

# **UACES 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference**

**Leeds, 2-4 September 2013**

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## **Austerity, Protest and the Making of a European Public Sphere? Social movements and responses to the Eurozone crisis in Spain and Greece**

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### **Introduction**

One of the most striking features of the Eurozone crisis has been the mobilisation of citizens against government and EU austerity reforms and the emergence of new social movements, many with transnational dimensions. While protests have occurred all over Europe, they have been particularly intense in two of the countries experiencing the worst effects of the economic crisis, namely Greece and Spain. In Greece, protests over government mismanagement of the economy took place as early as 2008 (Psimitis, 2011) but intensified from March 2010 as a result of the Papandreou government's austerity measures and the conditionality of the EU's first bailout. The demonstrations and protests, which took place throughout the country, were accompanied by strikes involving at some points almost the whole public sector, and many incidents of civil disobedience and rioting (Psimitis, 2011; Sotiropoulos 2012). In Spain, the event symbolising the birth of a new anti-austerity movement was mobilisation of tens of thousands of protesters on 15 March 2011 and the subsequent occupation of public squares in Madrid, Barcelona and elsewhere. This action, inspired by the Arab spring, but also protest movements in Iceland, Greece and Latin America (Fuster Morrell, 2012, 389, Castañeda, 2012, 310; Hughes, 2011, 411), went on to inspire Occupy movements in the Greece, the United States and beyond.

Such events represent the opening phases of what Tarrow (2011) calls a 'cycle' and what Koopmans (2007) calls a 'wave' of contention. For Tarrow, cycles of contention take the form of

parabolas from institutional conflict to enthusiastic peaks of contention, to ultimate collapse, or – in the case of successful revolutions – the consolidation of new regimes. In a simple version of cyclical theory, after gaining national attention and state response, peaks of conflict are marked by the presence of organizers who try to diffuse the insurgencies to broader publics. As participation is channelled into

organization, the parts of the movements that emerge in the early phases of the cycle take on a more political logic, engaging in implicit bargaining with authorities. As the cycle winds down, exhaustion and polarization spread, and the initiative shifts to elites and parties (212).

While it is too soon to know how the anti-austerity cycles of contention will close, the emergence phase of the anti-austerity social movements appears to be over. It may be that the 'peak' of contention has also passed, although the on-going economic crisis and continuing commitments by Greek, Spanish and EU authorities' to austerity politics suggests protest activity will continue for some time. Rather, a phase of uncertainty and contingency appears to have opened up which may lead to a variety of outcomes, ranging from the institutionalization of movement energies into new organisations, radicalisation of at least some movement groups or 'involution' (an exclusive focus on social initiatives) (Kriesi, 1996).

Studying the emergence of social movements and their dynamic quality in this rather indeterminate phase of their development provides many opportunities to examine the Europeanisation of social movements. Drawing on existing studies (Tarrow, 1995; Imig and Tarrow, 2000; Rucht, 2002, Della Porta and Caiani, 2010; Statham and Koopmans, 2010) and assuming Europeanisation is analogous to process of social movement transnationalisation (della Porta and Tarrow, Smith 2002, 2007; Reising, 1999), we understand the Europeanisation of social movements to involve at least one of the following: processes 1) where national social movements reorient, at least some of the time, their strategies to focus on powerful actors outside the state, including the institutions of European Union and other international bodies, other states or non-state actors like transnational corporations; 2) where more or less coherent European level or transnational social movements emerge to protest against similar problems; 3) where the diffusion of issue frames, conceptions of conflict and repertoires of action take place across movements in different countries; 4) where the emergence of feelings of solidarity and identity among social movement participants from different countries can be observed; and 5) where transgovernmental responses emerge to respond to social movement activities with transnational dimensions.

Processes of Europeanisation such as these appear more likely to occur during cycles as contention, as the existing literature on social movements suggests. Tarrow, for instance, argues, that cycles of contention are not only characterised by 'heightened conflict across the social system [and] rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilised to less mobilised sectors' but also involve a

‘rapid pace of innovation in the forms of contention employed, the creation of new or transformed collective action frames, a combination of organised and unorganised participation and sequences of intensified information flow and iteration between challengers and authorities’ (2011, 199). Similarly, for Koopmans, ‘waves’ of contention are firstly, moments of increased mobilisation, characterised by an expansive and ‘radical destabilisation [of the web] of social relations within the polity’ later followed by a closing contractive restabilisation of relations (2007, 37, 41); or in other words, they are moments where a ‘transcendence’ of the boundaries of ‘normal’ institutional arrangements, power relations and cultural idioms’ may occur (2007, 23).

In this paper, we develop a theoretical framework for the empirical study of social movement Europeanisation in the context of the Eurozone crisis. We begin with a brief overview of anti-austerity movements in Spain and Greece. This is followed by an examination of the theoretical themes in existing studies of the Europeanisation and transnationalisation of social movements and the formulation of three hypotheses to guide further research.

### **Anti-austerity social movements in Greece and Spain**

At a very general level, social movements - like interest groups, non-governmental organisations and other similar kinds of collective actors - can be defined in relation to the actions they undertake; that is, social movements pursue ‘politically, socially and economically motivated noninstitutionalised action intended to exert pressure on other social actors, state institutions and policies as well as international and supranational organisations’ (Reising, 1999, 325). Della Porta and Diani’s more clearly specified definition of social movements helps to distinguish social movements from other such civil society organisations. They define social movements as ‘mechanisms through which actors engage in collective action’, participate in ‘conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents’, ‘are linked by dense informal networks’ and ‘share a distinct collective identity’ (della Porta and Diani, 2006, 20). The conflictual element of social movement action refers to social movement actors’ ‘engagement in political and/or cultural conflicts meant to promote or oppose social change’ (ibid, 21). Social movements are thus engaged in an ‘oppositional relationship’ challenging other social and political actors who ‘seek control of the same stake – be it political, economic or cultural power’ and make demands that threaten to damage the interest of those other actors (ibid, 21). In contrast to specific organisations, social movements are characterised by collective action taken through the medium of dense informal networks. They may involve both individual and organised actors who ‘engage in a sustained exchange of resources’

(ibid, 21). Nevertheless, while individual and organised actors maintain their autonomy and independence and must engage in permanent negotiations to achieve goals and movement cohesion, they are bound by a collective identity (ibid, 21). This identity involves a 'sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause', a sense of being inextricably linked to other actors in the social movement, as well as common conceptions and shared narratives (ibid, 21-22). In this sense, social movements can be considered the 'expression of specific values': 'Social movements not only aim at specific policy changes or the replacement of specific political elites, but at broader transformations in social priorities, in the basic mechanisms through which a society operates' (ibid, 66). And finally, while social movements' repertoire of action may be wide, social movement politics nevertheless remains to a large extent 'politics in the streets'.

The first protest activities by civil society in Greece emerged in 2008 when the negative results of mismanaging the national economy first appeared in the news. At this time, protests centered on 'the defence of the insurance, salary and income rights of workers and employees' and expressed discontent with the elite and the government's measures to deal with the economic crisis (Psimitis, 2011:191). However, the new P.A.S.O.K. (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) government which came to power in October 2009 led by Georgios Papandreou brought hope for change and stability. Such hopes did not last long, however. In December 2009, the police killing of the 16-year old Alexis Grigoropoulos triggered large demonstrations against the police and the state all over Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Iraklio, Volo and other big cities). Soon afterwards, in March 2010, the Papandreou government announced harsh austerity measures, including salary and pension reductions, scrapping of bonuses, an increase in the age of retirement, more flexibility for private sector firms to lay people off and an increase in value added tax and indirect taxes. The reforms were the result of the 2010 agreement between Greece and the 'Troika' (Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) granting Greece financial aid of €100 billion to prevent a default on state debts. Among other things, these measures confirmed the inability of the recently elected government to fulfill its pre-electoral commitments to raise living standards (Sotiropoulos, 2012). The next wave of demonstrations in early February 2010 started even before these measures were formally announced and involved very high percentages of participation by the public sector unions. Demonstrations were accompanied by a general strike involving almost the whole public sector.

A new wave of demonstrations broke out following the announcement of more austerity measures on March 5 2010. The two main trade union confederations<sup>1</sup> agreed a 24-hour general strike that included workers from transportation, education and health sectors, journalists, pensioners and other professions (Psimitis 2011). Demonstrations developed into riots and violent clashes with the police, including an attack on Manolis Glezos, an historical figure of the Left well-known in Greece for heroically taking down the Nazi Flag from the Acropolis in May 1941 as a 19 year old. A general strike and further demonstrations were organized again two weeks later and repeated again in April.

These protests were strongly supported by parties of the left, involved more professionals than previous demonstrations and small business owners, such as shopkeepers affected by new taxation rules. Protests soon expanded geographically to include most of the main cities in the country (Patras, Volos, Larissa, Heraklion, Chania, Mitilini, Giannena and Corfu). While unions played an important role, many non-unionised people were also involved in protests (Psimitis, 2011:196). A May 2010 demonstration ended in violence and the death of three employees when extremists threw a Molotov cocktail into a bank.

In fall 2010, the government introduced new measures affecting 'closed' professions such as truck drivers, taxis and pharmacists, professions previously protected by statutes that restricted entry into their ranks. A new wave of unrest followed, with truck and the taxi drivers blocking major highways with vehicles and creating serious problems in the country's transportation networks, highways, ports and city centers. Pharmacists also closed their outlets. Similar acts of civil disobedience occurred in February 2011, when members of the "I won't pay" movement raised the gates at toll posts for several hours across Greece and let motorists go for free. After a price rise, bus passengers followed the 'I won't pay' movement and refused to pay for tickets. A network of these groups soon developed across Greece.

Other types of protest sought to provide direct solutions to emergent problems of hunger, accommodation and health. Parallel events were organized by various independent social groups (in the form of charities) but also by the church and professionals such as doctors. They often had a double character. On the one hand, they aimed to demonstrate contention and on the other, sought

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<sup>1</sup> The two main trade Unions are for the private sector (GGCL, Greek General Confederation of Labour) and the public sector (ADEDY, Advanced Administration of Civil Servants Unions)

to provide help for people in need. Examples of such events are the ‘supermarkets’ movements’ where groups of people took food from big grocery stores and then gave it to people in the streets; the ‘potato movement<sup>2</sup>’ ( τ ο κ ί ν η μ α τ η ς π α τ ά τ α ς ), ‘social grocery’ ( τ ο κ ο ι ν ω ν ι κ ό π α ν τ ω π ο λ ε ί ο ) and other movements that provided free food to people who could not afford it.

In May-June 2011, new austerity measures were announced which again provoked the mobilization of the civil society and triggered more street protests. These protests are often referred to as the Greek ‘*indignados*’ or ‘outraged citizens’ ( α γ α ν α κ τ η σ μ ε ν ο ι π ο λ ι τ ε ς ), in a clear reference to the example of the Spanish movement. Demonstrations were organized from the largest square in Athens, and debates were initiated to involve people passing by. Like their Spanish counterpart (see below) they were mostly initiated through Facebook (the period was also called the ‘May of Facebook’). More incidents of violence against public buildings, and physical and verbal attacks against public figures (i.e. the President and the chair of the Parliament) took place on various occasions, especially in the area in front of the Parliament (Psimitis, 2011, 2011:194).

In Spain, mobilisation against austerity crystallised around the *indignados* (the outraged) movement, also known as 15M, signifying the date of the first mobilisation on 15 May 2011. On this date tens of thousands of citizens joined demonstrations around the country in protest at Spanish government and EU responses to the global financial crisis, especially cuts in education, welfare and social problems and expressing frustration at their exclusion from an elitist political system dominated by the two main centre left and centre right parties, international organisations and financial institutions (Castañeda, 2012, 310; Hughes, 2011, 408; Hughes, 2001, 409). After the 15 May protests, many stayed on and occupied public squares around the country for a few weeks, with the biggest demonstrations in the *Puerta del Sol* in central Madrid and *Plaza Catalunya* in Barcelona.

The original 15M demonstrations were the initiative of a network of online activists, soon channelled through the platform *Democracia Real Ya*. This platform soon attracted the support of more than 200 organisations, including ‘humanists, NGOs, ecologists, neighbourhood associations,

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<sup>2</sup> They call themselves a grass roots socio/agriculture movement. The potato movement initiated in February 2012 by the Pieria Prefecture Voluntary Action, North Greece (direct selling of potatoes from the farmers to consumers, cutting down the cost of middlemen – brokers who made high profits (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17369989>)). The movement expanded in other agricultural product such as oil and meet.

youth groups, students and teachers' organisations, Facebook groups, bloggers, mortgage defaulters, the unemployed, and solidarity groups' (Hughes, 2011, 408). Protestors also used social networking sites such as Twitter and You Tube to organise more spontaneous mobilisations, such as protests to prevent forceful removal of activists occupying *Puerta del Sol* in Madrid and elsewhere (Hughes, 2011, 408).

The 15M mobilisations did not just mobilise 'the usual suspects'. It mobilised a new generation of citizens, many of whom had not been involved in previous social movement mobilisation (Fuster Morell, 2012, 386; Castañeda, 2012, 310). A core component of the movement were college educated youths frustrated because they could not find jobs with sufficient pay to cover basic living expenses (Castañeda, 2012, 309) In contrast to Greek protests, where political parties and trade unions were key players, observers often note that many participants eschewed party political or trade union affiliations (Hughes, 2011, 411; Castañeda, 2012, 310). 15M defined itself as a 'grassroots, non-party, non-violent citizen's movement' and 'excludes the direct participation of political parties' (Hughes, 2011, 411). Nevertheless the movement also built on the experience of previous movements, including the housing movement, the 'free culture' movement which mobilised, among other things, against the 2011 Ley Sinde tightening controls against internet piracy; and the global justice movement in Spain (Fuster Morell, 2012, 386-9; Charnock, Purcell and Ribera-Fumaz, 2011, 4). The 15M movement enjoyed wide popular support (Fuster Morell, 2012; Casquete, 2011, 20): A metroscopia survey of June 2011, showed 84 respondents believed the movement tackled problems directly relevant to citizens and had good reasons to mobilise (Fuster Morell, 2012).

The 15M movement also demonstrated a strong preference for direct democracy. In addition to marches, prolonged occupations and internet-based media campaigns, protestors also established fora for public deliberation in committees and assemblies. Camps set up in the occupied squares of various cities sought to provide opportunities for ordinary citizens to gain a voice in debates about important issues of the day (Hughes, 2011, 412; Abellán et al, 2012, 325; Errejón, 2011, 121): As Castañeda notes in relation to camps in Barcelona:

Once the Plaza Cataluña was 'occupied' a small semi-autonomous town was born within it...During the day, different committees met and discussed specific topics regarding education, health, migration, national finances, proposals for alternative national budgets, movement fundraising and accounting, internal security and so on. Different proposals were

written carefully and formally, uploaded to the Internet, printed and distributed among the occupiers, who would later be asked to debate and vote on them. Walking through the camp, one would see single and collective tents as well as booths hosting commissions, libraries and books sales. Assemblies were held at advertised times and days; in them people voted on proposals elaborated by the different commissions and on whether to continue living in the plaza or not. Important decisions were taken by consensus in General Assemblies. Members were vocal about their rejection of parliamentary indirect democracy and asked for the concerns of average citizens to be taken into account as much as those of large financial interests' (2012, 312)

A similar process took place in Madrid, where decisions from regional assemblies were emailed to be incorporated into statements of shared national goals (Hughes, 2011, 412).

The movement organised subsequent actions around Spain, including marches against unemployment, austerity cuts and the mainstream political parties, and a number of demonstrations outside national and regional parliaments (Carnock et al, 2011, 4; Hughes, 2011, 411 ). The *indignados* also backed action by other groups, such as the general strike organised by trade unions on 29 March 2012 (Castañeda, 2012, 319). After the camps were disbanded, movement activities tended to become decentralised, moving to local neighbourhoods and focusing more on local demands (Abellán et al, 2012, 322). For instance, as a response to an eviction crisis - which saw around 58,250 evictions of people unable to pay mortgages in 2011 alone - activists occupied unused housing in around a dozen Spanish cities, spearheaded by the fifty day occupation of a large hotel in central Madrid in October 2011 (Abellán et al, 2012, 321).

Cleavages based on attitudes to violence, need for radical reform and the regional dimension also became apparent over time. Although the initial epicentre of the M15 movement was the *Puerta del Sol* in Madrid, the movement had significant regional dimensions (Hughes, 2011, 411). Many parallel and autonomous protest actions were organised in other major Spanish towns and cities. Furthermore, as Hughes notes, the Catalan movement was more confrontational than those in many other parts of Spain, seeing episodes where there were violent confrontations between police and protestors, blocking entry to the Catalan parliament and spraying paint at parliamentary representatives (Hughes, 2011, 411). These events reflected broader divisions in the movement, including an 'ideological clash between reformists, who limit their demands to changes to the electoral law and greater transparency in politics, and groups advocating a radical, anti-system

direction and more confrontational forms of protest' (Hughes, 2011, 413, see also Castañeda, 2012, 319, Casquete, 2011, 19 ).

### **The Europeanisation of Social Movements**

Europeanization has been defined in various ways. Earlier conceptions of Europeanisation emphasised historical processes by which European cultural and social norms have been exported abroad or defused on a cross national basis (see Featherstone, 2003, 6 and Olsen, 2002). Others focused on political, legal and social institution-building at the EU level, which 'formalize interactions among actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules' (Risse, Cowles and Caporaso, 2001, 3). However, the mainstream of contemporary Europeanization research conceives their dependent variable as the domestic impact of the European Union, or the consequences of European integration for the economies, societies and political systems of the EU for member states. Within this mainstream, a prominent group of scholars conceive of Europeanisation principally in terms of 'adaptation' to the EU, seeing pressures emanating from the 'goodness of fit' between EU and member states as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for Europeanisation and part of an explanation for variation in state responses to the EU (Börzel and Risse, 2003; Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002; Ladrech 2010). A definition developed by Claudio Radaelli encapsulates the mainstream orientation of the European research agenda, including those embracing an 'adaptation' conceptions of Europeanisation and those that critique it, and is adopted throughout this paper. According to Radaelli, Europeanisation involves:

'Processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic institutions, identities, political structures, and public policies (2003, 30).

The results of over a decade of critiques, methodological soul-searching and the production of some innovative empirical research suggests it is no longer valid to reject the Europeanization research as a fad or passing fashion (Lynggard, 2011; Exadaktylos and Radaelli, 2012; Graziano and Vink, 2008, Ladrech 2010).

An interest in the possible Europeanisation of social movements emerged in the mid-1990s as scholars observed EU-oriented grass roots mobilisation by established movements such as the environmental movement and more spontaneous grass roots mobilisations on issues ranging from EU fishing rules, agricultural subsidies, unemployment in the EU, plant closures in transnational companies (Tarrow, 1995, Imig and Tarrow, 2000, Rucht, 2002, Marks and McAdam, 1996). It also grew out of work by social movement scholars on the internationalisation of protest in the context of globalisation (Tarrow, 1995, p 233-4, Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005, Reising, 1999: Smith, 2002 and 2007).

One of the distinctive characteristics of research on the Europeanisation of social movements is its 'bottom up' research design. Indeed, Della Porta and Caiani, explicitly state that their research examines 'Europeanisation from below', defined as 'Europeanization of, and by, civil society' (2009, 25). The distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches has long been considered significant from a methodological perspective (Lyngaard, 2011; Radaelli, 2004). Top-down studies address the impact of EU integration on the domestic level and usually concentrate on how specific regulatory frameworks trigger change at the domestic level. On the other hand, bottom-up studies examine how domestic agents may influence EU institutions or policies (Lyngaard 2011). More explicitly, a bottom-up Europeanisation research designs starts from the domestic level, the bottom, and examines actors, ideas, rules and styles and how they change through time. In case of change, causes that trigger this change are investigated along with where they come from, whether domestic, EU or the global levels. Exadaktylos and Radaelli (2009:510) suggest that 'in order to assess the contribution of the EU variables, the researcher goes 'up' – controlling temporal causal sequences from the domestic level, where the major change emerges empirically, to the EU'. In the case of social movements, applying the bottom up approach is useful in order to understand the extent to which change in the social movements through time was a response to European integration, or domestic changes in actors' constellations, ideas, rules and practices.

Research on the Europeanization of social movements addresses broader questions about the construction of a European polity and public sphere, the quality of democratic politics and the restructuring of political contention to encompass not just domestic but also European-level conflicts and collective action. Tarrow (1995) analyses social movements in the EU from the perspective of 'contentious politics' and an interest in the 'Europeanisation of conflict' (1995, 224).

Linked to the broader question of whether a European polity is emerging, Tarrow argues that it is necessary for a polity to possess established 'routines and well understood processes and repertoires of political conflict both within and outside of institutions' (Tarrow, 1995, 223). In a process made possible by economic integration and the creation of a new EU level political authority, the 'Europeanisation of conflict' could be observed if 'social movements shift to transnational strategies' and falsified if their strategies focus on influencing EU policies by targeting domestic authorities (Tarrow, 1995, 233).

More recent scholarship focuses on the contribution social movements may make to the construction of a European public sphere, understood as the emergence of a pan European arena where citizens can openly, publically, and on the basis of equality, debate their views on public policy with the involvement of civil society, including interest groups, non-governmental organisations and social movements (Habermas, 2001, 103). Della Porta and Ciani (2010) argue that social movements can play a similar role in the construction of a European public sphere as they did in the realm of the nation state (2009, 12-13). Social movements may do so through their critique of the public decisions of elected representatives and increasing the transparency and accountability of European governance, thereby contributing to the construction of a critical public sphere (ibid, 13). Moreover, social movements may contribute to the development of a more coherent European 'demos' and or imagined sense of territorial community (ibid, 20) through construction of discourses about Europe and its future, and by helping to build collective European identities (ibid, 23).

Similarly, Koopmans, Statham (2010) and their collaborators examine social movements as part of the study of the Europeanization of communication, or the impact of European integration on the 'media and political systems that supply information about European actors, policies and issues to general publics' (3). As the authors contend, such processes are a central component of 'Europe's on-going search for a public' and the links they provide between polities and citizens are part of what a 'politically mature Europe' with a 'Europe-wide public discourse of some sort' involves (ibid, 4). Social movements may be a source of information on citizen views on public policy issues in a Europeanised public sphere. However, a transformation in the media systems supplying political information may affect social movements because 'the more the European-level of decision-making becomes visible and the more it includes non-state voices, the more it is likely to

be subject to dynamics of contestation, leading to a politicization carried by party competition and challenges by civil society actors' (ibid, 5).

In order to address the question of whether the emergence of new anti-austerity movements like those in Greece and Spain contribute to the emergence of a more coherent public sphere of deliberation in the EU, we develop a theoretical framework and hypotheses for further examination in empirical research. More specifically, we address the question of how to go about an empirical investigation on the extent to which the following processes can be observed in anti-austerity social movement practices in the two countries. Existing studies suggest that the Europeanisation of social movements can be observed when one or other of the following takes place:

- 1) where national social movements reorient, at least some of the time, their strategies to focus on powerholders outside the state, including the institutions of European Union and other international bodies, other states or non-state actors like transnational corporations
- 2) where more or less coherent European level or transnational social movements emerge to protest against similar problems;
- 3) where the diffusion of issue frames, conceptions of conflict and repertoires of action take place across movements in different European countries;
- 4) where the emergence of feelings of solidarity and identity among social movement participants from different countries can be observed; and
- 5) where transgovernmental responses emerge to respond to social movement activities with transnational dimensions.

In this paper, we will focus attention on Europeanisation of social movement strategies (items 1 and 2), process of transnational diffusion (item 3) and processes of identity formation (item 4).

### ***The Europeanisation of social movement strategies***

A major preoccupation of the literature on the Europeanisation of social movements hitherto has been with movement strategy. More specifically, researchers have been particularly interested in the extent to which the gradual accumulation of decision making authority at the EU level has been accompanied by changes in social movements mobilisation from that principally involving fellow nationals and focused on state actors, on the one hand, to also involve and target actors and

audiences from other states and the EU (see for example, Tarrow, 1995; Imig and Tarrow, 2000; Rucht, 2002, Della Porta and Ciani, 2010; Statham and Koopmans, 2010).

As Arampatzi and Nicholls (2012) point out, mobilization at the local level is often the starting for transnational mobilisation. This initial stage of local activism can be followed by the emergence of a network of activists mobilizing on similar issues in other localities. Once they develop at the local level, many of these groups, movements and clusters move to the national – and possibly transnational - levels through informal interactions within the network. This is referred to as the phenomenon of ‘scalar compression’ (Arampatzi and Nicholls 2012:2604). Movement actors taking on the role of ‘brokers’ may be crucial in this process. They usually belong to various groups at different territorial levels simultaneously and as such not only provide many points of contact but gain experience of different action repertoires and access to diverse discourses.

Existing studies have helpfully distinguished between ‘non-Europeanised’ grass roots collective action which does not address EU issues at all and various forms of Europeanised social movement action. Imig and Tarrow (2000, 78) distinguish between four types of European protests: 1. *Typical Domestic Protests* ‘in which national actors target domestic opponents’, effectively non-Europeanisation. 2. *Co-ordinated Domestic Protest*, involves a transnational coalition of actors against a domestic political target (such as a national government) 3. *Domestication of conflict*, occurs when ‘national actors protest at home against policies of the EU’. 4. *Transnational contention*, in which ‘transnational coalitions of actors target the EU or other supranational or transnational actors in response to EU policies’. This last category is subdivided into three further categories (Imig and Tarrow, 2000. 86-7): a. *International Cooperation*, where ‘actors from various countries join together in linked and coordinated protest campaigns in each national setting against a shared antagonist’ b. *International Conflict*, where ‘protesters have targeted, rather than joining with, their competitors from other nations’; and c. *Collective European Protests*, which are ‘major protest events [which] draw the participation of citizens from across the EU’.

Della Porta and Caiani’s (2009) conceptualisation of social movement Europeanisation builds on and extends Imig and Tarrow’s early approach. Firstly, Della Porta and Caiani identify a ‘*nation state*’ model of Europeanisation, where European actors emerge to challenge decision-makers in a European polity in parallel to mobilization by strictly national actors mobilising only at the national level (2009, 13). More variegated strategies where social movements simultaneously address various territorial levels can take different forms. They may take a *domestication* path, which

follows the lines of Imig and Tarrow's (2000) conception cited above, whereby social movements only mobilise at the national level in order to pressurise national governments in the hope that government representatives will negotiate on their behalf in EU bodies (Della Porta and Caiani, 2009, 14). A second type of variegated strategy involves *externalization*, where national actors 'target the EU in an attempt to put pressure on their own governments', a strategy which may be particularly attractive to actors who feel marginalised in domestic politics (Della Porta and Caiani, 2009, 15). And finally, *European social movements* may emerge, involving 'loose networks of national (and even local) and transnational groups' which simultaneously address claims to various polities, including domestic and European level decision-makers (ibid, 16).

Patterns of mobilisation identified by Imig and Tarrow, Della Porta and Caiani need not be limited to contention arising in EU politics. For instance, Della Porta and Tarrow employ the concepts of *domestication*, *externalization* and *transnational collective action* (defined as coordinated international campaigns by networks of activists mobilising against international actors, other states or international institutions) in work on transnational movements active on issues of global reach (2005, 3-7).

While these typologies overlap to a significant extent, they can be combined and extended to produce a more exhaustive list of seven possible Europeanisation outcomes that vary along three dimensions: 1) whether *targets* of social movement mobilisations are principally domestic authorities, European authorities or both; 2) whether movement *participants* take action predominantly alongside fellow domestic actors, fellow European actors or both; 3) whether *issues* provoking mobilisation are conceived as predominantly domestic or predominantly European or a combination of both. These can be ranked by the degree of Europeanisation. *Non Europeanisation* occurs when protests involve predominantly domestic participants and targets, and issues are framed as domestic. *Low Europeanisation* occurs when domestic participants target a domestic actor at home or abroad on an issue predominantly framed as domestic or as one framed as both domestic and European. *Moderate Europeanisation* involves a higher degree of Europeanisation in terms of participants, targets and issue framing, but will show Europeanisation across two rather than all three dimensions. *High Europeanisation* involves the Europeanisation of participation and issues, but will only constitute a complete Europeanisation of participants, targets and issues in the 'EU federation model' (formerly Della Porta and Caiani's *nation state model*), where European movements deal exclusively with EU issues.

**Table 1. Degrees of social movement Europeanisation**

<b>Non-Europeanisation</b>
<i>Domestic Protests</i> – national actors target domestic opponents on issues framed as domestic
<b>Low Europeanisation</b>
<i>International Conflict</i> – national protesters target their competitors from other countries on an issue predominantly framed as domestic
<i>Domestication of conflict</i> - national actors protest at home against policies of the EU conceived as both a domestic and European issue.
<b>Moderate Europeanisation</b>
<i>Externalization</i> - where national actors target the EU in pursuit of domestic change on an issue conceived as both a domestic and European issue.
<i>Co-ordinated Domestic Protest</i> - a transnational coalition of actors mobilise against a domestic political target on an issue framed as European
<b>High Europeanisation</b>
<i>European social movements</i> emerge involving loose networks of national and transnational groups which simultaneously address claims to various polities, including domestic and European level decision-makers on issues conceived as both a domestic and European issue.
<i>International Cooperation</i> -actors from various countries join together in linked and coordinated protest campaigns in each national setting against a shared antagonist on an issue conceived to be a predominantly European issue
<i>EU federal model (Della Porta and Caiani's nation-state model)</i> European actors emerge to challenge decision-makers in a European polity on European issues, in parallel to mobilization by strictly national actors mobilising only at the national level on issues conceived as predominantly domestic issues.

Empirical investigations on the degree of the Europeanisation of social movement strategies tend to confirm low Europeanisation. In 1995, Tarrow argued that ‘there is evidence of increasing magnitude, simultaneity and coordination over the past 30 years in patterns of contentious collective action among European social movements’, but that ‘coordinated and sustained transnational protest against European institutions is still notable by its rarity’ (236-8). In other words, the EU had not become ‘a fulcrum for movement organisations as the national state did before it’ (1995, 238). In later, more systematic work, Tarrow and Imig (2000) reached similar conclusions about limited transnational social movement mobilisation but their research revealed the complementary process

of domestication or ‘the mounting of claims triggered by EU decisions within national or subnational politics’ (77). Protest event analysis surveying social movement actions in 12 member states between 1984 and 1998 showed ‘most people, for most issues, continue to protest against national or subnational targets about domestic issues’ (Imig and Tarrow, 2000, 84). Their data also suggests that while ‘Europeans are increasingly targeting the EU, its agents or its policies when they go to the streets’, the vast majority of protest against the EU took place within the domestic political sphere (87%, *domestication*) and rather than transnationally (17%, *collective European protest*). According to the authors, the predominance of the ‘domestication’ of EU conflict was due to the primacy of national courts and administrations in the implementation of the policies decided in Brussels; advantages for claimants, who could ‘continue to exploit the opportunities and resources that national social movements have created’; and advantages for national governments who could ‘offer the EU as the source of citizens’ grievances’ (Imig and Tarrow, 2000, 79).

More recent research, employing different methods – cross-national semi-structured interviews with social movement organisations (and other domestic and supranational actors) from seven countries – drew similar conclusions (Koopmans, Erbe, and Meyer, 2010).<sup>1</sup> The strategic repertoire of national political actors, including both ‘inside’ strategies addressing public administrations, parliamentarians and the courts, and ‘public-related strategies’ focusing on the media, public information campaigns and protest, are still primarily focused on the national level (234). Nevertheless, the authors argued that the European level attracts a ‘non-negligible range of activities on the part of actors’ (ibid, 234, 242) and ‘actors from the member states intervene in many [different] ways to influence the policy-making process at the EU level’ (ibid, 234, 243). Commenting on variation in patterns of social movement variation among the member states, the authors argue that the ‘relative neglect of both public-oriented as well as inside-oriented actions by domestic political actors at the EU level has been shown to be related to variations in institutionalised opportunities (EU membership, position of policy domain in the pillar structure, and phase of the decision-making process in a given domain) and endowment of resources (power and access at the domestic level) (ibid, 243).

Della Porta and Caini’s study, compiled from the same data set as that used by Koopmans, Erbe, and Meyer, 2010, also supports the conclusion of ‘low Europeanisation’ of the domestic public sphere (2009, 79). Using political claim analysis, which examines individual political claims made in newspapers, the authors found that even when issues are framed with specific reference to

Europe, social movements (considered together with non-governmental organisations) predominantly adopted a *domestication* strategy (51.7% of the sample) (2009, 47-54). Their research also showed that *externalization* strategies, where European actors are called on by national actors to intervene in national politics, were almost as common (37.7% of the sample). Cases of mobilisation where social movements and non-governmental organisations from different member states protested together against EU targets were less common occurring in relation to around 8% of sampled claims where issues were framed with reference to Europe. Rarest (2.6% of the sample) were instances of transnational pressure where European actors targeted national authorities. However, Della Porta and Caiani also show that social movements and non-governmental organisations were less likely to present Europeanised claims than other kinds of political actors analysed in the study and that claims were likely to be framed with specific reference to Europe less than 10% of the time (2009, 50). While most social movement activity remains focused on the national arena and on national issues, Della Porta and Caiani nevertheless observe ‘a significant increase in the percentage of claims from civil society organisations in addressing EU institutions as targets and in the framing of issues in a European perspective’ (ibid, 55, 80)

While this research provides compelling evidence confirming a relatively low level of Europeanisation, the data employed to draw such a conclusion is now fairly dated. Imig and Tarrow’s research examined data from 1984 to 1988 while Koopmans *et al* and Della Porta and Caiani use data from 1990, 1995 and 2002-3 (Koopmans and Statham, 2010, 48). This was well before the Eurozone crisis, which we have seen provoked major mobilisations against government austerity responses. While we would not expect a wholesale reorientation in the patterns of social movement mobilisation, it is reasonable to expect a higher degree of Europeanisation for the years immediately following 2010. This is due to the leading role played, alongside national authorities and international bodies like the International Monetary Fund, by EU institutions like the Commission, European Central Bank, the Eurogroup and the European Council in the management and politics of the conflict. A higher degree of Europeanisation is also expected to follow from the high profile role played by European leaders such as the German Chancellor and French presidents. These considerations generate the hypothesis that:

*H1: The degree of Europeanisation of social movement mobilisation will be higher in the context of the Eurozone crisis than in previous periods.*

### *Europeanisation of social movement issue frames and repertoire of action*

A second, but far less prominent, theme in the literature on the Europeanisation of social movements concerns the diffusion of issue frames, conceptions of conflict and repertoires of action across movements in different countries. A social movement's repertoire of action, or 'the set of means [a group] has for making claims' (Tilly 1986, 2) are not just strategic instruments for pursuing movement goals; they also 'belong to, and represent, a movement culture, and are therefore linked to the activists' values' (della Porta and Diani, 2006, 181).

The existence of transnational elements in social movement practices is not new. While modern social movements emerged around the consolidation of the nation state (Tilly 1986, Tarrow, 2011) transnational elements have long been evident in the emergence of similar movements in different states – for example workers, womens', students, anti-war, environmental - and the diffusion of forms of organisations and repertoire's of action (Tarrow, 1995, 236, Della Porta and Diani, 2006, 186). As Della Porta and Diania point out, for instance,

Nonviolent direct action was imported to Martin Luther King's America from Gandhi's India. The student movement brought sit ins across the ocean to Europe...In the peace movement dozens of camps sprung up around nuclear missile bases after the initial example of Greenham common (2006, 183).

Existing studies of anti-austerity social movements Spain provide more contemporary examples of transnational diffusion, even if this theme is not posed as a central research question in that research. For example, many studies on the Spanish 15M movement emphasise the importance of inspirations from other movements abroad particularly the Arab Spring, but also protest movements in Iceland, Greece and Latin America (Fuster Morrell, 2012, 389, Castañeda, 2012, 310; Hughes, 2011, 411). The 15M itself appears to have had an international resonance, insofar as 'solidarity protests [have broken out]around the world, with some, such as Greece, even styling themselves as *indignados* and chanting slogans in Spanish in their own protests' (Hughes, 2011, 413; see also Psimitis, 2011, 194). Casquete argues that M15 served as an inspiration for similar mobilisations in places like Israel, Chile or Brazil (2011, 25). The movement appears to have been shaped by at least some common intellectual influences. As Castañeda notes, use of the word *Indignados* was a reference to the activist manifesto of Stéphane Hessel titled *Inignez-vous!* 'which calls on

contemporary youth to search for injustices around them, get outraged and move into action' (2012, 310, see also Hughes, 2011, 410)

There is also evidence suggesting that links between the 15M movement and similar movements in other countries may have affected agendas, tactics, action repertoires and contentious performances (Castañeda, 2012, 314; Fuster Morrell, 2012, 389; Hughes, 2011, 316). Castañeda, for instance, notes that many participants in the 15M movement came from Argentina, Chile, Italy and Greece. More specifically, as

The South American contingent, for example, brought to the movement the practice of *Cacerolazos*, creating loud sounds by having many people hit pots and pans with utensils at the same time. This contentious performance was employed in Chile against Pinochet and in Argentina following the economic crisis of 2001, as well as in Iceland in 2008. At certain times of day, one could suddenly hear pots being struck in the dense residential neighbourhoods through Barcelona. This way people who were not occupying the plaza were still demonstrating their support and solidarity from their own kitchen windows (Castañeda 2012, 316)

Hughes notes another example of transnational diffusion, namely the 'horizontal principle', which he argued figured prominently in the 2002-4 Argentine protests against government imposed austerity, whereby decisions are reached collectively through participation and the free exchange of information in an atmosphere of respect for diversity and inclusivity (2011, 411)

An interest in contemporary transnational processes of diffusion can be found in many other studies. Reising identifies various mechanisms of transnational diffusion, including information through the mass media, learning, demonstration effects, travel of activists, the group organisation and social integration and the strength of social networks (Reising, 1999, 323)

For their part Della Porta and Tarrow consider diffusion – defined as the spread of movement ideas, practices and frames from one country to another - as one of three main processes of social movement transnationalisation (2005, 3).. Interestingly, Della Porta and Tarrow argue that processes of transnational diffusion – defined as the spread of movement ideas, practise and frames from one country to another - has contributed to the development of a qualitatively different repertoire of contention among groups involved in the global justice movement (2005, 12). After years of using more moderate tactics, they argue, social movements display a new propensity for

taking people to the streets, replacing more moderate and contained strategies with more direct confrontation, increasingly disruptive protests and civil disobedience. Repertoires of action tend to combine educational campaigns, comic presentations and attention to the mass media, stressing not only power in numbers but also the importance of the presentation and diffusion of the message. They also observed a tendency for social movements to develop looser organisational structures, rather than institutionalised and bureaucratic ones, when bringing issues to the public sphere. And finally they note a reorientation of campaigns from 'privileged specialisation' to more general issues (ibid, 12).

As Arampatzi and Nicholls (2012) argue, participation in protest and other expressions of grievances provides many opportunities for transnational learning. Through participation in contentious actions individuals become political agents. They debate, and through deliberation, may learn from each other and develop trust, build on collective skills, expand their knowledge on governance, regulatory frameworks and how to develop practices and strategies of exerting pressure on politicians (ibid, 2601). Through this process, the activists may also learn how to communicate and formulate messages that represent the gradual development of a common collective identity but also are used to approach and attract support in the public sphere. They also learn how to identify and develop contacts with other groups either on specific or general issues of common interest, collaborate and expand their repertoires of protest, promote common claims and become more effective in their mobilization practices.

Almost all of those working on transnational movements emphasise the importance of technological innovation for transnational diffusion (for example, Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005, 3; Arampatzi and Nicholls, 2012, 2604), emphasise the importance of technological innovation for transnational diffusion. This has also been so in commentaries on the occupy movement and anti-austerity protests (for example, Fuster Morell, 2012; Hughes, 2011). However, many argue that information technology served as more than an organisational tool. Hughes, for example, argues that the Spanish *Plataforma Democracia Real Ya* website 'played a key role in framing the 15 May action and developing a sense of common identity, solidarity and purpose amongst the participating groups' (Hughes, 2011, 409). In addition to issuing the call for the 15 May demonstration, the website sought to identify the values of the movement and to 'frame the action by identifying broad constituencies of support (the unemployed, low-waged, sub-contracted, precarious and young people), the objects of discontent, a common agenda and conditions of participation such as the

platform's commitment to non-violence and opposition to racism, homophobia and xenophobia' (Hughes, 2011, 409). As Fuster Morell has argued, an 'informational ecosystem' was important for the 'movements communication strategy for occupying the public space, not only through the mass media but also by attempting to become a trending topic on Twitter, reducing dependence on intermediaries or traditional media actors' (2012, 391). Tsaliki, in her work on Greece, suggests that alternative spaces of online media provide a different form of active citizenship that could ideally lead towards a revised and reinvigorated Greek civil society' (2010:152). Such processes may also be occurring between activists communicating through new media but operating in different states.

However, it is important to be aware of obstacles to the transnational diffusion of ideas, strategies and norms and the adaptation of established repertoires of action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, 181). Choice of strategy may depend on available material resources, but such choices are also social processes involving the mobilisation and reproduction of techniques and rituals institutionalised in distinctive national settings or movement milieu (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, 181-3). Choice of strategy involves a 'critical learning process' where protesters experiment with new techniques Tilly, 1986, 7 which they continue to use if considered effective or 'particularly well adapted to a movement's context or culture' (Koopmans 2004, 26). Furthermore, Della Porta and Diani argue that the diffusion of ideas, strategies and repertoires may depend on whether or not countries are geographically proximate, whether movements from different countries have a history of interaction; whether there is a basis for cultural understanding reflected in similar social and political structures; and the status of 'transmitting' countries (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, 187). The the diffusion of ideas may take a mediated form, through television, newspapers and written documents or involve direct interaction between participants in different movements. Direct interaction between movement participants in geographical proximity, in countries with a history of movement interaction and structural similarities 'all tend to produce language and norms which facilitate direct contacts between the activists of parallel movements' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, 187).

These observations generate the following hypothesis:

*H2: Technological innovations, the relative geographical proximity of European states and their shared experiences of EU citizenship over the longer term and of EU-sponsored austerity in the shorter term will facilitate the diffusion of issue frames, conceptions of conflict and repertoires of*

*action among actors from EU states to a greater extent than among those from EU and non-EU states.*

### ***Europeanisation and identities***

Della Porta and Diani (2006) argue that identity in social movements is developed and sustained through various processes relating to a) models of behaviour, b) symbolically significant objects, c) narratives and d) rituals. Distinctive models of behaviour associated with a social movement may 'define in various ways the specificity of its activists in relation to "ordinary people" or their adversaries' insofar as 'adopting certain styles of behaviour or certain rituals [permit] movement militants [to] directly express their difference' (ibid, 108). Movement identities may also be associated with a series of objects, which serve as 'identifiers which enable supporters of a particular cause to be instantly recognisable'. Models of behaviour and symbolically significant objects may merge into narratives 'which circulate among members of the movement, reflecting their vision of the world and reinforcing solidarity' (ibid, 109). And finally, models of behaviour, objects and narratives are often incorporated into specific rituals, which 'represent forms of symbolic expression by which communications concerning social relationships are passed on, in stylized and dramatized ways' (ibid, 110).

In their 2000 seminal article, Imig and Tarrow argue that one of the main the obstacles to transnational protests was the absence of common identities, a sense of solidarity and 'pre-existing social networks in which relations of trust, reciprocity and cultural learning are stored' (79-80). This was because 'social networks provide the interpersonal trust, the collective identities and the social communication of opportunities that galvanise individuals into collective action and coordinate their actions against significant others in a social movement' (Imig and Tarrow, 2000, 80).

However, Della Porta and Caini (2009) provide evidence to suggest that some sense of collective identity, social networks of trust, reciprocity and learning may have already taken root among participants in certain joint European protests centred on issues not dissimilar to those at the centre of anti-austerity protests. In their study of European Social Forums and EU counter summits, Della Porta and Caini (2009) address the role of social movements in the construction of collective European identities through discourse and processes of communication. The authors argue that the European arena offers social movements 'opportunities to meet, build organisational networks, coordinate activity, and construct supranational discourses' and that 'growing interaction facilitates

the development of common, more or less, European identity' (ibid, 96). Social movements and non-governmental organisations tended to privilege ties with similar civil society organisations rather than those with institutional actors or interest groups (ibid, 73) and this tight network of links also 'favours the emergence of shared goals and collective identities on European issues' (ibid, 80). Social movement organisations and non-governmental organisations are not only more critical towards the EU (ibid, 59) than other groups in their country, they are also more likely to frame Europe in their claims in identity terms by emphasising 'non-material aspects of the integration process, referring to an identity discourse (such as references to Europe as a community of values) and constitutional principles (especially democracy)' (ibid, 80).

In contrast to much of the literature on European identity, which tends to equate identification with positive assessments of European integration, the authors argue that social movements and non-governmental organisations develop the foundations of a common identity through critique of contemporary institutions and the desire to construct an alternative Europe. Interview data showed that the emerging critique was not about 'too much Europe', but 'not enough social Europe' (ibid, 119): More specifically:

Complaints from social movement organisations and non-governmental organisations specifically address the prevalence of neo-liberal policies and weak solidarity policies. Even while expressing their support for European citizenship, they criticise European institutions' policy choices, seen as designed to protect the market rather than citizens. Criticisms of EU policies is severe, addressing in particular what is perceived as scarce attention to positive integration, especially in terms of social rights (ibid, 119, 134).

They also expressed criticisms of the perceived democratic deficit of the EU, focusing on the limited powers of the European Parliament, lack of transparency, distance from civil society and accessibility from citizens (ibid, 123). Furthermore, most civil society groups interviewed expressed support for a 'different Europe' built from below by a 'European movement' (ibid, 123).

The authors provide evidence showing that activists began to identify themselves as part of a European or even a global subjects during transnational campaigns and came to recognise similarities across countries (165). Indeed representatives of civil society organisations tend to see themselves as 'European entrepreneurs' and saw protest campaigns as 'occasions to build European

identity' (ibid, 124). European Social Forums aspired to provide 'spaces for exchange of knowledge and ideas' (ibid, 164) and demonstrated normative commitments to 'openness towards others' (ibid, 165), with assemblies developing into '(more or less) formalized and ritualised spaces of encounter and debate' (ibid, 165). The authors also argue that there was a strong 'emotional dimension' to European social forums which provided opportunities for the development of affective ties, through 'experiencing a sense of fellowship through sharing elements of everyday life such as food and entertainment and for collectively tackling practical and political problems' (ibid, 159). This contributed to the formation of both formal and informal friendships, and relationships of 'trust and solidarity' that endured after protests (ibid, 160).

Existing research suggests that the existence of pre-existing networks, affective ties and identities among European activists provide a resource which makes transnational mobilisation in the face of EU austerity programmes more likely. It leads to the following hypothesis:

*H3: Collaboration among anti-austerity social movement from different countries will built upon and strengthen pre-existing networks, affective ties and collective European identities*

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<sup>i</sup> The data was collected as part of the Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in Europe project, which covered supranational actors at the EU level and national actors from six different EU countries (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and one no-EU member state (Switzerland) (see Koopmans and Statham, 2010)