of extending prosperity and economic growth, we see that there is a deceleration in the general protest behavior yet still the country has a relatively higher record when the strike activity comes into question compared to other European countries (Rüdig &

²⁴ For more detailed information see European Protest and Coercion Data, Greece (1980-1995).

Karyotis, 2013). At this point, it can be helpful to look at the trade unions' place in the country. According to the OECD data, the trade union density tends to decrease from 1980s to 2010s. While the rate was nearly 40% in 1980, it fell back to less than 24% in 2008. These numbers show that there is no marginal trade union membership present in the country. On the other hand, such strike activity density reveals that there is an efficient internal coordination within the existing unions and they clearly have an activist nature. In terms of student movements, it can be explanatory to talk about the 'university asylum law'. This law was enforced in order to protect freedom of thought and expression within the campus as under this law the police are banned to enter the campus for any kind of intervention. In a sense, it was aimed to prevent future official brutality in a student uprising especially after the killing of 24 students during Polytechnic events on 17 November 1973 when the colonel sent the security forces to quash the uprising. In this context, the universities were turned into safety zones. In the time of transition period after the end of military dictatorship, there were efforts to de facto abolish it yet the radical student groups harshly fought back against such implementation. In 1982, the PASOK government included it into Law No.1268 for a further institutionalization of the law (Andronikidou & Kovras, 2012).²⁵ Andronikidou and Kovras (2012, p.719) interpreted this as "the institutionalization of the academic asylum law facilitated the reproduction and perpetuation of rioting as a means of expression". The safe haven offered by universities explains the eruption of riots close to university buildings. It also explains the obvious pattern whereby violent protests follow calls for education reform. Participants take refuge in university buildings in Athens and Salonika which are located within walking distance of riot hot-spots. This creates a steady and predictable link between violent protests and protesters who hide in university buildings. At this point, it should be noted that Polytechnic events has a particular importance in terms of students' participation to social movements. From now onward, students became the one of the most active and dynamic participants of such movements in the country. Indeed, students' such characteristics made Synaspismos and accordingly SYRIZA realize a strategy that put the youngsters in the center.

²⁵ This law was abolished in 2011 again by the PASOK government that institutionalized the law in the first place.

The strikes and the demonstrations held by workers and students are not the only forms of protest that we should take into consideration. In 2007 Greece had to deal with a great amount of forest fires across the country due to the dry and hot air conditions and strong winds yet despite the efforts to control the fires and to minimize the damage of it nearly 269.000 hectares of forest was burnt and 64 people lost their lives during this incident (European Commission, 2007). In order to show their grievance and dissatisfaction of the government's handling strategies of the issue, Greek people gathered before the Greek Parliament building with wearing black. According to Karamichas (2012), this protest is one of the social protests that have particular importance and in this context, should be mentioned in order to gain an insight into the "Aganaktismeni" movement and social protest culture of the country.

In the following year, 2008, when a 15 year old Alexandros Grigoropoulos was shot by a policeman, many cities of Greece starting with Athens witnessed harsh rallying mainly of the students that protested such unjust death of the teenage boy. These riots continuing nearly three weeks were mainly violence prone and destructive while there were also peaceful sit-ins outside the parliament building. In the scope of these events, there were clash between the police and the demonstrators, occupation of universities and schools, general expression of anger against arbitrary treatments of state and the brutality and unjust impunity of the police officers. Some interpreted the movement as having an anti-systemic characteristic by linking it with the 1973 Polytechnic events and even with 1944-45 "Dekemvriana". In this regard, 'December events' are considered to clear the way for 'a new space for the politics' and initiated a fresh way of political expression, which would later influence the austerity movements, in this sense (Pantazidou, 2013).²⁶ On the other hand, there are others questioning this link between 1973 Polytechnic events and the 2008 events. To illustrate, Kostis Kornetis (2010) emphasized that while the two have different sociopolitical conditions, they also differentiates in terms of the profile of the protesters. The former is in general movement

²⁶ 2008 events occurred in December which was the month that also 1944 events followed by the civil war happened. The link between these two uprisings is underlined by naming 2008 events as 'December events'.

of the students yet the latter, other than students, includes “anarchists, immigrants, hooligans, dissolute intellectuals, and unspecified others” (Ibid, 2010).

John Karamichas (2012) indicated that when look closely to the conjuncture of the 2008, we see that the unemployment among the youth was more than 24% and the clientelism could be still considered as being a defining characteristic of the public sector employment. Moreover, the wages were in relatively low levels and inflation was on the rise. Within such circumstances, the youngsters were mainly anxious about their future and furious with the authorities. At the time, New Democracy was the party in power yet with 2009 elections the power changed hands and passed into PASOK, which can be realized as an implication of such reaction. In other words, rather than an anti-systemic movement, 2008 events mainly reflected an anger of the youth and excluded ones against the authorities due to their deteriorating conditions and opportunities.

In this context, Yannis Pechtedelis (2011) tried to classify the positions that the different intellectual circles took towards the 2008 events. He wrote that the one of the positions is that the youngsters who are so raw and have not yet any steady political stance were directed to take the streets in order to gain certain ‘political interests’. Pechtedelis specified it is interesting to see that in addition to liberals, the Greek communists also supported such idea and said that

“According to the Greek Communist Party, children without communist political beliefs are apolitical, they have no clear class consciousness, and they certainly don’t measure up to the ideal of the popular rebel. Uprising and revolution are considered concerns of the proletariat; of the workers, not the children; especially not children from the middle or upper class” (p.452).

Pechtedelis also highlighted that young people in Greece is both critical to neoliberal policies and the traditional left due to their highly hierarchal internal structure , which is also the case for youngsters of other countries; therefore, characterizing their mind as a tabula rasa or basically underestimating them in this regard is questioned by the author. In the beginnings of the movement, there was a public support yet especially after the mainstream media’s negative characterization of the protesters and the state of chaos dominated the city during the protests exhausted the support of the society. The violent character of the movement is marginalized the demonstrators, and deprived its

legitimacy in the eyes of the society as the shops of regular craftsmen were plundered and damaged including the shop of the Grigoropoulos' family during the events and even the Library of International Studies was burnt unintentionally. SYRIZA was the only political party that openly supported the protesters. However, this support costed a decrease in the percentages of the party in the polls (Kornetis, 2010). This proves that the ordinary Greek people did not approve the movement, probably due to its violent and militant characteristics.

Finally and most importantly, we can focus on the austerity movements. In this regard, Georgios Karyotis and Wolfgang Rüdig (2016) categorized them as “three waves of the anti-austerity protests”. The first wave includes the mass protests in 2010. The second wave comes with the Aganaktismeni movement in 2011, and the third wave rather than a protest movement comes in the form of an electoral reaction with the rise in SYRIZA's rate of vote. In May 2010, the first bail-out package was agreed by the Greek government. The austerity measures brought by the package included massive removals from the public sector employments, wage cuts, lower minimum wages for new comers, increasing the age of retirement, freezing the payments and reorganizing the public enterprises. Immediate reactions were given by the Greek people in the cities like Athens in 2010 both before and after the bail-out package's approval. Indeed, there is a dramatic increase in the protest action after the package's approval. The street protests of the Greek people were also followed by trade unions' strikes. On 5 May 2010 GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) called a 24 hours general strike, which was supported by the ADEDY (Confederation of Public Servants) and eleven more strikes followed this one in that year.²⁷ The strike activity continued in the following years with increasing its number. After the end of Aganaktismeni movement, the protest movement continued in the following years. According to the police data there were 5654 protests in 2012, 6231 protests in 2013 and 3032 protests in the initial six months of 2014 recorded (Rüdig & Karyotis, 2016).

²⁷ GSEE and ADEDY are the two largest trade unions in the country that respectively represented the workers of the private sector and the workers of the public sector.

4.1.2.2. Movement of Squares (Aganaktismeni)

The wave initiated by the Arab Spring in 2011, especially with the memory of the demonstrations in Cairo's main Tahrir Square in Egypt. The European reflections were firstly seen in Spain when the outraged people of Spain, the Indignados, took the streets of Puerta del Sol in Madrid and of other squares in other cities. The Spanish people's response to the government's harsh austerity measures probably inspired the Greek people who can be considered as the most suffered party of the economic crisis in the Europe. There was also a rumor that during the Indignados movement, Spanish people unfurled a banner in which wrote that "Shhhhh... Keep it quiet, we might wake up Greeks" and the following day a Facebook page was created to call Greek people for a peaceful protest to take the streets and to raise their voice against the austerity measures (Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013). On 25 May 2011, thousands of people gathered around the Syntagma Square of Athens and thousands of others around other squares in more than 38 cities all around the country. When the movement erupted, the trade unions and parties also called for a two day long general strike and by this means they showed their support to the movement.

The "Aganaktismeni" movement was mainly a peaceful protest, which was frequently interrupted by the repressive and violent police action. It was non-hierarchical and horizontal. Like its Spanish counterpart, it also had a non-partisan characteristic. In other words, no party affiliation was welcomed. Indeed, those who have party affiliations could participate the movement individually. What did unite these people in this sense is their outrage towards such harsh austerity measures. They were consumed away and now all they have left is their rage that the streets are waiting to be flooded with. The slogan of "We are squares, we are everywhere" screamed the place down. This movement has certain characteristics that should be elaborated. It could be possible to say that the epicenter of the movement was the "Syntagma Square" of Athens in which the Parliament building is located. "Syntagma Square" (Constitution Square) has a symbolic meaning for the Greek people as a place that hosted different set of gatherings from New Year celebrations to social protests. Syntagma Square can be considered as the correspondent of "Tahrir Square" in Egypt or "Puerta Del Sol" in Spain or "Taksim Square" in Turkey. In this regard, the occupation of the Syntagma Square differentiates

the movement from other movements. Although the occupation as a way of protesting is not something new for the Greek people as there were protests that involve the occupation of various places like schools, universities, ministries, highways and so on, the occupation of the Syntagma Square had a different meaning in terms of the protest movements. The Syntagma Square has always hosted mass mobilizations. It witnessed the resistance of the Greek people against the King Otto with the demand of democracy, which was later followed by the establishment of Greek constitution (Simiti, 2014). All the government's failure in crisis management and the corruption allegations like bribery scandals made people demand direct democracy. In the scope of the movement, people formed an assembly that they can experience a direct democracy practice. This horizontal and non-hierarchical structure was adopted in here; therefore, each person had the equal opportunity to speak up and express their thoughts and feelings in the platform. The assembly even made a declaration about the movement's content which was as follows;

“For a long time decisions have been made for us, without us. We are here because we know that the solutions to our problems can come only from us. In these public squares we will shape our claims and our demands together. We will not leave the squares until those who compelled us to come here go away: Governments, Troika [EU, ECB and IMF], Banks, IMF Memoranda, and everyone that exploits us. We send them the message that the debt is not ours. **DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOW! EQUALITY – JUSTICE – DIGNITY!**” (Ibid, 2013).

Rather than demanding ‘real democracy’ as with their Spanish counterparts, Greeks demanded direct democracy, which is both a call for refreshing a social memory and a demand for a systemic change in essence. Indeed, this politicized spirit most likely was not shared by all the demonstrators. In this sense, it would not be a coincidence that the movement was mainly hostile to any kind of party or organization affiliation. What was aimed to be created is an environment that every kind of Greek citizen from the housewives to retirees; in other words, an environment welcoming the ordinary citizen who keeps his/her nose clean. We will discuss the profile of protesters further below.

If we briefly examine the internal dynamics of the movement, we see that what was established in the occupied squares actually looks like a city-state ruled with direct democracy like in antiquity. The direct democracy functioned through the assemblies.

These assemblies' main duties and responsibilities included being a unifying power for local-resistance against the recent national economic and political order such as occupying the local tax offices in order to resist against the rising tax rates, informing the local crowd about the national policies; forming pressure over the local authorities in order to prevent any further exploitation of public spaces, to demand assistance for street persons and so on; and providing a space for communication, socialization and searching solutions for urgent problems like helping families that were cut off the power; providing a space for the sprouting of new future activist relationships (Pantazidou, 2013). Indeed, while these duties and responsibilities reflect the general framework, they can be redefined from place to place, in accordance with the different needs and problems. It can be stated that these assemblies became the voice of the local that was once silent and ignored. In other words, the neglected people of the periphery got involved into the movement and became the part of the struggle. These assemblies functioned as 'self-governing communities' in parallel to the fundamentals of direct democracy. Speakers were selected randomly in these assemblies. In this context, the decisions were made by the end of long discussions in terms of their essentiality and implication, and they are always open to reassessment and modification.

With the growing number of people who cannot even meet their basic needs like food and medical needs, some local authorities like the Church and some NGOs tried to provide food, clothes and medicines by establishing banks for each of these needs and organized soup kitchens. To illustrate a kitchen called "social kitchen" gave free food to the homeless people (Ibid, 2013). Every day while the movement was still ongoing, the members of this kitchen went to the different parts of the Athens with their own cooking utensils. There was a circulation that people who see them also voluntarily joined to help them and afterwards they ate together. There were also other kinds of networks including social health centers run by voluntary doctors, teaching assistance to the school kids, language training given voluntary citizens, psychological support and so on. All these characteristics of the movement display that other than protesting the austerity measures, they developed a civic culture in which the citizens became a community that all desire to live in humane conditions and in harmony.

Some scholars believed that the 2008 events triggered further mobilization and eventually, the Aganaktismeni movement came forth (Souzas & Ilipoulos, 2016). Their main emphasizes in terms of these two movements similarities are the use of social networks for mobilization and communication and the horizontal structures. The aggressive attitude towards the authority in the 2008 events was also embraced in the Aganaktismeni movement. However, the unchannelled rage in the 2008 events was replaced with the target oriented outrage in Aganaktismeni movement. In other words, Aganaktismeni movement is both a follow-up and updated version of December events (Douzinas, 2013).

At this point, it can be more explanatory to look closely to the certain characteristics of the Aganaktismeni movement.

4.1.2.2.1. Upper - Lower Square Division

In the literature, there is a rough sketch of a division between the lower and upper squares of Syntagma. In this context, the upper square mainly hosted Greek flags and banners aggrandizing the past of the nation. This part of the square is regarded as inclining to have more nationalistic, patriotic sentiments and to apolitical. Their slogans mainly emphasized the national sovereignty of the country. Their main accusations towards the officials include national treason, and they constantly accentuated that the accused ones should be punished. Besides, there were people with shaved head greeting each other in a Nazi way (Karamichas, 2012). On the other hand, in the lower part of the square there were people with an active political background, with leftist affiliations including those from left wing parties like SYRIZA and ANTARSYA and with anarchist tendencies (Ibid, 2012). The encampments were mainly positioned in the lower square. The people in the lower square attached great importance to experience the direct democratic practices. The assembly was very active in there. During the discussions, long-standing difference of opinion within the leftist circles manifested itself between the reformists and the radicals as some emphasized the urgency that the government should relinquish and new elections should be held immediately while others stuck by an anti-systemic movement (Makridis & Pagiatsos cited by Simiti, 2014). There was also a division of labor. Different groups were assigned to different

tasks such as in food supply, cleaning the square, providing first aid and so on. Indeed, this division should not be considered as something rigid. Roussos (2014) specified that there was a circulation between the two squares as the protesters in the lower square visited the upper square and the vice versa was also valid (cited from Souzas & Ilipoulos, 2016). In that vein, Douzinas (2013) also indicated that a long standing antagonism between the people of right and left somehow was able to put aside and they were both in the Syntagma square to protest the authorities, for the sake of same objectives. Aganaktismeni movement is a heterogeneous movement that includes people from all kinds of backgrounds and status. Of course, there would be disagreements among them yet still this should not overshadow the fact that they came together to resist against the same victimization. He also criticized the perception that while the people in the upper square was associated to much lower classes and degraded as with not having any political understanding, people in the lower square was glorified as the real defenders of democracy. Such perception alienates the people in the upper square while the movement's all intention is being inclusionary enough in order to reach all parts of the society.

4.1.2.2.2. Profile of the Protesters

It is commonly emphasized that the Aganaktismeni movement differentiates from its counterparts with its heterogeneous crowd. Before focusing on the protesters' profile in the Aganaktismeni movement, we can briefly analyze the former movements' protesters in order to gain insight about the issue. Until recently, the workers and the students can be regarded as the two main characters of the movements as the workers mainly in strike activities and the students in the demonstrations and school occupations. Yet, this trend started to change with the 2008 events. Douzinas (2013) argued that the authorities identified the protesters as the vulgar and actually this was not incorrect as the 2008 events actually made the invisibles visible that were once staying in the shadows and ignored, and Kornetis (2010) as it is also mentioned above stated that alongside of the students, "anarchists, immigrants, hooligans, dissolute intellectuals, and unspecified others" were the active actors in the events. After a year witnessing a great amount of protests held by the Greek people in order to show their reaction to the harsh austerity measures, in December 2010 Rüdig and Karyotis (2013) did a research related to the

anti-austerity movements. They conducted a survey with the help of Kappa Research in which the number of respondents is 1014 Greek people. Among these people, 302 indicated that they physically participated in an austerity protest. Within the context of the research, the respondents were asked whether they support the austerity measures taken by the government, 54% of them indicated that they are against it. 80% of those who opposed to the austerity measures supported the protest idea. Rüdig and Karyotis also investigated the respondents past protest participations. In this regard, nearly 21% of all the respondents had participated in a strike action while 19% stated that they had participated in a local demonstration before. In the light of this information, almost 29% of the people took part in at least one form of protest. According to their findings, the previous protest participants' profile coincides with the classical understanding including the characteristics like being young, male, literate, public sector employee, trade union member with a left-oriented vision and so on. Although the 2010 protesters' profile is also very similar to this, Rüdig and Karyotis still highlighted certain characteristics of them deviating from this appearance which are lack of male-dominance, relatively high number of married persons or persons living with a partner and generality of full-time employees among the protesters. By looking at these results, Rüdig and Karyotis made the inference that the 2010 protests mainly followed the path of the former protests. When compared to the December 2008 protests, the 2010 protests have a higher inclusion of elderlies. In this respect, among the age groups, the greatest share in both strikers and demonstrators belongs to those who are in the range of 45 and 54 years with 48% in the strikers and 43% in the demonstrators. Rüdig and Karyotis also emphasized that the probability of participating in the 2010 protests increases, in accordance with the increase in previous protest involvement experience. For the recruitment of protesters the traditional networks including the trade union and voluntary group memberships and public sector employment have important roles. Furthermore, in all stages of the recruitment process, the rational choice variables can be observed.²⁸ By using these findings as a base, they indicated that "this is not a protest movement of middle-class educational elite that is active in their spare time, as most 'new social

²⁸ Rational choice approach suggests that those who think the benefits of participating in a protest will outweigh the costs will most likely to take part in the protest.

movements' in Western Europe have been in recent decades but this is a mass protest in which ordinary people of all educational backgrounds and ages take part" (2013, p.507-508). In conclusion, they specified that their research revealed nearly 30% of the total population somehow involved in the 2010 protests either in the strikes or in the demonstrations. The profile of the protesters was not dominated with the appearance of those with high socio-economic status and high education level or having a great deal of time to make protest. It was also not the concentration of students, radicals or the uneducated ones but it was those who are both young and old, in full-time employment, married and educated. In this regard, while the ideological orientation of the protesters was mainly left, it still did not exclude the more ordinary citizen that is classified above. In this sense, the 2010 protests do not have the characteristic of new social movement identified in the academic literature especially for the relatively new movements. On the other hand, the protests partially reflect the traditional movement characteristics through the strike movements' inclusion. In their article "Beyond the Usual Suspects? New Participants in Anti-Austerity Protests in Greece" (2013, p.325), Rüdig and Karyotis made a further analysis and stated that "strike activity fits the 'usual suspects' pattern fairly well while for demonstrators, new participants are more like 'apprentice' protesters and look less like the 'usual suspects' and the overall picture suggests that new types of people are drawn to anti-austerity protests mainly through participation in demonstrations instead of strikes."²⁹ Then, we can ask who the Aganaktismeni are. The main emphasis was given to the precariat as the leading actor in the movement. They are the ones alongside of the unemployed the most affected victims of the crisis. As they do not have a secure job positions, they can be easily discarded. Therefore, there is literally a very thin line between the position of the precariat and the unemployed. Their precarious work deprives them of claiming a right. In these circumstances, when they are unjustly dismissed, they cannot challenge the decision. The austerity package foresaw a restructuring of the labor market in favor of the employer while promoting the

²⁹ The "apprentice" protesters term was derived from the Rothenberg (1988) while the usual suspects correspond to left-wing trade union activists. Rothenberg identified the first-time protesters as "apprentice" strikers or demonstrators while explaining that these new protesters do not have a clear idea about such protest action's extent. In this regard, these new recruits will be similar to the general public rather than the veteran protesters. For more information look Rothenberg, L. S. (1988). Organizational maintenance and the retention decision in groups. *American Political Science Review*, 82(4), 1129-1152.

flexible labor. On the one hand, this means that more and more people will become a precariat. On the other hand, in such a crisis environment, they are the first ones who are beheaded as it is very easy to fire them. While the unemployed cannot find a job, the precariat is the future unemployed in this situation. Other than the precariat and the unemployed, we also see an emphasis to the middle classes' presence. Especially on the weekends when there was no clash in the squares and the coast is clear, they showed up. What made them protest in this regard was actually their proletarianization. Since the wages were decreasing while the inflation went to the opposite direction, the middle classes were gradually impoverished. When their diminishing purchasing power came together with the waning welfare state through massive privatizations in the basic public sectors like education, health and so on, the middle classes became close to the lower status ever before. Indeed, this would create a panic among them as they are losing their advantageous upper position against the proletariat and heading towards being one of them. Therefore, from the middle classes' angle, this protest was a demand for a restoration of the former position. Indeed, the squares welcomed everyone who can leave their political affiliations in the open and show presence just as an individual. In this context, the workers who are also trade union members were there. The youngsters were there. The anarchists, the radical leftists, rightists, feminists, environmentalists and others with various ideologies were there but without giving any reference to their identity and ideology. Housewives, white collar workers, retirees, children with their families and so on were there in the squares. Karyotis and Rüdig (2016) held another survey to understand the profile of the protesters in Aganaktismeni movement in December 2011. They asked the respondents whether they participated any austerity related demonstration and they also separately asked whether they took part in the Aganaktismeni movement. According to their findings, while 36% of the respondents claimed that they took part in an anti-austerity movement, 29% of them indicated that they were participated to the Aganaktismeni movement. In total, 43% of the respondents stated that they were either involved in a demonstration or the Aganaktismeni movement, and over than 70% of them were present both in demonstrations and in the Aganaktismeni movement. Also, a Public Opinion Survey (2011) was conducted on behalf of the SKAI Television and Radio. According to this survey, 35% of the

respondents claimed to take part in the Aganaktismeni movement. The survey data displays that there is nearly a half and half split between the male and female rates of the protesters. The education level is also high among the protesters. The highest rate of the participation among the different age groups belongs to the 45-54 age range, which is followed by the 35-44 age range. Moreover, concerning the ideological stance of the protesters, the rate of those identifying themselves as leftists is 17% while the rate of those who do not claim any ideological attachment is 41%. By looking at this picture, it is possible to say that the Aganaktismeni movement is similar to 2010 protests in terms of gender division yet there is a differentiation in regard to the distribution of the age groups as the Aganaktismeni movement is rather the movement of the middle and old aged, and also, in terms of the ideological positioning of the protesters as the protesters of 2010 are mainly left-oriented. In this context, Karyotis and Rüdig (2016) underlined that “the Aganaktismeni touched, at least marginally, on a group of people who are not part of the usual Greek protest culture but clearly do not fit a ‘new social movement’ profile either” (p.7). They finally indicated that other than the old, inexperienced protesters, much younger protesters were also involved in the Aganaktismeni movement, which is another diversification factor between 2010 protests and the Aganaktismeni movement. Compared to the 2008 events, the participation of the immigrants were limited to the Aganaktismeni movement and the youngsters were not the protagonists in the movement (Simiti, 2014).

4.1.2.2.3. The Use of Social Media

The use of social media as a means for mobilization is a common characteristic of the new age movements. It is very easy and rapid to reach hundreds, thousands and millions through the social media or in general with use of Internet. Indeed, such speed enabled by the new technologies and the social media platforms with an easy access; it is not surprising to witness spontaneous and immediate protest mobilizations with the participation of thousands. As the communication and the spread of any kind of news or information over the social media are effortless, the protest can go viral in minutes all around the world and also get support over there. In this regard, Yannis Theocharis, Will Lowe, Jan W. van Deth and Gema García-Albacete (2015) indicated that there are two elements which dramatically altered the mobilization tradition. They are the

“participation costs and the need for co-presence”. In the traditional form, you have to invest part of your spare time, and your effort and even some of your money to the related organization in which you can be part of a planned mobilization. In other words, there is a high participation cost in the traditional forms. On the other hand, Internet eliminates all these costs. You do not have to participate the meetings in order to plan a protest action, and you do not have to pay membership fee and contribution. All you have to do is being informed by the time and place of the movement, and instantly you become a part of the movement, that is all. Internet also enables people to show their reaction without even being physically present in a protest. In this sense, the only thing they have to do is touching the letters in their keyboards within the comfort of their home. Yet, in terms of a protest action, such transformation may not be useful as this reaction is only valid in virtual reality but not bear a return in physical reality. In addition to the above mentioned two elements, contrary to the vertical and hierarchical structure of the traditional organizations, social media enables people to organize in a horizontal and non-hierarchical manner, which facilitates people’s involvement to the movement. At this point, I want to briefly talk about a research conducted related to the issue. Theocharis, Lowe, Deth and García-Albacete (2015) have conducted a research regarding the extensive use of social media in the recent protest events. In this context, their research focused on the role of Twitter in terms of the political mobilizations in the movements of Indignados in Spain, Aganaktismeni in Greece and the Occupy movements in the United States. Their findings show that Twitter was not used with the motivation of the direct mobilization of the users to the movements or for the coordination of street activities. Twitter’s most common ways of usage were for sharing information and for conversational purposes. In a further analysis, they tried to elaborate the type of information that was circulated within the Twitter. In this context, what they found is that a great number of tweets included a link directing the users to a third party website, to social media platforms or to another source. While analyzing the data, they pointed out that there are differentiations between countries in terms of the content of the links. They indicated that while in Spain the links mainly directed the users to the mainstream news media, in Greece the links mainly directed the users to the alternative news media sources like *Preza TV*, *TVXS* and *Indy-media Athens*. Indeed, such behavior

is attributed to the Greece's loss of confidence to the popular media. According to the findings of Eurobarometer in 2011, among the EU27 Greece was the country that had the highest levels of distrust to the mainstream media.³⁰ The researchers also tried to juxtapose 13 various political contents that were debated within the tweets in each movement. 'Education, institutional reforms, lack of representation and corruption' were the issues jointly discussed in all three movements. In the Greek case, the mention of 'austerity measures and the lack of representation' was very common. Indeed, it is possible to claim that there is a relation between the growing importance of the social media and the diminishing popularity of traditional news outlets. In the Greek context the mainstream media is mainly regarded as an instrument of the existing system which Greek people were protesting and criticizing. Greek people believe that what is reflected in the mainstream media is actually the vision of the political elites, not the commoners. In the Aganaktismeni movement, the mass media focused on a certain image of the protesters. According to them, they are sympathetic yet clueless; that is, they are apolitical without a clear demand or agenda (Real- democracy.gr cited by Prentoulis & Thomassen, 2016). Prentoulis and Thomassen (2016) specified that "the media often used pictures of, and statements from, particular protesters and posters as a way of representing 'the faces of indignation', but it is precisely this aspect of representation that the movements criticized: the unity implied in the representation that the movements in a single word, slogan or image, let alone a single spokesperson" (p.221). In this sense, in order to ensure a fair and objective representation of the movement in the outside world, the movement should free itself from the existent institutions, which also cover the mainstream media. Therefore, there was an effort to bypass the traditional media and to tend towards the alternative communication and information channels, which are basically the social media like Twitter and Facebook. In this context, a 2016 dated digital news report of Reuters shows that while the role of TV and newspapers have been shrinking in the country in terms of accessing news; Internet-based sources became the main means to access news (Kalogeropoulos, 2016). In the television world, the most commonly preferred channels for news are the ALPHA TV and SKAI. They

³⁰ The rate of trust in radio is 28% while the rate of distrust is 70%. The rate of trust in television is 15% while the rate of distrust is 84%. The rate of trust in press is 20%, and the rate of distrust is 77%. All the trust rates are the lowest among the EU27, and all the distrust levels are the highest among the EU27.

outstripped the two biggest private channels since the 1980s, ANT1 and MEGA news. In addition to that, ERT (The Public Service Broadcaster) which was resurrected in 2015 and renamed as NERIT (New Hellenic Radio, Internet, Television) could not even reach to a quarter of news watchers with 14% (Ibid, 2016). When we look closely to the newspaper market, while relatively new generation newspaper Sunday could be regarded as a front runner, old generation newspapers like Kathimerini and To Vima were following the former from behind (Ibid, 2016). We can interpret this as while in time these media outlets gradually melted away their credibility in the eyes of Greek people, they tended to prefer relatively new sources. On the other hand, this report underlined that the weekly use of the social media is 74% and the Internet in general is over 95% while the TV's weekly rate of use is 66%, the radio's is 34% and the print media's is 31%. In other words, the traditional channels to reach news or in general to reach information is now mainly subordinated by the new channels, which can be attributed to the above mentioned loss of credibility for the traditional sources within the Greek people. While the research conducted by Theocharis, Lowe, Deth and García-Albacete (2015) shows the increasing significance of the social media in terms of the role it's playing as a means of mobilization and communication during the protest movements, the survey of the Public Issue (2011) pointed out that the main source of news about the Aganaktismeni movement is the television by 60%. The rate of Internet is 16%. The research (2015) also highlighted that while the Twitter was an important medium for the communication and accessing the latest news in the shortest time possible during the protests, it was still far less important in the initial mobilization tendency of the movement compared to the Spanish Indignados and the US Occupy movement.

4.1.2.2.4. Theoretical Background

The concept of "multitude" in order is referred by some scholars including Douzinas (2013) and Kioupkiolis (2014) while elaborating the nature of the movement. The concept of "multitude" was originally used by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004). Hardt and Negri tried to understand the formation of the multitude including those who work and live under the roof of the post-industrial capitalist global Empire (Newman, 2014). As they put it the 'immaterial labor' arising from the production of knowledge and information is the key element of the Empire. The reproduction of the common

knowledge and networks of communication became the new forms of social interaction. In this respect, Saul Newman (2014) highlighted that

“while social relations and identities are produced under conditions of capitalism and private ownership, they are increasingly difficult to commodify and tend towards a ‘being-in-common’. What is emerging, then, with this form of production is, therefore, a new form of subjectivity defined by the possibility of a ‘becoming-common’ of labor and life” (p.103).

The multitude is a collectivity which contains various identities rather than a homogenous one; in other words, “singularities that act in common” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p.105). Yet, this multiplicity has the leaning to converge into a common body, which will stand out against the Empire and emancipate itself. Hardt and Negri characterized the multitude as a class concept yet they specified that it should not be regarded as a class in the Marxist terms, like proletariat. In this context, the authors indicated that

“Class is a biopolitical concept that is at once economic and political. When we say biopolitical, furthermore, this also means that our understanding of labor cannot be limited to waged labor but must refer to human creative capacities in all their generality... The multitude from this perspective is based not so much on the current empirical existence of the class but rather on its conditions of possibility” (2004, p.105).

The authors pointed out that the multitude as a class contains all who work and live under the roof of capital and has the potential to resist the rule of the capital. They also highlighted that in the old understanding the main ‘productive forces’ are regarded as the working class, and also, working class has a political supremacy over other classes to carry out the struggle against the capital. In this regard, they stated that in today’s conditions all classes are productive and there is no political priority among these classes. The central leadership cult and the representation principle are not adopted in this understanding. It includes horizontal, non-hierarchical relationships without a centralized decision-making body. Žižek (2001) criticizes such characteristic by emphasizing the Leninist stance and stating that there will be no future for a movement deprived of an organizational form of the party, and it is doomed to wither away. Hardt and Negri underlined the difference between “the people” and “the multitude”. In this context, while people contain from the sovereign entities, multitude represents the

opposite of it. Jodi Dean (2014) stressed that what Hardt and Negri provides with the concept of multitude is an alternative to the proletariat. Dean (2014) continued that in the era of deindustrialization, progress of new technologies and the expansion of service sector, there was a need of a more flexible and inclusionary term to explain the mobilization tendencies. Concerning the issue, Marina Prentoulis and Lasse Thomassen (2014) pointed out that “they are a constituent power in that they do not make demands to an already constituted power (the state), but instead create a new power (the democratic power of the multitude) and in this way produce the common” (p.217). Žižek (2001) indicated that Hardt and Negri characterize the concept of globalization as an “ambiguous deterritorialization”, and continued that the globalization pervaded to every aspect of our lives, changed the existing mechanism based on a hierarchic structure and led to mobile, ‘hybrid identities’. Such process is defined as a transition from the nation-state to the Empire, which reveals as a transnational body including the masses with ‘hybrid identities’. Žižek also maintained the authors implied that with the erosion of the essential social ties the capitalist system actually free its own enemy, which is also the case in the traditional Marxist stance that the capitalism is blown up by its own bomb. In this sense, Douzinas (2013) highlighted that it is still not something proven that the capitalism is headed for a fall; therefore, it is not very credible to form a basis starting from this. While Žižek stating that Hardt and Negri

“rehabilitate the old Marxist notion of the tension between productive forces and the relations of production: capitalism already generates the "germs of the future new form of life," it incessantly produces the new "common," so that, in a revolutionary explosion, this New should just be liberated from the old social form”.

Ernesto Laclau (2001) also made a critical review regarding the essence of the authors’ theorization.³¹ Laclau’s one of the main focuses of the critique is regarding the concept of the immanence. Laclau asserted that the authors’ historical examination of the concept does not go back to real initial point. In this regard, the roots of the concept are depicted incompetently.

Conclusion:

³¹ For more information see Laclau, E. 2001. Can immanence explain social struggle? *Diacritics*, 31(4), 3-10.

Athanasia Chalari (2012) in the wake of her interviews with the Greek people indicated that “they expressed negativity, pessimism and disorientation... felt cornered and cross as they explained that they were trapped in a ‘system’ that was only concerned about maintaining its power without offering anything in return” (p.19). Chalari’s inference basically reflects the Greek people’s perception of the situation and as the agents of the change explains their reasons to take to the streets. In the Greek context, the austerity movements had a certain agenda, which was ceasing the approval of bail-out packages. In this regard, 28 and 29 of June became the important dates for the future of the course of events. On these dates, a new austerity package was brought before the parliament for a vote in. While the labor unions called for a two days long general strike, the protesters encircled the parliament building in order to withhold the MPs from entering the building for voting. The protesters also pressed the MPs to vote against the package. Nevertheless, the package was passed and the protesters were exposed to disproportionate force used by the police. Indeed, the approval of the package left many disappointed, and made them lose their faith in the social mobilizations in terms of getting a favorable result. After that, the movement has lost blood day by day. The encampment was dismantled on 30 July. The strikes, street protests and public building occupations proceeded throughout September and October yet in the following year; the mobilizations became narrow in size and more sector-directed (Simiti, 2014). Even though the mobilization could not prevent the ratification of the austerity package, there has been certain political gains. In the late October 2011 George Papandreou, prime minister of the country at the time, proclaimed that there would be a referendum in order to vote the EU bailout package. Papandreou got immediate reactions both from the EU and from the Greek oppositional parties. This announcement would also push the Greek people’s button since after all the former bargains were done in smoke-filled room, this was nothing but a political tactic of the prime minister to retrieve the legitimacy of the government and prevent a potential early election call. Under these circumstances, Papandreou submitted his resignation. Such move of the former prime minister was interpreted as the political success of mass mobilizations.

4.2. Historical Evolution of the Party

4.2.1. KKE (Communist Party of Greece)

In the Greek context, when someone talks about a radical left party in these days, what comes to our minds is probably SYRIZA. Indeed, the party's name is the Coalition of the Radical Left. Yet, SYRIZA can be regarded as a relatively new radical left party in its country. The Communist Party of Greece, KKE, is one of the oldest radical left parties in both the Greek and European Context. Moreover, SYRIZA's roots go back to KKE. KKE's long historical background gained the party a well-developed identity and a great experience in the political field since they even had to deal with the repression and marginalization in its strictest forms during the times they were banned from the politics. KKE was able to hold the highest shares of parliamentary seats among the radical left parties until the SYRIZA's success in 2012 by coming second after the New Democracy and leaving behind the PASOK. At this point, analyzing the paths that are followed by the party can facilitate us to understand how SYRIZA managed to come first in this political race as being a late comer radical left party.

KKE was established in 1918 with the influence of the Socialist Revolution occurred in Russia in 1917. As an old-line party, KKE can be regarded as one of the most conservative communist parties of Europe. The party is deeply loyal to orthodox Marxist values. After the civil war, KKE was banned from the Greek politics until 1974 when the military junta was finally ended. This position of illegality encouraged them to find alternative solution. In this context, in 1951 EDA (United Democratic Left) was established with a hidden communist identity in order to keep warm the place of KKE in the Greek political arena while the members who were not in the exile continued to be active in underground arena. At the time, many members of the party were taken under the protection of the Soviet Union. In the period, EDA was able to gain some political success and even to become main opposition party for a short while between 1958 and 1961 (Kalyvas & Marantzidis, 2003). As EDA could not openly propagate communist ideals, they appeared as a more moderate left that was able to appeal many more people with more modest leftist sentiments. Indeed, the exile process made things harder for the party since now there were two heads one of which located in the country while the

other was in Moscow (Ibid, 2003). While many scholars assumed that the differentiation between two groups was a result of ideological divergence, Kalyvas & Marantzidis (2003) indicated that it's the political elites locating in two different territories and dissenting from who is to be in control were the reason, rather than having an ideological separation. Indeed, in the process of exile those who were under the protection of Moscow were the ones that could be easily under the influence of Moscow. On the other hand, those who stayed in the country and entered the political arena with the EDA label enjoyed some kind of political success by employing more moderate leftist stance; therefore, the electoral concerns may make them rethink their strict ideological position. The separation between these two poles gained a clear vision when the KKE-Ministry of Interior (KKE-Esoterikou or KKE-es) took a critical position against the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968³² while KKE stayed loyal to the Soviet Union, they more or less chose up their sides (Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013). Those who stayed in Greece called them KKE-Ministry of Interior while named ones who were in exile as KKE-Exterior (KKE-Exoterikou), which was not accepted by those who were in exile (Ibid, 2003). With the end of military junta and transition to democracy in 1974 the two groups decided to go separate ways. In the first elections after the transition, the two sides formed a coalition called 'United Left' yet after the elections the coalition was dissolved and never came together again. In 1977, the two parties came face to face when competing against each other in the elections. KKE-Ministry of Interior was representing the 'Eurocommunist' ideological stance while KKE remained faithful to the orthodox Marxist ideology. This election rewarded the KKE that was loyal to its party roots with more than 9% vote shares and marginalized the KKE-Ministry of Interior with less than 3% of vote shares (Ibid, 2003). In 1986, in the 4th Congress of KKE-Ministry of Interior, it was decided to dissolve the party³³ and established a new party

³² When Alexander Dubček took over the power in Czechoslovakia in 1968, he indicated that he wanted to smooth down the totalitarian aspects of the regime and introduced some liberal reforms including the extension of freedom of speech and enabling the party members to act according to their conscience. In this regard, some degree of political democratization and enhancement of personal freedom was achieved. This liberalization process lasted for four months and named as "Prague Spring" and ended with Moscow's military intervention while Dubček was dethroned.

³³ There was a discussion in the 4th Congress of KKE-es, which was followed by the split up within the party. The differentiation in opinion occurred between the left-wingers and right-wingers concerning the abandonment of the party's communist title and symbols. While the left-wingers left the party and formed

with a new name. In 1987, EAR (Elliniki Aristera-The Greek Left) was founded. In this context, the communist ideal totally left behind by finally abandoning the communist name of the party. In 1989, KKE and EAR formed a coalition which was called ‘Coalition of the Left and Progress’ (Synaspismos). After the elections with a result that no party had the majority to form a government by its own, Synaspismos made a critical decision and formed a coalition with the center-right party New Democracy. Luke March (2011) indicated that “this coalition’s principal aim was to purge the Greek political system of the widespread corruption of PASOK rule, but the KKE also envisaged promoting a left alternative to PASOK and increasing its domestic legitimacy” (p.53). Yet, this decision had a heavy cost for both since in the following elections parties’ voters punished them for such a decision to make a coalition with a center-right party and their vote shares decreased dramatically. The fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the following dissolution of Soviet Union made the KKE members an internal reevaluation of their current position. While the hard-liners within the party wanted to maintain their old position, the reformers wanted to discuss reforms for the party. The rates of the reformers and hard-liners were very close to each other yet the hard-liners were able to dominate, which was followed by the leaving of many from the party. Aleka Paparagi who is also a hard-liner became the general secretary of the party in 1991 (March, 2011). Party emphasized its orthodox position further and even criticizing the late period policies of CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in its 18th Congress by specifying that “The adoption of revisionist and opportunist positions by the leadership of the CPSU and of the other CPs in power, in the end transformed these parties into vehicles which led the counterrevolution in the 1980’s” (KKE, 2009).

KKE has a strict party culture bound by the party statutes.³⁴ Marxist-Leninist line of the party shapes the structure. In this context, KKE positions itself as a vanguard party that will lead the revolution of working class. The party defines itself as a representative of working class. While the extent of the working class was redefined in accordance with

the KKE-es – Ananeotiki Aristera (Communist Party of the Left – Renewing Left, the remaining others re-established the party under the name of EAR (Greek Left) (Eleftheriou, 2009).

³⁴ The current statutes of KKE were accepted in the 15th Congress of the party (Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013).

the necessities of the time but in a limited sense from the rare industrial workers to include others from the different labor-intensive working forms that are also doomed to be exploited under the capitalist system, still this widening in the scope of the working class is not inclusive enough to embrace all people suffered under the capitalist system (in the Greek case we could say specifically after the 2008 crisis with the application of austerity measures) or even not enough to cover all in the labor force. Apart from the party's limited class understanding, party's internal organization has a rigid structure. Party is highly centralized and hierarchic. In this regard, party's recruitment process follows a certain path, which is also rigid in itself. In order to be a party member, the candidate must prove herself/himself in the political arena and take her/his stand in a certain manner while the candidate should also be recommended by the two already party members (Ibid, 2013). The former split within the party made the party members much more cautious while welcoming the new members. Factionalism is something no longer tolerable. KKE's youth organization KNE (Communist Youth of Greece) simply takes the responsibility of training the future members of the vanguard party.³⁵ Indeed, such attitude would cause the standardization of the party members. The party became a homogenous entity in which no different voice or color can survive. Without a critical point of view within the party, it may not be possible to evaluate their decisions objectively since differentiation is not an option. Within this atmosphere, it is hard for the members who think divergently if the majority agrees with the decision, then this minority probably never talks about their dissimilar ideas. Indeed, it is something understandable when we look at the party's highly conservative stance. They are not open to change in the way that the time we live in requires. In this regard, it is possible to claim that the party's responsiveness towards any kind of situation is relatively low. In this context, it can be assumed that KKE's relatively close structure was toned down by the auxiliary structures. PAME (All Workers' Militant Front) can be seen as the most noteworthy structure.³⁶ PAME is characterized as an

³⁵ KNE (The Communist Youth of Greece) was established in 1968 through the Resolution of KKE's Central Committee within the period of military dictatorship when the party was illegal.

³⁶ PAME was formed in 1999 within the scope of Panhellenic Meeting with the participation of 230 trade unions.

“open, democratic, unifying trade union front, it pursues to have among its members the most active, fighting forces of the trade union movement, and it has got panhellenic characteristics and focuses on every working field and production branch, in the Public and Private Sector, with no exceptions” (PAME, 2010).

The two biggest trade unions GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) and ADEDY (Civil Servants' Union Federation) were regarded to remain incapable to represent the precarious workers, whose number was increasing each passing day (Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013). KKE targeted to reach this non-unionized group yet it was a difficult task to realize it within the strict party context (Ibid, 2013). In this sense, the party's former auxiliary structure ESAK (Unified Trade Union Anti-dictatorship Movement) in the first place functioned to regroup the party members during the years of military dictatorship when the party was under the condition of illegality, and then it basically introduced the candidates for the elections of trade union in the confederate, federate and local levels (Ibid, 2013). However, ESAK was not suitable for the task, and PAME's formation simply filled this gap. KKE also harshly criticized the two trade unions, GSEE and ADEDY, as being deceptive towards the workers since they actually serve to the system rather than to the working class' interests. This critique also emphasized in the context of PAME by indicating that

“GSEE and ADEDY support the exploitation system and they defend it. They actively support the Capital's strategies and anti-peoples policies. They act according to the competitiveness and profitability criteria for the capitalistic enterprises; they place themselves in favor of what the economy can withstand. This is why they refuse and fight against the class struggle, choosing the path to class cooperation and social dialogues. They cannot represent the working class; they represent the opponents' interests. From this basis on they participate, with different means and pretences, in the planning to forward every contradictory to the working class' interests reformation, they take part in the privatizations scheme, in the destruction of industrial relations, of the social security, of the diminish of the workers' income” (PAME, 2010).

PAME's main function is to enable the trade unions dominated by the KKE members to act coordinately with no formal attachment to the KKE. While KKE tried to separate its own agenda from the PAME's, it evoked its presence within the structure in every way. PAME was able to penetrate to various trade unions within its first five years after the formation. In this regard, their main areas of dominations include private sector, especially the workers of construction, dock workers, textile workers, artists,

typographers, hospital personnel and the laborers of pharmaceutical companies (Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013). PAME embraced relatively more aggressive mobilization strategies, which was criticized by the more moderate circles within the GSEE. PAME was even able to mobilize its own mass for the issues which are not related to work like calling for a 24-hour general strike to protest Iraq War in 2003. Indeed, according to the understanding of KKE and naturally PAME, the working class struggle is something exceeding the local limits; in other words, it is an international struggle. Thus, it is not surprising to observe that both places emphasis on the issues occurring in the international arena apart from the domestic ones. When KKE was able to increase its vote shares in 2007, it was mainly attributed to the success of PAME (retrieved by Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013).

4.2.2. SYRIZA (The Coalition of the Radical Left)

SYRIZA (The Coalition of the Radical Left) is a relatively new party, which was formed in 2001 with the unification of different parties from the leftist spectrum. In order to understand SYRIZA's current functioning, it will be guiding to evaluate SYN (Synaspismos-The Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology). SYN was firstly revealed as a coalition between KKE and EAR in 1989 with the intention of transforming it to a permanent political party. In the critical 13th Congress of the KKE in 1991, while hard-liners declared their supremacy within the party, the right-wingers expressed their intent to support Synaspismos by joining the "Panhellenic Assembly" in 1991. The hard-liners of the KKE did not lean towards this; thus, they withdrew from the coalition while forcing the right-wingers to quit their party membership. According to the estimates, about two fifth of the party members including nearly half of the Political Bureau and Central Committee members were expelled from the party and joined the ranks of Synaspismos few months later (Eleftheriou, 2009). SYN as a political party was established in 1992. The party located in the left spectrum which positioned itself as a democratic socialist party rather than being an orthodox communist party or a social democratic one, it had a pluralist structure, and in this regard, party supported a mixed economy and European integration while focusing on the issues of modern era like environment, feminism, civil rights and so on (Kalyvas & Marantzidis, 2003). It is possible to assert that this characterization of the party was positioned it to a place in

between PASOK and KKE. SYN was the left of the PASOK while being right of the KKE. SYN's core team included the EAR (the United Left) members, and the left-offs from the KKE in 1991 split-up. The party also covered small groups and persons from the left circles such as ecologists, social democrats and extra-parliamentary leftist groups (Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013). Such pluralist structure of the party enabled it to elude from the class notion and to be able to reach different groups with different class characters, other than working class. Indeed, it is also a strategical aspect since now they could reach bigger masses, and they were able to expand their voter base. When we look at the party's voters, what we see is that the biggest shares of vote came from the young and highly educated public and private sector employees, professionals and students (Kalyvas & Marantzidis, 2003). Indeed, being interested in more up to date issues like feminism, environment and so on enabled the party to get the support of such range of voters. Although this pluralism within the party brought dynamism, it also brought factionalism.

When we focus on the internal organizational structure of the party, Eleftheriou (2009) emphasized two important characteristics of the party, which are centralism and factionalism. Party had a strong central body, 'Executive Committee', which had the duty to co-ordinate the actions of the parties of the coalition. On the other hand, the party's local branches were relatively autonomous and ineffective. The party's central body consisted of Central Political Committee which can be defined as a main collective decision-making entity, the Political Secretariat that was elected by the Central Political Committee and the President who was also elected by the Central Political Committee.³⁷ Local level organization included the Members' Political Movements and Prefectural Committees. Moreover, there were professional, social movement and youth branches of the party.

The second characteristic of the party was factionalism. Factionalism can be regarded as both a blessing and a curse for the party. While it enabled the party to embrace different

³⁷ In 1992, the main sources of power were the Central Political Committee and the Political Secretariat. Nevertheless, this situation changed when the Nikos Konstantopoulos was elected to the Presidency of the party in an extraordinary congress in 1993 as Maria Damanaki resigned from the presidency after the 1993 election defeat of the party. Konstantopoulos as a charismatic leader who was also a popular figure outside the party redefined the presidency within the party. The position of president was consolidated.

kinds of opinions and political stances, it can also easily cause polarizations within the party. To illustrate, there was a split in opinion about the possible coalition options. In this sense, while the former EAR members supported a more autonomous party vision, former KKE members were more open to a possible cooperation with PASOK (Eleftheriou, 2009). In this regard, internal party democracy matters since the party brought together different groups and persons with various backgrounds. There were different opportunities for the factions to be part of the decision-making process including the times of congresses, Central Political Committee and Political Secretariat meetings. Relatively bigger factions were mainly in a more advantageous position in the decision making process since they have the majority yet the minority factions had also the opportunity to contribute to the process through proposing certain amendments or coming up with different proposals. In SYN, the two main opposing sides were the leftists and the reformists. In this context, the charismatic leader of the party Nikos Konstantopoulos played the role of stabilizer within the party when these two groups could not get along. In the late 1990s, the bad electoral results made the party move away from the convergence strategy to the PASOK. In this sense, SYN recognized more leftist agenda. Party's former pro-European stance gave way to more critical position, which was also valid for their position towards PASOK. In 2003 during the Programmatic Congress of the party, it was renamed as the Coalition of Left of Movements and Ecology by replacing the former 'Coalition of Left and Progress'. In this programmatic congress, party expressed its concerns about the neoliberal globalization under the hegemony of USA and emphasized their ongoing support to the social movements, in this regard. On December 2003 for the 2004 General elections, a coalition among SYN, KOE (Communist Organization of Greece), AKOA (Renewalist, Communist and Ecological Left), DEA (Internationalist Workers' Left), KEDA (The Movement for the Unitary Action of the Left), AC (The Active Citizens with the Left) and some other small organizations and individuals was formed under the name of SYRIZA (The Coalition of Radical Left). In the elections, SYRIZA could only get 3.26% of the votes with only getting 6 seats in the parliament (Ministry of Interior, 2004). In 2004, Alecos Alavanos who is a leftist figure became the president of the party. Alavanos was the one of the biggest supporters of the coalition under SYRIZA.

More radical left aspects became dominant within the party in the following years. In 2007, party gained some success in the general elections with 5.14% (14 seats in the parliament) (Ministry of Interior, 2007). This development was interpreted as “we managed to give a new dynamic to the unity left project and express the movements, the people of labor and the youth that resist neoliberalism” (retrieved by Eleftheriou, 2009)³⁸. Also, the strategy of rejuvenating the party was embraced under the leadership of Alavanos. Alavanos himself supported the candidacy of Alexis Tsipras for presidency in the 5th Congress in 2008, and Tsipras was elected by getting 70.6% of the votes. Tsipras was a leader without a parliamentary membership at the time after the 2009 elections; Tsipras became the Member of Parliament while the party could only get 4.6% of the votes with 13 seats (Ministry of Interior, 2009). SYRIZA’s march to the power can be regarded to be visible with the 2012 elections when the party got 16.78% of the votes and came as the second party after New Democracy, which would only get 18.85% of the votes (Ministry of Interior, 2012). In 2014, in the European Parliamentary elections, SYRIZA came first by getting 26.57% of the votes while the second comer party New Democracy could get 22.72% of the votes (Europa, 2014). Finally, on December 2015 elections SYRIZA was able to be the first party by having 35.46% of the votes (Ministry of Interior, 2015).

4.3. Two-Party System of the Country

Greece has been a country dominated by the rule of two parties, New Democracy (ND) and the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) in the political arena for decades. In this context, it is important to explain the conditions that SYRIZA grew apace and appeared as the challenging third party to the system. It will be helpful to briefly mention the historic formation of the two-party system in the country. In terms of the Greek democracy, the end of the military dictatorship can be regarded as the turning point. Democracy before the dictatorship was more of a superficial one as the left forces were banned from the politics and the any kind of leftist prospect met with reaction. Nevertheless, with the end of the military dictatorship in the 1974, the political atmosphere in the country was very liberating especially for the leftist circles within the

³⁸ SYRIZA Secretariat’s Announcement, 20.09.2007 from <http://www.syn.gr/gr/keimeno.php?id=7527>

country. *Metapolitefsi*³⁹ proceeded in a relatively radical manner with the removal of the ban over the left in the country. In 1974, the formation of the two parties from opposite poles of the political spectrum was witnessed. While Konstantinos Karamanlis established the New Democracy as a center-right party, Andreas Papandreou led the formation of PASOK as a left party. As a newly established left party, PASOK when it first appeared in the political scene, was drew attention with its radical discourse. Indeed, the immediate aftermath of the military dictatorship was more or less dominated by the radical vibes; thus, PASOK, as an infant party from the leftist spectrum, shared such radical enthusiasm of its line, which at the time reflected the leftist circles' celebration of the reentering to the official politics in the country. In this regard, PASOK's program included nationalizations of main industries and certain sectors. The party had an anti-NATO and anti-European stance. Michalis Spourdalakis (2013) specified that “*PASOK gave the impression that it was not only further to the left than its European counterparts of the time but even more radical than some of the country's communists*” (p. 101). Yet, it would be clear that PASOK's radicalism could not go beyond the party's program and to be materialized. The party's relatively poor performance in the first election made the raising of voices of those within the party that were eager to gain the power at short notice. In this direction, Papandreou gradually changed the party's political position (Spourdalakis & Tassis, 2006). The initial radicalism of the party was softened. In 1981 party was able to attain the power. When they came into power, it was explicitly seen that rather than carrying through its initial radical promises, the party would put into place some social-democratic policies which were basically the reflection of the mainstream policies at the time and embrace the clientelism which was considered as an old Greek state tradition (Spourdalakis, 2013). Nevertheless, party's such change in attitude could not simply equated to its own internal dynamics. When we consider the time that the party came to power, there many other challenges the party had to face with at the time in terms of the realization of such radical position. PASOK was the first party in power with the leftist aspirations. In this sense, the old skepticism towards the left was not something totally eliminated.

³⁹ The transition period to the democracy starting with the end of military dictatorship (1967-1974) is named as *Metapolitefsi*.

Moreover, the economic recession, the neoliberal transformation and the ongoing Cold-War with the socialist bloc (indeed, there were also some liberating developments in the socialist bloc at the time) were all negatively affecting the party's leftist position. Party's first term in office lasted for eight years. The corruption scandals including the top government officials, press and the bankers clouded the June elections. Within this atmosphere, ND became the first party. However, ND could not form a majority government. Therefore, a coalition government with the Synaspismos (Coalition of the Left and Progress) which included the KKE and EAR was formed. PASOK's 1989 electoral program lost its former tone of the party and focused more on the economic growth, which was mostly related to be the part of the European integration (Spourdalakis & Tassis, 2006). In this context, the party's opposition to the ND government that displayed in the words of Papandreou as "responsible opposition", which means it was rather than being radical, being more technocratic and amenable to neoliberal ideals (Ibid, 2006). PASOK returned to the office in 1993. ND government's lack of majority, the 'Macedonian crisis'⁴⁰, and worsening economy with the high inflation, increasing unemployment and frozen wages brought forth its end of term in office (Ibid, 2006). In 1996 Papandreou resigned from PASOK due to his illness and Kostas Simitis became the new leader of the party. Under the Simitis' leadership, the party mostly focused on modernization of the country, which was mainly associated with the further Europeanization. In this respect, being the part of the Euro-zone turned into a critical national issue. Simitis served as a Prime Minister until 2004. Indeed, these modernizing reforms and the efforts to fulfill the requirements for Eurozone entrance had a social cost for the party. Within this framework, lower income groups' conditions deteriorated dramatically. The rate of the minimum wage has shrunk within the average wage rate. Besides, the rate of those living under the poverty line has increased to a level way above the average rate of the Eurozone countries (Spourdalakis, 2008). This general situation gave the signal that the party's chance to win the election was low. The outcome was as the way it was forecasted. ND came back to power. Under the

⁴⁰ Greece refuses to use the name of Macedonia for the Republic of Macedonia. The country claims that the name of Macedonia both historically and territorially to a large extent is overlapped by the Greek ties. Therefore, Greece as a temporary solution uses the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to refer the country.

leadership of Kostas Karamanlis, ND government speeded up the carrying out the neoliberal policies. This included a reduction in the corporate tax and in the tax rate of the small businesses and privatizations in the state-controlled companies in the financial sector like Hellenic Postal Bank and the Commercial Bank of Greece (Ibid, 2008). One the most noticeable amendment attempts of the ND government was the Article 16 that prohibits the private sector to establish universities. Also, Article 24 which enables to preserve the environment from the aggressive land development can be realized among such attempts. Especially the Article 16 amendment discussions met with big reactions from the students. They organized demonstrations to show their rage against such proposal. ND government's neoliberal policy injections affected many parts of the social strata. The working class wages melted away against the rising cost of the public services with the privatizations. The wage increase of the public sector employees could not catch up with the inflation increases. Government's promise to farmers to improve the product prices was not fulfilled. While the country was proceeding towards the 2007 elections, both of the main parties' performances were poor in the eyes of Greek people. In 2004, Kostas Simitis stepped down for the leadership of George Papandreou, the son of the party's founder member. This leadership handover would be expected to refresh PASOK and increase its appeal. Nevertheless, George Papandreou rather than grabbing the social base of the party and regaining their consent remained more or less ineffective figure (Ibid, 2008). On the other hand, ND government was shaken by the corruption scandals in which state-controlled security bonds of the several pension funds were sold to very low prices. Moreover, at the time extensive forest fires in which over than 60 people lost their lives was another occasion that regarded as the government failure since it is believed that the government could not execute an effective crisis management. Despite the two main parties' shrinking popularity among the Greek people, ND was able to come first in the election. However, ND's victory was gained nearly by three point difference with PASOK, which did not provide ND a secure place in the parliament. In this context, Spourdalakis (2008) highlighted that

“By the end of 2007, it became more than apparent that support for what the Greeks call bipartism (the two-party system) was displaying signs of fatigue and even decay. Time and time again, opinion polls have shown a drastic fall in the total percentage of the popular vote's preference for the two major parties. While

the combined vote of ND and PASOK in the last election was almost 80 percent of the electorate, no serious opinion poll since then has shown a combined percentage much above 60 percent. As ND, and primarily PASOK, staggers between incompetence, misuse of political power, and corruption, a new radical realignment of political forces appears to be a realistic possibility” (p.183).

This shows that the long-standing two party system of the country started to give the alarm in 2007. In 2009 the Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis called an early election. ND’s 2007 success as mentioned above was not a crushing victory since ND’s votes were only about three points ahead of the PASOK’s votes. On the other hand, during the time ND was in power, the economic performance of the country was deteriorating. Country’s public debt reached to alarming levels. Karamanlis’ roadmap for a recovery included structural reforms and some austerity measures, in this sense (Pappas, 2010). In general, these measures include freezing the public sector wages and pension in 2010, ceasing the public sector hiring, averting the tax evasion through forming a more efficient taxation system, and promoting more privatizations (Ibid, 2010). In this context, PASOK appeared as the victor of the 2009 elections by 43.92 percent (Interior, 2009). Although, this election result seems like a great success for the PASOK side, the time still deserves to be elaborated. The solution offered by Papandreou, the leader of the PASOK, was much more different than the ones Karamanlis offered. Rather than an austerity plan, Papandreou proposed enhancement in the market liquidity (Ibid, 2010). In that sense, he defended reinforcement in the positions of middle and lower income groups and supporting the small enterprises. He also foresaw a tax reform which would bring income redistribution. At the time, more than 40% of the Greek people had no trust in both governments and the rate of the irresolute voters was relatively high (by around 25%), according to Kapa Research’s polls (retrieved by Pappas, 2010).

Within this atmosphere, while the two biggest party of the country did not move away from their former positions in terms of their promises and more or less preserved their centrist attitude, more marginal promises manifested by the small parties of the country, especially by the leftist parties. In this context, Aleka Papariga, the secretary-general of KKE at the time, expressed that people create wealth yet this wealth is seized by the capital and also denounced the PASOK and ND leaders for veiling the recession risk (Pappas, 2010). She highlighted that “No capitalist economy in the world had escaped

the crisis cycle... unemployment will rise steeply, that the public's income will sharply fall and that farmers and the self-employed will be bankrupted" (Ibid, 2010). As an orthodox communist party, KKE emphasized an improvement in the labor market (raising the salaries, decreasing the retirement age and providing equal rights to migrant workers) importance to have state-owned industries especially in the basic needs like medicine. KKE has a strict orthodox Marxist position; therefore, the party has a limited appeal among the Greek people due to their ideological stance. Yet, it is possible to say that KKE holds loyal supporters. In this regard, the party has the ability to organize mass protest activities. Apart from KKE, another small party that draws attention is the far-right party LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally). LAOS was established in 1999 by a former ND member. This party provides an alternative to the right-wing electorate with more radical sentiments. While LAOS was not able to enter the parliament in 2004 election, the party increased its vote share from 2007 to 2009 elections by nearly two points. Nevertheless, the party's decision to take part in the technocratic government led by Papademos decreased the appeal of the party dramatically.

In 2010, it came to light that the government has no longer maintained its debt; therefore, they had to knock the doors of the creditors including IMF and EU. The loan needed by the Greek government was given in exchange for draconian austerity measures. Indeed, Greek people resisted with all their power for the cessation of these measures. Papandreou played his last card to cool down the angry crowd by declaring to hold a referendum. Yet, this decision of the Prime Minister was welcomed by neither the Greek people nor the creditors. In the end, Papandreou resigned. Government led by Lukas Papademos who is a technocratic figure, served in Bank of Greece and in European Central Bank was established. This government included ND, PASOK and LAOS. The two-party system was no longer valid in the country since the two main from now on mainly lost their legitimacy in the eyes of Greek people. This became apparent in 2012 election as SYRIZA appeared as the second party after ND with only a small difference in vote shares.

4.4. Rise of SYRIZA until 2012 elections

Until 2000s, SYN appeared as a more moderate left party with pro-European vision and supporting mixed economy (Eleftheriou, 2009). Nevertheless, especially after 2000 the party started to redefine itself and gradually gained more radical appearance. This radicalization of the party was concertized by the formation of SYRIZA in 2004 as in the form of coalition of the leftist forces. The internal dynamics of the SYN led to a “left turn” presented by Costas Eleftheriou (2009). This “left turn” of the party refers to the domination of the leftist faction within the party over the renewalists. Eleftheriou (2009) explains this left turn within two phases. In this respect, the first phase of this turn covers the period between 2000 and 2004. In this period, SYN got involved in the anti-globalization movement. Party members participated in the demonstrations of Prague in the year of 2000 and Genoa in the year of 2001. They also attended to the World Social Forum meetings in Porto Alegre in the years of 2001, 2002 and 2003. Moreover, SYN cofounded the Greek Social Forum in 2003 along with the several radical left organizations. During the organization process of the forum, SYN had the chance to interact many leftist organizations and platforms. This would affect the party’s orientation. In this period, apart from the anti-globalization movement agenda, “Space of Dialogue and Common Action of the Left” which was the party’s effort to enable cooperation among left forces of the country while the election was approaching. Within this scope, SYN gave support to 55 nominees with leftist and ecological orientations in 2002 municipal election. The eventual step within this direction was the formation of the SYRIZA as a coalition of the leftists and greens. Eleftheriou indicated that the second is between the periods of 2004 and 2009. In the second phase, the left turn of the party was further reinforced through the social movement participation. In this context, 2006 -2007 student movements against the amendment proposal of the Article 16 which prohibits the establishment of the private universities were important. SYN actively took part and supported the movement. The movement became so effective that PASOK changed its position by not giving its approval to the amendment so the required majority for the enactment was not obtained (Spourdalakis, 2013). In 2006 European Social Forum held in Athens and the party again took part in the proceedings.

In 2004 a leftist figure, Alekos Alavanos, came to the leadership of SYRIZA. This was another element of the second phase. In this context, party's strategy acquired a new dimension. Alavanos tried to make SYRIZA as a "unifying agent for a broad 'new left' – a presence so strong that it would no longer feel squeezed between PASOK's conformist governmentalism and the KKE's dogmatism" (Ibid, 2013, p. 102). The main principle of this strategy was "empowering the powerless" (Ibid, 2013). Alavanos put the youth in the center as the main group of electorate that the party wanted to receive support. The representation of the youth within the party became more prominent. This strategy reached its peak with the election of Alexis Tsipras who was 34 years old at the time to the leadership of the SYRIZA while Alavanos stepped down in the 5th Congress of the party in 2008.

It is possible to say that in both of these phases it is the active social movement participation of the party that came to the forefront as the party strategy. In the process, especially initiating with the anti-globalization movement support and inclusion, the party became active in various social movements having different aims. The factionalism within the party probably became useful in this regard. Party's different factions with different identities enabled it to fit in different kinds of social movements with different agendas. The party would always have a word to say concerning the main issue of the movement. This movement can be a student movement with anti-systemic characteristic or an environmental movement or a woman rights movement or so on. The party was able to attach itself to them. Party's emblem consisted of three flags over a white background. The red flag represents the leftist orientation, the green flag represents the environmental orientation and the purple flag represents the struggle against the patriarchy (Spourdalakis, 2013). In other words, the emblem of the party exhibits the party's pluralistic vision, which is inclusionary and reverent towards different visions. Party has no strict class understanding. In this context, within the party a cross-class alliance is emphasized (Katsambekis, 2016). Anti-neoliberal stance is defined as the common ground for such alliance. Indeed, this is also a disadvantage for the party since it curtails the party's ability to initiate a mobilization by itself. In this regard, KKE has a certain advantage in this regard since the party has a certain class affiliation; it is easier for it to mobilize these affiliates of the party with a specific image

of representation. On the other hand, SYRIZA's lack of particular class characteristics brought flexibility to the party in terms of supporting different kinds of social movements. They did not have to limit themselves with working class mobilizations. Indeed, in the KKE's context, these social movements are not considered as a real challenge to the system; therefore, supporting these movements probably only have electoral gains yet unable to provide an alternative to the current system. Moreover, SYRIZA refused to play a vanguardist role in the movements, which was the case in the KKE. The party respected the movements' autonomous characteristics.

SYRIZA's organizational structure also serves to its active social movement participation. In this sense, party is identified as a 'mass connective party' (Spourdalakis, 2013). The traditional mass party is presented "as the sole owner of the political action of organized masses" (Porcaro, 2011, p. 1). The mass party tries to unify the mass and direct them to take over the state power. On the other hand, mass connective party does not focus on the unification of the mass yet it is interested in connecting the people in a much more flexible way. While KKE can be regarded as a mass party, SYRIZA appeared as a mass connective party. In this respect, KKE mainly does not support any social movement other than its own- organized ones. According to the KKE, these social movements do not constitute a real challenge to the system. Party also refuses to do any kind of cooperation with the other leftist parties. Indeed, such sectarian understanding of the KKE inhibits the party from being a major force in the political spectrum and contributes to the further marginalization of the party.

The social movements that SYRIZA actively supported included the environmental struggles in Skouries, Halkidiki against the mining activity and in Keratea, Lavreotiki against the construction of the waste landfill; a civil disobedience movement named as "I Am Not Paying" against the rising road tolls; the struggle of the public broadcaster employees which was closed in 2013 and the struggle of the cleaning ladies who were removed from the Ministry of Finance in 2013 (Katsambekis, 2016). While these movements can be considered as noticeable ones, the most prominent movement that SYRIZA was able to make its mark was the Aganaktismeni. At the time, SYRIZA was the only parliamentary force that officially supported the movement. SYRIZA carefully

read the demands of the movement and was able to make these demands be a part of its political agenda successfully. Greek people believed that none of the parties within the limits of old established structures are representing them, at least not anymore. Within such a framework, SYRIZA was able to provide them an alternative as a radical left-wing party that was outside of the old norms of the political tradition and giving hope with its strict anti-austerity stance to the people.

4.5. Rise of SYRIZA after 2012

SYRIZA's success in the May and June 2012 elections in which the party came as the second was not a surprise for the party. This success consolidated the party's position as a representative of the Greek people in the parliament. After the elections, party called the left parties of the country to form a coalition as the "government of the left" (Katsambekis, 2016). Yet, SYRIZA's such attempt remained inconclusive, especially after the KKE's strict position against making any kind of cooperation with the party. After 2012, party's active social movement participation winded down, which was also related to the deceleration in the social movements since people started to search solution in the political arena rather than in the streets. Still, party continued to support the social movements. Party's broad appeal within the different social strata of the country made it embrace more and more a populist strategy. Indeed, there is no intention to ascribe a negative meaning to the term. While in the Western academic and journalistic circles SYRIZA was interpreted as a populist party with a negative connotation, it is not possible to basically define the party as such by focusing on the party's tactics within a limited period. Party's populist discourse which was built upon 'us' and 'them' polarization was more or less the reflection of the atmosphere within the country. In this context, as the anti-austerity camp, they were criticizing the corrupt elite of the former two-party system and in general the neoliberal policies. There was an obvious deficit of democracy in the country especially revealing within the crisis period. This was expressed in the streets by the Greek people. SYRIZA brought the issue to the parliamentary level and established their discourse over this. The party tried to explain the Greek people that they can represent the whole. In this respect, a populist discourse facilitated the party to reach much broader audience. Katsambekis (2016) identified two strategies of SYRIZA. While the first one focuses on the social movements which he

named as “identification”, the second one refers to the party’s effort to represent the Greek people which he called “representation”. The emphasis upon the representation of the Greek people was also reflected to the party documents. Specifically, the demands of the squares were tried to be put in the center within such documents. The party program which was hastily prepared before the election was formulated over these demands and displays the party’s enthusiasm for being the official voice of the people. In this regard, it can be helpful to look closer to the important documents put forward by the party within the period.

4.5.1. Party Program of SYRIZA

Before the 2012 elections, SYRIZA represented its governmental program in 27 May 2012. In general, the program promised some sort of recovery from the crisis. If we look at the program more closely, we will see that there are some important articles coming to the forefront, especially in terms of reflecting the demands of the squares. Let’s draw up these articles in order to evaluate them much more easily.

Article 1: “...suspension of payments until the economy has revived and growth and employment return”.

Article 3: “Raise income tax to 75% for all incomes over 500.000 euros”.

Article 10: “Cut drastically military expenditures”.

Article 11: “Raise minimum salary to the pre-cut level, 750 euros per month”.

Article 14: “Free health benefits to the unemployed, homeless and those with low salaries”.

Article 16: “...Increase social protection for one-parent families, the aged, disabled, and families with no income”.

Article 18: “Nationalization of banks”.

Article 19: “Nationalization of ex-public (service & utilities) companies in strategic sectors for the growth of the country (railroads, airports, mail, water)”.

Article 24: “Recovery of collective (labour) contracts”.

Article 26: “Constitutional reforms to guarantee ... protection of the right to education, health care and the environment”.

Article 27: “Referendums on treaties and other accords with Europe”.

Article 29: “...Prohibition for police to wear masks or use fire arms during demonstrations”.

Article 36: “Nationalization of private hospitals”.

Article 37: “No Greek soldiers beyond our own borders”.

Article 38: “Abolition of military cooperation with Israel”.

Article 39: “Negotiation of a stable accord with Turkey”.

Article 40: “...withdrawal from NATO”.

These articles can be considered as the most critical points of the program. They manifest the party’s position very clearly. Indeed, it is possible to say that these articles effectively reflect the demands expressed during the austerity movements. In this context, this program shows that SYRIZA was able to catch the demands of Greek people who are torn to shreds by the draconian austerity measures. As a party actively took part in social movements and owes its success to such social movement participation and support, such effective reflection of these demands is not something surprising. Yet in the Greek context, it is possible to assert that SYRIZA was the only party with such effective representation of the squares and forming its official appearance mostly based on these demands.

It will be clarifying to elaborate these articles one by one in order to understand the party’s position and to see how they handle with these problems within the party framework. In the first article, it is stated that a future SYRIZA government will demand the suspension of the debt until the economy regains its feet. Indeed, all these people were suffering in order to pay the debt, which is something they are not responsible.

Such suspension may relieve the Greek people and accelerate the economic recovery process. SYRIZA attached great importance to a tax reform. In this regard, their main argument was that the current tax system while bestowing the privilege on already wealthy minority, putting the rest of the population in a tight spot.

In the article 3, what meant to do is those who are rich also have to do their own share in such crisis situation. There is a debt of Greek government that has to be paid and every Greek citizen must contribute as much as he/she can yet this does not mean that while the entire burden is shouldered by the ordinary Greek people, a handful of elite slip through the net. The party highlighted that within the tax system, there are certain concessions to certain favored sectors. Also, tax evasion is very common especially in the major league of the business sector; therefore, eliminating such unjust systemic practices will be one of the main targets of the government. Nevertheless, at least as a beginning in order to increase the public revenues, increasing the income tax for the already wealthy strata of the society can be realized as a logical move. In this context, the party would play the role of Robin Hood as in the simplistic sense they take from the rich to give the poor.

Article 10 the need to decrease the military spending of the country is specified. While EU Member Countries defense expenditures' average changes in between the range of 1.4 and 1.5, the rates of Greece are relatively high. To illustrate, in 2009 the country's defense expenditure rate is 3.3, which was 1.5 in the EU average; and the country's lowest rate for such spending is 2.1 recorded in 2013 for the period between 2000 and 2015 (Eurostat, 2017).

Article 39 can be linked to Article 10 since mainly the times when the military spending is highest are the times when the Turkey and Greece has tense relations. If the two countries somehow work things out, probably there will be a change in the country's external threat understanding and in the military expenditure characteristics accordingly.

Article 11 touches a raw nerve. In the case of Greece, the minimum salary is not just a number; it is the representation of the frustration, exploitation and victimization. There is a youth called as "Generation 700 Euros" including those in between the ages of 25

and 35 and who are working more and paid less, taxed more and debt-ridden, and struggling against an insecure future waiting for them. This article can be accounted as one of the most critical articles of the program. It is not the amount that the party promised to give as the minimum salary but the symbolic meaning of the minimum salary itself represented. In this context, unemployment became a common phenomenon especially among the young Greeks and many people cannot even meet their basic needs like food or shelter.

Articles 14 and 16 resurrect the welfare state understanding, which was shelved mainly after the austerity measures' application. These articles also display that it is the most vulnerable parts of the society that again take the major blow from the crisis since in this case they are not even in a position to meet their most basic needs to survive.

Articles 18, 19 and 36 can be seen as the clarification of the party's ideological stance. A wide range of nationalization operation in the crucial areas exhibits the party's socialist state vision. Indeed, as a radical left party, SYRIZA expressed that this crisis is not simply the crisis of Greece or Euro but actually the crisis of the neo-liberal system. The party underlined that it is not possible to eliminate this crisis by maintaining the existing system; in other words, a systemic change is necessary. Yet, they are mainly in a democratic socialist line rather than a communist one, which is strictly dominant within KKE.

Article 24 can also be associated with the party's ideological ties. Party indicated that while they are representing the interests of all the Greek people who are dramatically affected by the austerity measures, they do not give up on representing the working class' interests. However, this does not change the party's catch-all characteristic. SYRIZA does not have an assertive party identity, which limitedly undertakes a certain class representation as in the case of KKE. In this context, SYRIZA's claim is that their party is open to anyone who is torn by the austerity measures. Indeed, the party has to prove its sincerity and its difference from other parties in order to gain confidence of the Greek people who have been already deceived by the political elites.

Article 26 underlines that it is people's democratic right to access free education, health care and to live in a clean and green environment, and it is the duty of the state to provide these. Therefore, again there is a social state understanding emphasis.

Article 27 touches upon the nationalistic feelings. In the process of the crisis and the application of austerity measures, while the Greek people accused of being the main responsible of the crisis, they were surpassed by the political elites during the critical decisions that concerns them closely were taken. Ex-Prime Minister and the former leader of PASOK, Papandreou had an attempt to make a referendum yet it backlashed since it was a late decision while the measures were already turning the life of Greek people into living hell so people commented his act as an election tactic, something pragmatic rather than democratic. Moreover, such decision of Papandreou was not welcomed by the political elites of Europe. At the end of the day, Papandreou resigned and the idea of referendum was put aside. This article aims to declare that the will of Greek people matters. Greece is a democratic and sovereign country, not a satellite of West European countries; therefore, they can take their own decisions without asking permission of the others.

Article 29 displays the close relation of the party with the social movements. In this regard, the party exhibits its support to social movements and resists the idea of brutal official interventions to such movements. SYRIZA is a party that draws its strength from the social movements, which will be explained further below. Therefore, it is not surprising to see such article.

Finally articles 37, 38, 39 and 40 can be perceived as the exhibition of the anti-imperialist agenda of the party. SYRIZA as a radical left party criticizes the imperial powers and their expansionist and exploitative politics. As a country that suffers in the hands of such powers, Greece should not be part of this team and take a stand against this understanding. This imperial ideals hiding behind the neoliberal globalization has to be precluded so as to stop any other nation's suffering.

4.5.2. The Economic Program of SYRIZA

On June 2012, Yiannis Dragasakis, one of the important economists within the party and the current Vice-President in the SYRIZA government, presented the details of the economic program of SYRIZA. During his speech, he repeated the party's position regarding the solution offers for the way out of the crisis.

“...the crisis in which we are living is not merely an administrative crisis, but a crisis of the system itself. Consequently, safeguarding the interests of the working people and guaranteeing the rights of the working people cannot be done by simply conserving or restoring the collapsing old system. This will be done on the basis of a new model of development, a new social model, a new labor model and this is the goal of the reforms we are proposing... The crisis has also taken the form of a crisis of trust towards institutions, the parliament, political parties and trade unions. Therefore, it is only through new institutions, democratic institutions of social control, and institutions of direct democracy that we can regain the trust of the people in a new plan that will restore hope” (2012).

Dragasakis underlined that SYRIZA did not envisage an exit from the Euro yet it was not possible for the party to accept the maintaining recovery plans which serve everything apart from recovery. In this context, the program has three immediate targets including

“the immediate material relief of the victims of the crisis and the policies of the Memoranda; the aversion of an even more massive and deep economic catastrophe, by directly stabilizing the economy; and to restrain the generalized insecurity, to revive hope and create new visible prospects” (2012).

In order to increase the public revenues, the program mainly focused on tax system reform. Within this scope, they specified three main subjects, which cover “the wealth registry, tackling the black economy as a structural problem, reexamination of all the special tax regimes and creation of a modern tax revenue system”. Wealth registry enables to record all the wealth possessed by the Greek people who live in the country and in the abroad. This can be seen as the initial step for taxation as through the wealth registry more just and effective taxation can be done. Black economy is seen as a result of competitive environment that the big companies take the race to another level. These companies literally go to any extent in order to get ahead of their rivals. Finally, in the Greek context, there is a need for the reexamination of the special tax regimes especially formed after the World War II since there are many loopholes and the system itself inefficient. Aside from the tax reform, the party foresaw also a public administration

reform. This reform targets to make the public administration's functioning much more efficient. In this sense, it is emphasized that the clientelism must be abandoned, new institutions which are transparent and accountable in every sense must be introduced, more democratic internal structuring should be formed and long term planning should be introduced. Finally, the program prescribed the reconstruction of the economy. This reconstruction in the long term aims to bring a new productive paradigm and in the short run to curb unemployment's increase and lower the rates especially for the sectors affected the crisis at most. Under this heading, public sector is aimed to become precursor for the qualitative and quantitative enhancement and reconstruction of the productive system. Public sector will be subject to a modernization and restructuring process. Moreover, banks will be transformed in a way that they will serve the benefit of people, not the system. There will be regional planning and land registry so that the living spaces will be designed in a more environment-friendly fashion. At the end of the presentation of the program, party's priorities were ordered as follows;

- To create those conditions that will stall the flight of deposits abroad and retribute deposits to the banking system.
- To increase public revenues through tax reforms, combating tax evasion, restricting insurance contribution evasion and the 'black economy'.
- To establish agreements to secure the taxation of bank deposits abroad, until the wealth registry is operational.
- To stall interest payments within the framework of a new agreement on national debt.
- To restructure and accelerate the rate of absorption of the NSRF and other European funds.
- To fully investigate and make use of the opportunities for the development of cooperation with third countries, under the rubric of a multidimensional foreign policy and the implementation of economic diplomacy.

These priorities show that in order to strengthen the government's hand both inside and outside, there is an immediate need to increase the public revenue. Since the basic income of the state is the taxes and especially in the Greek context it is stated the system

has corrupted long ago, it would be logical to stress the importance of the tax system's renewal for a short-term solution. Besides, it is crucial for the creditors' approval for the suspension of the payment, at least the deferment of the interest payments urgently. There is also a search for alternative partners other than EU Members to support the country in the recovery process and to collaborate accordingly.

The economic program of the party has a relative importance since the Greek crisis was firstly appeared in the form of the crisis of Greek economy followed by the political crisis. Therefore, party should put forward a realistic as well as promising program which convinces the people that even in the short term, there will be a relief. Moreover, this program should provide an alternative to the people, specifically within a system in which the main economic traits of the parties do not differentiate noticeably. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, neoliberal system melted away the difference between the center left and right parties in terms of economic paradigms. There is a consensus among these parties for the promotion of neoliberal policies. In this context, a radical left has certainly a comparative advantage since they will have a different economic aspect that can be an alternative to the existing one. SYRIZA's association with the anti-neoliberal stance also tried to be reflected in this program. At this point, the biggest attention was directed towards the tax system, which shelters great inequalities within itself and has corrupt structure. According to the party, reforming the tax system would bring moderation to the Greek people's heavy burden and make the upper strata to share this burden.

4.5.3. Thessaloniki Program

On September 2014, Alexis Tsipras announced SYRIZA's program in detail at the Thessaloniki Fair. This program is mainly a more detailed version of the party program. It exhibits the party's will and strength of becoming the party of power. They tried to manifest that they are the ones who can draw the country out of this crisis. In this respect, Tsipras expressed the immediate demands. They included the writing off the public debt of the country, insertion of a 'growth clause' to the repayment process and moratorium to secure the growth, omitting the public investment from the Stability and Growth Pact, ECB funded 'European New Deal' for public investment, ECB's provision

of quantitative easing for direct purchases of sovereign bonds, and finally the payment of the Nazi Occupiers' forced loans from the Bank of Greece. Final demand can be considered as a counter argument against Germany. Germany within the process has exhibited one of the strictest positions towards Greece regarding the payment of the debt. In this context, it is not surprising that Tsipras turned the clock back by demanding the payment of the Nazi's forced loans taken from the Bank of Greece in the years of World War II. Greek side accused Germans not to pay the debt by stalling off. In this case, while Germans are not loyal to their debt to Greece, why Greece is expected to make an immediate payment under such harsh conditions? After the fulfillment of these demands, SYRIZA's premise was that there was an immediate boost in the public investment. This boost would remove the traces of the injustices caused by the austerity measures. Accordingly, the former amounts of the salaries and the pensions would be brought back. At last, the welfare state would be revived and the rule of law would dominate in company with the meritocracy in the country. In this context, SYRIZA offered an alternative "National Reconstruction Plan" which was aimed to replace Memorandums. This reconstruction plan consisted of four pillars, which are "confronting the humanitarian crisis, restarting the economy and promoting tax justice, regaining employment and transforming the political system to deepen democracy" (2014).

First pillar, confronting the humanitarian crisis, was directed to the most vulnerable social stratum. This social stratum mainly covers the unemployed, families living under the poverty line and families without income. Among the actions to be taken in this scope, providing free electricity to households living under the poverty line; providing meal subsidies to families without income; providing housing through rent subsidies, providing free medical and pharmaceutical care to those in need can be accounted as the most prominent articles. This humanitarian action plan shows that how alarming is the situation in the country. Such a sudden change even brought people to the edge of the

suicide as a last resort, and the country's suicide rates increased dramatically especially as from 2010 onwards.⁴¹

In the second pillar, restarting the economy and promoting tax justice, the main aim was to reduce the burden of people in financial hardship, to moderate the excess burden of tax in the real economy and to transfer liquidity to the economy in order to increase demand. In this sense, party emphasized that it is not fair to lay the tax burden at the middle and lower classes' door. Therefore, their solution offers covered the abolition of the existing unified property tax (ENFIA). Also, introduction of a tax for the large properties was on the agenda. Nevertheless, such vision of reduction in tax rates could not be carried into effect. On the contrary, even after the SYRIZA's arrival to the government, the tax-GDP ratio continued to increase.⁴² According to the Greek Reporter's news (2017), Greek people forced to do pay property taxes seven times higher than the amount they paid in 2009 while the drop in GDP reached 25% accompanied by the high unemployment rates. Another aspect under this title is the debt relief for persons through restructuring the non-performing loans. Party offered to establish an intermediary institution for the dealing of the private debt, other than a bank. A proposal was planned to be brought forward concerning to the suspension of confiscation of primary dwellings. Formation of a public development bank and the restoration of the minimum wage were the other plans to be realized after the party's coming to the power. In the third pillar, national plan to regain employment, it was expected to gain an increase in employment in the amount of 300.000 in all sectors of the economy. Within this framework, employment rights repressed by the Memorandums would be restored within the institutional structure. Collective agreements would be revived and massive and unjust removals would be abolished.

⁴¹ The country experienced an unfortunate increase in the rates of suicide as from 2010. The rate of suicides was 3.1 in 2010, 3.9 in 2011, 4.2 in 2012 and 4.5 in 2013 (OECD, 2015).

⁴² According to OECD Revenue Statistics (2016), the tax-GDP ratio followed a steady increase as from 2010 and exceeded the OECD average in 2011. This ratio was 32.2 in 2010 in the country while the OECD average was 32.6. Yet, in 2011 it became 33.7 while OECD average was 33.0. The ratio was 35.5 in 2012, 35.6 in 2013, 35.8 in 2014 and finally 36.8 in 2015 while the OECD averages were 33.4, 33.8, 34.2 and 34.3 respectively for these years.

Final pillar, transforming the political system to deepen democracy, focused on strengthening the institutions of representative democracy and introducing new institutions for practicing direct democracy. For the execution of this pillar, it was aimed to increase transparency, economic autonomy and effective functioning of regional organizations. Moreover, it was targeted to increase the people's participation through new mechanism like "people's legislative initiative, people's veto and people's initiative to call a referendum". Parliamentary immunity and non-prosecution of the MPs would also be rearranged in order to enhance the parliament's accountability.

The Thessaloniki Program's total cost was forecasted as €11,382 billion. According to the party's belief, the foreseen structural changes would bring €12 billion; thus, they could manage to afford such reforms if the route that the party mapped out was followed.

4.5.4. Promises and Practices

On January 2015, SYRIZA won the elections and came to power. It was object of interest whether SYRIZA can fulfill these promises and initiate the wind of change in the country. In its party program, the most prominent article is the suspension of the debt, which is also in the Greek context probably the most urgent one. Nevertheless, after they came to office, in February they extended the Memorandum and in July they signed the Third Memorandum of Understanding. Therefore, rather than ensuring the suspension of the debt, they accepted the continuation of these harsh austerity measures for the sake of remaining to be solvent. Nevertheless, in March party adopted an anti-poverty law in order to tackle the humanitarian crisis which was presented in the Thessaloniki Program under the first pillar. In this context, for those who live under conditions of extreme poverty this law provides free electricity, rent subsidies for securing housing and food subsidies. However, this law only targets ones who were in worst condition; thus; its scope remained very limited. Also, €5 entry ticket paid to the hospitals was abolished. High security prisons were also abolished. Tax arrears were given the facility of payment with extended installments. Nevertheless, the biggest part of the program could not carry into effect. To illustrate, they promised to restore the minimum wage to its pre-crisis level yet this was not materialized. They promised to

abolish single property tax (ENFIA) yet once they came to office, they increased this tax level (Chrysopoulos, 2017). They also promised to bring back the pensions specifically the supplementary pensions (EKAS) for low income pensioners. Yet, the party even decreased the EKAS (Ibid, 2017). Under the SYRIZA government, houses were confiscated and auctioned, which was another promise that would not happen (Ibid, 2017).

In this respect, it is possible to say that in the aftermath of its electoral success, SYRIZA mainly failed to fulfill its promises which enabled the Greek people to look future with more hope and brought them some kind of an inner relief. Anti-austerity stance of the party mainly remained as the rhetoric of the party rather than reflecting its practices.

Conclusion:

“No political strategy, no matter how innovative, comprehensive, well-planned and well-executed can be successful and effective if conditions are not conducive to it” (Spourdalakis, 2013, p. 105). Without the crisis atmosphere within the country in which a great majority of the Greek population affected negatively while the upper strata did not shoulder the burden along with the others, SYRIZA could not possibly come to power. Nevertheless, it is the success of the party to effectively utilize from this atmosphere and to stand out amongst the others. SYRIZA as a radical left party drew its strength from the social movements. Party’s active social movement participations and supports clearly served the purpose of the rise of the party. It would be very unfair to attribute the party’s rise simply to its populism. Within this framework, it is seen that SYRIZA owes its success to its social movement participation and support without exception. The populist strategy embraced by the party especially after 2012 was mostly a complementary tactic to reach to fruition. Spourdalakis (2016) explained the strengths of SYRIZA’s strategies that opened the door to its achievement. First of all, while taking part in the movements, the members never tried to lead the movement with a vanguardist manner yet at the same time never made sacrifices from their militancy. In this respect, they did not emphasize their presence as a party within the movement, and respected the movement’s own dynamics. Secondly, SYRIZA avoided the old leftist habit in which all the bureaucratic and official institutions of the political and social representation are

looked with suspicion. By this means, SYRIZA was able to bring issues that other parties could not dare to express to front in the parliament. Thirdly, SYRIZA perceives the party program as a dynamic text rather than a static one. The program should always be open to be developed and transformed in the light of the social struggles and experiences, instead of just aiming to save the day. Finally, party's call for the left to form a unitary government proves the sincerity of the party. SYRIZA criticizes the former two-party system and exhibited its effort for the elimination of the system.

To conclude, SYRIZA became a unique party in the Greek political setting as a radical left party that came to the office. The key practice of the party that paved the way for the success is its active social movement participation and support which within the crisis atmosphere became the most important mean to win the heart of the angry crowd torn apart by the establishment.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Greek crisis can be regarded as both unique and familiar. It is possible to say that in many ways Greece became the Chile of Europe. Chile was the country once harsh neoliberal policy trials were conducted with the support of USA. The country was forced to undertake a painful transition in 1970s. A similar trial was also carried out for Greece. Both EU and IMF pushed the country to turn the country into a more neoliberal one as it still did not complete its transition. It looks as if Greece is very sick and the creditors have the medicine for its heal yet rather than giving the complete medicine needed for its full recovery, they give it in very small numbers which only enables it to survive yet live in pain without a proper relief. This basically summarizes the situation in the country since the crisis broke out. The country was exhausted while struggling to come through the crisis. Indeed, it is the people who have suffered most in the process. Besides, their combat was in both domestic and international arena. On the one hand, they tried to save their national pride especially in the European context since they were accused of ‘living well beyond their means’, which ended up with this crisis and now all Europe has to pay for it. On the other hand, under their own roof, they faced with draconian austerity measures which were imposed upon them in defiance of their will and consent. In this context, what make the Greek crisis unique are the dissolution of the long-standing two-party system and the rise of a radical left party that came to power in 2015.

SYRIZA’s arrival to the power was welcomed with great joy especially among the leftist circles. Tsipras in his post-electoral speech, said that

“today, the Greek people have made history. Hope has made history. Greece has turned a page. Greece is leaving behind destructive austerity, fear and authoritarianism. It is leaving behind five years of humiliation and pain” (Henley, 2015).

In his first day in office, Tsipras visited the monument of 200 resistance warriors executed by the Germans during 1941- 44 period located in Kaisariani. This was a symbolic act to show that they are the inheritors of these warriors who battled against Nazism. It can be considered more of a nationalist response towards the German side that criticized the country with both barrels in the process. Indeed, the real expectation was they would prove their difference, uniqueness in practice. Nevertheless, what was expected would unfortunately not occur until now.

On January 2015, despite being first party with a high rate of vote (36%) in the election, SYRIZA still needed a coalition partner to form a government. In this regard, the party called the left forces to unite but KKE as a parliamentary force rejected such coalition partnership. On the other hand, SYRIZA decided to avoid forming a government with pro-austerity parties. At the end, SYRIZA formed a coalition with Independent Greeks (ANEL), a right wing party. This coalition was not perceived as a solid one since in the last instance mainly the only common thing between two partners were their anti-austerity stance but nothing more. Still, it was important for SYRIZA to terminate the austerity measures at the soonest possible date; therefore, the emergency of the situation designated the primacy of it in the agenda.

Indeed with the SYRIZA's arrival to the power, Europe's worst nightmare came true. A real challenge to the neoliberal system was now gained an official power and appearance. If this anti-austerity, anti-neoliberal stance spill over to the other European countries that are also close to the edge, they could not contain the unity of the continent under the neoliberal ideals. There have been already anti-austerity camps in countries like Spain and Portugal that also suffered a lot from the austerity measures in the process. In this context, the negotiations between the two parties would come to a deadlock. Creditors preserved their strict attitude towards the radical left government by announcing that these terms were not open to discussion. The creditors were basically saying that 'take it or leave it'. Third loan agreement worth €86 billion finally came on July 2015 yet with the measures even heavier than the ones former Greek governments accept. In the initial phase of the negotiations, Tsipras was determinant regarding that the memoranda grinded to a halt and a new loan agreement without conditionality

should be formulated. Nevertheless, in time while the negotiations were continuing, Tsipras realized that the creditors would not moderate their attitude and since they did not have an effective leverage which could change the roles, they had to play the game by the creditors' rule. In the process a figure like Yanis Varoufakis, former finance minister, who is a pro-European yet a vigorous advocate of the anti-austerity stance his alternative economic model proposal could not go beyond being a loudy actor that further aggravated the EU and narrow down the government's ability to maneuver.

One of the important aspects of this agreement is the referendum held on 5th of July, in which No vote dominated with a slashing difference (%60 to 40%). This referendum asked Greek people whether the government should accept the July 25th agreement of Troika. SYRIZA openly supported the No vote. After the results of the referendum were announced, Tsipras indicated that "Greece has proved that democracy cannot be blackmailed; Greece has made a brave choice and one which will change the debate in Europe". This referendum result obviously strengthened the Grexit possibility. Nevertheless, despite this result, agreement was signed between two parties. This referendum indeed was more of a tactical move. The government did not ask people that whether they should exit the euro or not. Without leaving the euro, the government would not have much of a say to negotiate. After the agreement, government took a stand that we did our best to defend your rights yet this was the only result we can get. Indeed, it is a problematic topic whether Greek people were ready for a Grexit. When we look at the opinion polls, there is a sharp decrease in the trust of EU among Greek people. According to 2015 Eurobarometer data, 73% of the Greek population did not trust in EU institutions. On the other hand, 50% of the Greek population felt they were citizen of EU while other 50% did not. Also, for 37% of the population EU conjured up a total negative image while for 38%, it was neutral. This shows that while the EU institutions lost their credibility in the eyes of Greek people due to their mishandling of the crisis process, Greek people still see themselves as the part of the union. Concordantly, according to several opinion polls⁴³, the Greek people did not want a

⁴³ According to Pew Global Attitude poll held in 2014, 69% of the Greek people were in favor of staying in the Eurozone while only 26% of them wanted an exit from it (Moutzouridis, 2017). This former rate rose to 71% in 2016 (Ibid, 2017). According to 2015 Eurobarometer data, 52% of the Greek people still think that the "Euro is a good thing" while 32% defined it as something bad.

Grexit. Although EU's appeal shrunk among them, they still believe that exiting from the Eurozone is not part of the solution. It is possible to say that they may think exiting from the Euro will bring more problems rather than being a solution. Indeed, SYRIZA also displayed its reluctance to bear any kind of responsibility in the aftermath of a possible Grexit. Therefore, they realize the discourse that we fight for you to the best of our ability yet we may not gain an achievement, which was the case in this negotiation.

SYRIZA's retreat in the agreement negotiation brought internal split. When the package came to the parliament almost one third of the party MPs refused to approve it. In this context, these more radical groups within the party mainly broke away from the party and formed Popular Unity (LAE). Indeed, these relatively more radical segments of the party did not like the party's ongoing trajectory from the beginning since the party could not exhibit any kind of radical break from the former practices.

Within this atmosphere, Tsipras resigned and the country entered a reelection process in September. In this election, SYRIZA renewed its electoral success by getting 35.5% of the votes (Smith & Wearden, 2015). When we look closer to the SYRIZA's Governmental Program for the election, we see that the party tried to justify its act of signing the agreement. In the program, it is explained that ECB's suspension of liquidity provision to the country and IMF's pressures for the repayment of delayed debt tranche would leave the country alone with a default threat. This would be followed by isolation from the international market in general, which eventually could bring the country to an irreparable point. Within these circumstances, they were stating what they have done was the only logical choice. They also mentioned some gains of the agreement that they achieved. In this regard, the previous legal institutional framework was transformed. Now the country will be guided and assisted through ESM (European Stability Mechanism), an international organization rather than EFSF (European Financial Stability Facility) which is directly accountable to the creditors. Many criticize this development as nothing more than the name change. Other than that, the agreement set a clear timetable to discuss reduction in the debt. Yet, this interpreted that the creditors meant if you can reach the targets, we'll consider it. In the program, SYRIZA (2015)

also mentioned that their formal anti-neoliberal agenda is still valid yet not maybe in the short-run by specifying that

“It is one thing to accept neoliberalism as a strategic horizon, as the sole road to social welfare and another to accept that in a certain moment in time, with a given balance of political forces, one has to make a tactical and temporary compromise so as to be in a position to keep fighting preserving the possibility and the opportunity of prevailing”.

They claimed that they still promise an alternative different from others to the Greek people.

Filippa Chatzistavrou and Sofia Michalaki (2015) argue that in this election Greek people did not vote for SYRIZA but they voted for Tsipras. In this context, the party's former grassroots politics was basically undermined to the charismatic figure of the leader. Michalis Spourdalakis (2016) as a founder member also criticizes the party's parliamentarist and governmentalist turn when they came to office yet he indicated that it can set the things right by simply turning back to its original strategy that enabled the party to rise and eventually to come to the power.

It is important to understand that it is the party's active social movement support made it possible for the party to rise. Indeed, without such crisis atmosphere they might not come to power. Nevertheless, their grassroots strategy which was far from being vanguardist as in the case of KKE goes way back before the crisis. The World Social Forum experiences and the following Greek Social Forum with their lead contributed a lot to the party's social movement understanding and knowledge. Thus, they made people accept their presence in different social movements with different agendas. In conclusion, rather than simply attributing a populist characteristic to the party, it is possible to state that SYRIZA is a party that revealed its uniqueness while rising to the power through getting its strength from social movements.

Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate that SYRIZA as a radical left party could not maintain its radical characteristic and mainly lost its dynamic nature after arriving to the power. Party followed the path that the creditors drew for the country and mostly complied with their terms. Party's lack of a strong leverage against the creditors and the will to stay in the Eurozone forced the party to play the game by the rules of creditors

that had basically zero tolerance to the demands of a radical left party. At the end, the party's anti-austerity stance in particular and anti-neoliberal standing in general was exhausted. They continued to maintain the austerity policies and simply embraced an agonizing neoliberal transition which was not fully employed formerly. In this context, they failed to present an alternative to the neoliberal system. Indeed, the decision of staying in the Eurozone would not help the party in terms of pursuing their ideals. Eurozone crisis made it clear that this system deepens the gap between core and peripheral countries rather than enabling a convergence as it was expressed in the beginning of the Chapter 4. Besides, the prescription given to these countries after the crisis was basically taming the public through laying the burden on the people in the form of austerity measures and repeating the discourse of 'there is no alternative'. At this point, it can be essential to return the discussion of the crisis of neoliberalism and the crisis in neoliberalism, which was mentioned under the Chapter 2. In the Greek case, an alternative was not materialized. The system transformed into a more oppressive and exploitative one in the country. Therefore, the crisis in neoliberalism became valid. In conclusion, while SYRIZA was moving away from its radical left agenda as a remedy for this crisis, the restoration of the neoliberal order was continued to be carried out by them, at the expense of the Greek people.

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APPENDICES

A.TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

2008 küresel krizini takip eden Avro Bölgesi krizi, özellikle Yunanistan krizi kapsamında görünür oldu. Yunanistan krizden en kötü etkilenen ve sonrasında en ağır yaptırımlara maruz bırakılan ülke olarak hem politik hem ekonomik anlamda zor bir sürece girdi. Bu süreç beraberinde ülkede belli başlı değişikliklere sebep oldu. Bu anlamda krizin politik alandaki yansımaları hem ülke gündeminde hem dünya gündeminde kendine yer edindi. Ülkedeki uzun süreli iki partili sistem bu süreçle birlikte sona erdi. Radikal sol bir parti olan SYRIZA 2012 seçimlerinde ikinci gelerek elde ettiği başarıyı, 2015 seçimlerinde birinci gelerek taçlandırdı. SYRIZA' nın bu yükselişi bütün dikkatleri partinin üzerine çekti. Kriz öncesi dönemde küçük bir oy oranına sahip ve fazla göze çarpmayan bir partiyken nasıl oldu da iktidar olabilecek kadar yükseldiği sorgulandı. Bu bağlamda, bu tezin de ana meselesi SYRIZA' nın yükselişidir. Tezin ana argümanı, SYRIZA' nın yükselişinin altındaki ana etken sosyal hareketlere aktif katılımı ve desteğidir. Partinin 2000'li yıllarda benimsediği bu strateji özellikle kriz döneminde yükselen soysal hareketlerle özel bir önem kazanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda da, tez partinin yükselişini incelerken krizi genel çerçeve olarak kabul etmektedir.

Tezin giriş kısmında konu ekseninde tezin nasıl şekillendiği sunulmaya çalışılmıştır. Yunanistan krizinin patlak vermesi ve özellikle Almanya' nın bu durum karşısındaki tepkisi ortaya konulmuştur. Bu anlamda Alman medyasındaki Yunanistan imajı ve Alman otoritelerin ülkeyle ilgili söylemleri giriş kısmında vurgulanmıştır. SYRIZA' nın yükselişi ve bu yükselişin farklı çevrelerce nasıl yorumlandığı da kısa bir şekilde bu kısımda belirtilmiştir.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde neoliberalizmin krizi ele alınmıştır. Öncelikle neoliberal dönüşümün kısa bir tarihi arka planından bahsedilmiştir. Bu bağlamda neoliberal teoriyle neoliberal pratiğin nasıl farklılaştığına değinilmiştir.

İlerleyen kısımlarda, neoliberal devletin nasıl şekillendiği aktarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu anlamda, sosyal ve ekonomik alanda etkin bir şekilde yer alan refah devletinin aksine,

neoliberal devletin olabildiğince minimal olması vurgusu yapılmıştır. Bu açıdan devlet artık refahın sağlayıcısı değil, marketin koruyucusu haline gelmiştir. Devletin ana görevi rekabetçi marketin garantörü olmak ve bunun için gerekli tedbirleri almaktır. Neoliberal devlet bireyleri marketteki başarısızlıklarında kurtarmaya gelmez ama eğer bu başarısızlık finansal sektörün başarısızlığı olursa o zaman duruma müdahale eder. Yani kısacası devlet düzenin bekçisi konumuna getirilmiştir ve bu bağlamda kapitalist sınıfları gözetirken, alt sınıfları sistemin insafına bırakır.

Bu bölümün altında ayrıca neoliberalizmin küresel hegemonik bir proje olarak özellikle gelişmekte olan çevre ülkelere nasıl empoze edildiğine değinilmiştir. Bu açıdan Uluslararası Para Fonu (IMF) ve Dünya Bankasının (World Bank) rolleri vurgulanmıştır.

2008 küresel krizi bağlamında neoliberalizmin krizi tartışılmıştır. Özellikle devletin finansal sektörü kurtarmak için sağladığı yüksek miktarlardaki likidite kaynakları ve kriz döneminde iyice fakirleşen halkın bu kapsama dâhil edilmemesi arasındaki ikilik ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu krizin Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinde başlayıp nasıl küresel bir kriz şeklini aldığına da kısaca bu bölüm kapsamında değinilmiştir. Bu açıdan, finansallaşma ve deregülasyonla birlikte sınırlar ortadan kaldırılmış, Amerika’da çıkarılmış bonolar dünyanın başka bir noktasından rahatlıkla satın alınabilir hale getirilmiştir bu yüzden ulusal bir kriz özellikle Amerika gibi büyük finansal bir markete sahip bir ülkenin krizi kolaylıkla küresel bir krize dönüşebilir.

Teorik alanda bu krizin doğasıyla ilgili bir tartışma vardır. Bu anlamda, bu krizin neoliberalizmin krizi mi yoksa neoliberalizmin içindeki bir kriz mi olduğu tartışılmaktadır. Bu bölümde bu tartışmaya da yer verilmiştir. Neoliberalizmin içindeki bir kriz argümanını savunanlar bu krizden sonra neoliberalizme alternatif bir sistem getirilmediği için bu şekilde bir açıklama yapılması gerektiği taraftarıdır.

Neoliberal çevrelerin ana söylemi ‘Başka bir alternatif yok’ anlayışına dayanır. Bu anlamda bu sistem kemer sıkma politikalarıyla kurtarılmalıdır. Bu kriz ortamından çıkabilmek için herkesin taşın altına elini koyması gerektiği vurgusu vardır. Fakat, pratikte taşın altına elini koymak zorunda kalanlar alt sınıflardır. Kemer sıkma politikaları alt sınıfları içinde bulunduklarından çok daha zor koşullara mahkûm eder. Zaten kriz ortamında yeterince mağdur olan bu kesimler, kemer sıkma politikalarıyla iyice bastırılıp, sindirilirler. Tezde bu bölüm altında bu durum da kısaca anlatılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu bölümde son olarak neoliberal sisteme karşı halkın verdiği tepkilerden bahsedilmiştir. Özellikle 2000’li yılların başında ortaya çıkan Dünya Sosyal Forumu (World Social Forum) ve krizin patlak vermesinden sonra ulusal sınırlar içindeki

‘Indignados’ ve ‘Aganaktismeni’ yani Öfkeli hareketleri gibi sosyal hareketler bu bağlamda ön plana çıkmaktadır.

Tezin üçüncü bölümünde ülkenin kriz dönemine kadarki genel politik ve ekonomik durumundan söz edilmiştir. Bu bölümde üç ana dönemselleştirme bulunmaktadır. İlk dönem İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasına odaklanarak 1974 senesiyle sınırlandırılmıştır. Bu periyot 1967’deki askeri cunta yönetimini de içine alır ve 1974 yılında sivil yönetime geçilmesiyle son bulur. Bu dönemde genel olarak devletin güçlü ve baskıcı yapısı vurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, politik ve sivil hakların mercek altında olduğu ve kısıtlandığı gözlenmiştir. Ekonomik alan yüksek oranda devlet kontrolüne tabidir. Bu açıdan da sistem liberal modelden uzaktır. Özellikle iş gücü sert kısıtlamalara maruz bırakılmıştır. Sivil savaştan sonra solun politikadan men edilmesi ve askeri cunta döneminde de artan baskılar işçi sınıfının daha fazla baskılanmasına neden olmuştur. Yunanistan bu dönemde Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluğuyla ‘Ortaklık Anlaşması’ (Association Agreement) yapmıştır ve birliğe üyelik yolunda ilk adımı atmıştır.

İkinci dönemselleştirme 1981 ve 1995 yılları arasındaki zamanı kapsar. 1981 de sol bir parti olan PASOK (Panhelenik Sosyalist Hareket) iktidara gelmiştir. Parti bu dönemde özellikle alt sınıflara belli tavizler tanımıştır. Bu dönemde işçi sınıfı güçlenmiştir. Maaşlar artmıştır. Enflasyon genel olarak yüksektir. 1986 ve 1987 yıllarında İstikrar Programı uygulanmıştır. Bu program makroekonomik istikrarı sağlamayı amaçlamıştır. Program kısa süre için amaçlarına ulaşmıştır fakat bu hedefler uzun vadede sürdürülememiştir. 1992’de Maastricht Antlaşması imzalanmıştır. 1994 de Avro bölgesi üyeliği için belirlenen 2. aşama başlatılmıştır. Bu evreden sonra ülkede ekonomik istikrar önem kazanmış ve anlaşmanın getirdiği yakınsama kriterlerini sağlamak gündemde en tepeye konulmuştur.

Son dönemselleştirme 1995 ve 2008 yılları arasındaki dönemi kapsar. Bu dönemde Costas Simitis’in başkanlığındaki PASOK hükümeti ülkenin Avro Bölgesi üyesi olabilmesi için sağlanması gereken yakınsama kriterlerini gerçekleştirebilmeye odaklanmıştır. Bu anlamda, enflasyon kontrol altına alınmıştır. Yunan Merkez Bankası bağımsızlık kazanmış ve para politikası üzerinde tam söz hakkına sahip olmuştur. Ülkenin rekabet gücünü arttırmak için ücretler düşürülmüştür. 2001 yılında ülke Avro bölgesine kabul edilmiştir. Avro’ya geçtikten sonraki süreçte, ülke ekonomisi hızlı büyüme değerleri kaydetmiştir. 2008 krizine kadar bu büyüme devam etmiştir.

Tezin dördüncü bölümünde SYRIZA’nın yükselişi geniş bir perspektiften ele alınmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu açıdan, dördüncü bölümün ilk kısmında bu yükselişe ortam hazırlayan arka plan Avro Bölgesi krizi ve bu krizi izleyen sosyal tepkiler analiz edilmiştir. Avro Bölgesi krizi göstermiştir ki Yunanistan’ın yaşadığı bu kriz ülkenin kendi başına açtığı ve üyesi olduğu yapıdan bağımsız bir kriz değildir. Kaldı ki, Yunanistan bu anlamda yalnız da değildir. İspanya, Portekiz ve İrlanda gibi diğer Avro Bölgesi ülkeleri de kriz

sonrasında ekonomilerine ağır darbeler almışlardır. Bu açıdan, Yunanistan krizini Avro Bölgesi krizi bağlamında ele almak önem kazanmıştır. Bu sistemin nasıl işlediğinin sorgulanması bu krizin meydana çıkış sebeplerini anlamada yardımcı olacaktır. 1992’de Maastricht Antlaşmasının imzalanmasından sonra Avro Bölgesinin oluşturulmasına dair yol haritası belirlenmiştir. Bu anlamda belli kriterleri sağlayan ülkeler bu bölgenin üyesi olabilecektir. Bu yakınsama ölçütleri ülkelere makroekonomik düzeyde görece homojen bir görünüm kazandırıp sistemin bütünlüğünün sürdürülebilir bir hal almasını sağlayacaktı. Fakat gelinen nokta gösteriyor ki bu sistemin altında çevre ve merkez ülkelerin arasındaki fark giderek büyümüştür. Bu sistem genel olarak kazanç bağlamında ihrac fazlasını temel alan bir sistem ve bu anlamda yeni merkantilist sistem olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çevre ülkeler teknolojik yenilik anlamında merkez ülkeleri yakalayamadıkları için rekabet güçleri azdır. Bu sistem altında parasal politika yapma haklarını Avrupa Merkez Bankası’na devrederken (ECB), maliye politikası yapma haklarını da sınırlamışlardır. Bu yüzden hareket alanları bu anlamda çok kısıtlıdır. Özellikle Almanya gibi birim emek maliyetini çok düşük seviyelere çekmeyi başarmış bir ülke karşısında şansları yoktur.

Çevre ülkelerdeki büyüme daha çok hane halklarının borçlanarak yaptığı tüketime ya da emlak balonlarına bağlanmıştır. Bu açıdan bu ülkeler Almanya gibi ihracat fazlası veren bir ülkeye kolay pazarlar olmuşlardır. Yani sistem Almanya yararına işler hale gelmiştir.

Bu sistem altında fazla veren ülkelere borçlu ülkelere bu fazlanın dağıtımı yoktur. O yüzden mevcut koşullarda çevre ülkelerin merkez ülkelere gerçek anlamda yakınsaması pek mümkün değildir. Ayrıca finansallaşmayla birlikte bu ülkelere sıcak para giriş çıkışları artmaktadır. Bu giriş çıkışlar bu ülkelerde ekonomik patlama ve çöküş aralıkları yaratmaktadır. Özellikle büyüme dönemlerinde giren sıcak para, bu ülkelerin borçlarını kolaylıkla finanse edebilecekleri düşüncesini onlara vererek borçlanma eğilimlerini arttırmaktadır. Fakat bu durum kriz dönemlerinde onları daha korunmasız bırakmaktadır.

Avrupa Merkez Bankası’nın (ECB) da rolü sistem içinde önem arz etmektedir. Bu anlamda, ECB ulusal merkez bankaları gibi hareket etmemektedir. Hiçbir ulusa tabi olmayan bağımsız bir oluşumdur. Fakat banka üzerinde Almanya’nın etkisi açık bir şekilde gözlemlenebilmektedir. Almanya’nın baskılarıyla birlikte bankanın genel misyonu fiyat istihkarını sağlamakla sınırlandırılmış ve ECB ulusal merkez bankalarının kendi hükümetlerinin borçlarını satın alabilme gücünden mahrum bırakılmıştır. ECB Avro bölgesi krizi patlak verene kadar bölge ülkelerin borçlarını finanse etme yetkisine sahip olmamaktaydı.

Bu bölümün altında, Avro Bölgesi krizi bağlamında Yunanistan krizi daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Bu anlamda, Yunanistan’ın borç alabilmek için Avrupalı elitlere başvurması ve bu süreçte özellikle Almanya’nın sert tutumu irdelenmiştir. Alman yetkililer sürecin başlangıcında Yunanistan’la masaya oturmak konusunda çok isteksiz

davranmışlardır. Fakat bu kriz sadece Yunanistan'ın krizi olmadığı ve Yunanistan'ın batması durumunda bütün Avro Bölgesinin tehdit altına gireceği ihtimali Almanya'yı masaya oturmaya itmiştir.

Bu süreçte Yunanistan'ın yüksek kamu borcu birçok eleştiriye uğramış ve bu açıdan Yunanistan gücünün ötesinde bir hayat standardında yaşamakla suçlanmıştır. Ama yüksek kamu borcu aslında krizin sebebi olmaktan çok sonucudur. Kriz sonrasında hükümetler finansal sektörlerini kurtarabilmek için bu sektöre yüksek oranda para aktarmıştır. Bu durumda kamu borçlarının artmasına sebep olmuştur.

Yunanistan'ın vergi sistemi de bu eleştirilerden nasibini almıştır. Özellikle vergi kaçakçılığının ülkede çok yaygın olması gündeme getirilmiştir. Birliğin ortak bir vergi sistemi yoktur. O yüzden ülkeler rekabet güçlerini arttırmak için vergiler üzerinde sıkça oynama yapmaya başvurabiliyor. Ayrıca vergi cenneti diye adlandırılan ülkelerin içinde birçok Avrupa ülkesi de bulunuyor. Bu durumda Yunanistan yozlaşmış vergi sistemi üzerinden ağır eleştirilere maruz kalırken merkez ülkelerin rekabette öne geçebilmek uğruna vergi sistemlerini kolayca eğip büktüklerini görebiliyoruz.

Bu süreçte Yunanistan'a borcunu ödeyemez damgası vurulmuştur. Bu anlamda tezde teknik olarak hiçbir ülkenin bu pozisyonda olmadığı vurgulanmış ve özellikle bu fenomenin bu krizle takiben ortaya çıktığının altı çizilmiştir. Bu borcunu ödeyemez damgası borçlu devletleri borç veren elitlerin uydusu haline getirmiştir ve bu devletler kendi halklarının çıkarlarının önüne borç veren elitlerin çıkarlarını koymaya zorlanmaktadırlar.

Kriz sürecinde Almanya'nın borcun büyük bir finanse ettiği algısı yaratılmıştır. Fakat Fransa ve İsviçre'nin bu anlamdaki katkılarının çok daha büyük olduğu ortaya konulmuştur.

Yunanistan aldığı borçla birlikte ağır kemer sıkma politikaları uygulamaya mecbur edilmiştir. Bu anlamda bu kemer sıkma politikaları kriz sürecini aşmak için uygulanması gereken bir reçete olarak ülkenin önüne konulmuştur. Ama bu süreç gösteriyor ki bu kemer sıkma politikaları ülkedeki krizi daha da derinleştirmiştir. Ülkedeki yoksulluk oranı ciddi seviyelerde artış göstermiş birçok insan yoksulluk sınırının altında yaşamaya başlamıştır. İşsizlik endişe verici seviyelere ulaşmıştır. Bu anlamda genç işsizlik rekor seviyeleri görmüştür. İntihar oranı ciddi şekilde artmıştır. Başka bir deyişle, krizin halka yansıyan olumsuz etkileri kemer sıkma politikalarıyla çok daha yıkıcı boyutlara ulaşmıştır.

Avro Bölgesi krizi ve bu krizi çerçevesinde uygulanan kemer sıkma politikaları Yunan halkının tepsini çekmiştir. Bu bağlamda birçok kişi sokaklara dökülüp bu durumu protesto etmişlerdir. Bu açıdan bu kısmın altında sosyal hareketler de incelenmiştir. İlk olarak ülkedeki protestolar tarihsel bir düzlemde ortaya konulmuştur. Ülkede sivil savaş

sonrasında sol güçler politikadan soyutlanmış ve baskı altına alınmışlardır. Bu yüzden bu dönemde özellikle sol nitelik taşıyan herhangi bir sosyal hareket için bir alan bırakılmamıştır. 1967’de askeri cuntanın yönetime gelmesiyle ülke yeni bir baskı dönemine girmiştir. 1973’de askeri cuntanın bu baskıcı yönetimine karşı çıkmak için üniversiteli öğrenciler ayaklanmıştır. Bu olaylar Atina Politeknik Üniversitesi merkez olduğundan Politeknik olayları olarak adlandırılır. Bu olaylar ülkedeki proteste eğilimlerinin şekillenmesinde büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu olaylardan sonra öğrenciler sosyal hareketlerin en aktif katılımcılarından biri olmuştur. Özellikle sivil yönetime geçildikten sonra işçi ve öğrenci hareketlerinin ağırlık kazandığı gözlemlenmektedir. Ama farklı kaygıları olan sosyal hareketlerde kendilerini göstermektedir. Bu açıdan 2007 deki orman yangınlarına karşı gösteri ve 2008 de 15 yaşındaki bir gencin polis kurşunuyla öldürülmesi sonucu yapılan protestolar gösterilebilir. Tabi ki, kriz sonrası dönemde kemer sıkma politikalarının uygulanmaya başlanmasının ardında ülkede sosyal hareketler büyük bir yoğunluk kazanmıştır. 2010 daha çok grev ve sokak gösteri ve yürüyüşleri formunda cereyan eden hareketler, 2011 yılında ‘Öfkeliiler’ (Aganaktismeni) hareketi altında farklı bir karakter kazanmıştır.

Öfkeliiler hareketi bu kısmın altında daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu hareket hem karakteri ve doğası açısından önceki hareketlerden ayrıştığı için hem de SYRIZA’nın yükselişinde büyük bir rolle sahip olmasından dolayı önem arz etmektedir. Öfkeliiler hareketi genel olarak onlara bu kemer sıkma politikalarını dayatan sisteme ve yozlaşmış politik düzene karşı çıkmaktadır. Bu hareket İspanya’daki öfkeliiler hareketinden de etkilenerek şehirlerdeki önemli meydanların halk tarafından işgal edilmesiyle farkını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu açıdan Atina’daki Sintagma Meydanı’nı en önemli buluşma noktası haline gelmiştir. Bu meydan toplumsal açıdan birçok önemli sosyal harekete eve sahipliği yapmış olmasıyla halk için seçilebilecek en uygun yer haline gelmiştir. Öfkeliiler hareketi kapsamında meydanlara çadırlar kurulmuş, ücret talep edilmeden yiyecek ve içecek sağlanmış, sağlık hizmeti verilmiş ve hatta piyano resitali gibi bazı kültürel aktiviteler düzenlenmiştir. En önemlisi de halk meclisleri oluşturulmuştur. Bu meclisler küçük çaplı bir doğrudan demokrasi pratiği oluşturmaktadırlar. Meclislerde yerel ve özel sorunlar dile getirilip ve bu doğrultuda belli kararlar alınmıştır.

Öfkeliiler hareketinin belli başlı özellikleri dört ayrı başlık altında ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Bunlardan ilki yukarı-aşağı meydan ayrımıdır. Sintagma Meydanının yukarı kısmındaki protestocular genel olarak daha milliyetçi eğilimler göstermedirler. Buradaki söylemlerde ülkenin egemenliğine vurgu yapılmaktadır. Diğer bir taraftan, meydanın aşağı kısmında sol eğilimler ön plana çıkmaktadır. SYRIZA bu kısımda etkiliğini sürdürmüştür. İkinci olarak protestocuların profili ele alınmıştır. Öfkeliiler hareketinin genel profili heterojen bir yelpaze içindedir. Bu açıdan en çok göze çarpan gruplar güvencesiz çalışanlar/prekarya (precariat)ve işsizlerdir. Aynı zamanda proleterleşmeye

başlayan orta sınıflarda hareket içinde dikkat çekmektedir. Üçüncü olarak sosyal medya kullanımının hareket içindeki önemi sorgulanmıştır. Özellikle yakın dönemdeki sosyal hareketlerin genel olarak sosyal medya üzerinden örgütlendiği gözlenmektedir. Bu durum Öfkeliiler hareketi içinde geçerli olmuştur. Sosyal medya örgütlenme açısından çok daha kolay ve zahmetsiz bir araç olması ve geleneksel hiyerarşik yapılara dâhil olmadan bir sosyal hareketin parçası olma olanağı sağlaması bakımından önem kazanmıştır. Ayrıca ülkede geleneksel medya kanallarına olan güvenin büyük ölçüde azalması Yunan halkını alternatif medya kanallarına itmiştir. Bu yüzden sosyal medya haber kaynağı olma anlamında da önemli bir konuma gelmiştir. Son olarak bu hareketin akademik çevrelerde hangi teorik yaklaşımla ilişkilendirildiği üzerine gidilmiştir. Bu anlamda Michael Hardt ve Antonio Negri'nin 'çokluk' (multitude) kavramsallaştırması ele alınmıştır.

Bu bölümün ikinci kısmında SYRIZA'nın yükselişine odaklanılmıştır. Bu anlamda öncelikle partinin tarihsel gelişimi üzerinde durulmuştur. Partinin kökleri Yunanistan Komünist Partisiyle (KKE) kesişmektedir. Parti içindeki ayrım daha sonra SYRIZA'nın içindeki en büyük parti olan Synaspismos'un oluşmasına olanak sağlamıştır. Bu kısımda sadece tarihsel bir arka planla sınırlı kalınmamış komünist partinin genel yapısı ve izlediği politikalara da değinilmiştir. KKE ülkedeki en eski sol partidir. Parti Ortodoks Marksist bir bakış açısını benimsemekte ve politika ve söylemlerini bu doğrultuda şekillendirmektedir. Parlamenter sol bir parti olarak bu kriz atmosferinde kendini nasıl konumlandığı önem kazanmaktadır. Parti SYRIZA'nın aksine sosyal hareketler içinde öncü bir rol üstlenmeye çalışmış ve bu anlamda kendi örgütlediği hareketlerin dışında kalanlara ılımlı yaklaşmamıştır. Bunu Öfkeliiler hareketi de dâhildir. Bu anlamda SYRIZA parlamento da bu hareketi açık bir şekilde destekleyen tek parti konumundadır. KKE ele alındıktan sonra SYRIZA'nın oluşumuna odaklanılmıştır. Bu açıdan partinin en etkin üyesi Synaspismos'a (SYN) odaklanılmıştır.

Tarihsel arka plan verildikten sonra ülkedeki iki partili sistem ele alınmıştır. PASOK ve Yeni Demokrasi (ND) partileri askeri diktatörlük sona erdikten sonra politik alana egemen olmuşlardır. Bu iki parti değişimli olarak 2011 senesine kadar iktidarı ellerinde tutmuştur. Ancak 2011 de PASOK lideri Papandreou görevinden istifa ettikten sonra bu sistem işleyemez hale gelmiştir. Yeni kurulan hükümet teknokrat bir figür olan Papademos başkanlığında kurulmuş ve bu hükümette PASOK, ND ve LAOS (Popüler Ortodoks Rallisi) koalisyonuyla oluşturulmuştur. 2012'de yapılan seçimlerde de SYRIZA ikinci gelmiş ve ana muhalefet konumuna gelmiştir.

İki partili sistem açıklandıktan sonra SYRIZA'nın yükselişi ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda partinin yükselişi iki ayrı dönem altında incelenmiştir. Bunlar 2012 seçimleri öncesindeki dönem ve 2012 seçimleri sonrasındaki dönemi kapsar. 2012 öncesindeki dönemde parti sosyal hareketlere aktif katılıma önem verir. 2000'li yılların başlarında SYN özellikle Dünya Sosyal Forumu deneyimleri çerçevesinde sosyal

hareketleri partinin odağına koymaktadır. Bu anlamda partinin içindeki sol fraksiyonlar etkin konuma gelmesi bu eğilimin güçlenmesini sağlamıştır. 2004 yılında parti başkanlığına gelen Alekos Alavanos'la birlikte partinin ana misyonu gençleri temsil etmek haline gelmiştir. Bu hedef doğrultusunda Alavanos liderlik koltuğunu 34 yaşındaki Alexis Tsipras'a bırakmıştır. Partinin yükselişi açısından bu dönem çok kritiktir. Özellikle 2010 ve 2012 tarihleri arasında sosyal hareketler büyük bir yoğunluk kazanmış ve SYRIZA bu anlamda bu hareketlerin hem aktif katılımcısı hem de destekçisi olmuştur.

2012 seçimleri sonrasındaki dönemde parti genel olarak bir sonraki seçime yönelik belli başlı hazırlıklar yapmaya ağırlık vermiştir. Bu anlamda bir parti programı ve ekonomik program hazırlanmıştır. Bu programlar büyük ölçüde bir önceki dönemde ağırlık kazanan sosyal hareketlerin dile getirdiği istekleri yansıtmaktadır. Bu anlamda özellikle borcun ertelenmesi, asgari ücretin eski seviyesine getirilmesi, alt sınıflara bedava sağlık yardımı ve benzeri bazı kritik konulara vurgu yapılmıştır. Bu kısımda bu programlar ayrı başlıklar altında incelenmiştir.

Bu bölümün altında son olarak parti iktidara geldikten sonra bu programlarda öngördüklerinin ne kadarını gerçekleştirebildiği sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Bu anlamda partinin en belirgin uygulaması acil insani krize yönelik çıkardığı yasa olmuştur. Bu yasa toplumun en savunmasız kesimlerine bedava elektrik sağlanması, kira yardımı ve yemek yardımı yapılması gibi uygulamaları kapsamaktadır.

Sonuç bölümünde SYRIZA'nın iktidardaki döneminden kısaca bahsedilmiştir. Bu anlamda parti iktidara geldikten sonra Avrupalı elitlerin sert tepkiyle karşılaşmıştır. Belli bir süre masaya oturup pazarlık yapamamışlardır. Pazarlık için takvim belli olduğunda parti anlaşmayı referanduma taşımıştır. Referandumdan hayır oyu çıkmasına ve partinin açık bir şekilde hayır oyunu desteklemesine rağmen 25 Temmuz'da yapılan görüşme sonucu yeni Memorandum kabul edilmiştir. Bu Memorandum ile gelen şartlar çok daha ağır olmuştur. Parti bu paketin onaylanmasından sonra kendi içinde bir bölünme yaşamıştır. Bunu takiben Alexis Tsipras istifa etmiş ve ülke tekrar seçimlere gitmiştir. Bu seçimler sonuncunda SYRIZA büyük oranda oy oranını korumuş ve yeniden birinci parti olarak seçimler çıkmıştır. Bu tabloya bakıldığında partinin kemer sıkma politikalarına karşı olan tavrını koruyamadığını ve parti programını pratiğe taşımakta başarısız olduğunu görüyoruz.

Kısaca tezin ana meselesini özetleyecek olursak, bu tez SYRIZA'nın yükselişinde en büyük rolün partinin sosyal hareketlere aktif katılımının ve desteğinin olduğu savını desteklemektedir. Bu anlamda parti için belirleyici dönem 2012 seçimlerine kadar ki dönem olmuştur. Bu dönem kriz ortamının bir sonucu olarak büyük bir yoğunluk kazanan sosyal hareketler SYRIZA'nın görünürlüğünü arttırmıştır. Bu süreçte krizin etkisi de büyük önem arz etmektedir. SYRIZA bu sosyal hareketler içinde öncü rolüne

bürünmeyerek bu hareketlerin özerk yapısına saygı duymuş aynı zamanda da bu hareketlerden desteğini esirgememiştir. Partinin bu tutumu partiye avantaj sağlayarak 2012 seçimlerinde büyük bir başarı elde etmesini sağlamıştır. Diğer bir deyişle parti sosyal hareketlerin dinamiğine uyum sağlayarak onların bir parçası olmayı başarmış ve böylece diğer partilerin arasından sıyrılmayı başarmış ve yükselmiştir.

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