

How Has the Phenomenon of Revolutionary  
Groups Been Resilient in Greece? A Relational  
Study of Two Contentious Episodes (1965 – 2002)

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If life is a journey, then PhD is a remote island in a wild ocean.

It is a solitary trip in yourself and the great world that stands beside you ready to be discovered.

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## *Abstract*

This thesis addresses a major issue in contentious politics. Why are revolutionary groups resilient in Greece? Greece has experienced regular instances of political violence in the past decades – from low-level phenomena, such as vandalisms, riots and clashes with the police, to high-level occurrences, such as the operation of clandestine groups. Particularly critical has been the rise of a series of revolutionary groups from the 1960s onwards. Identified as clandestine left-wing groups that organise underground and use violent methods to disrupt the political system and cause radical political change, revolutionary groups have been one of the most enduring challenges faced by the modern Greek state. By employing mixed methods for a deep analysis of the phenomenon's causes in Greece, this thesis shows how the emergence of the revolutionary groups can be traced back in the military junta's era (1967 – 1974) – making Greece the oldest and most protracted case of revolutionary violence in Europe, and one of the most resilient globally. To trace the phenomenon, this thesis follows a relational analytical approach (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi 2015) that emphasises the role of mechanisms and posits the content of interactions as key to the understanding of groups' violence. Based on a comparative design across generations of armed groups and the study of their communiqués, this research provides a detailed analysis of the mechanisms that facilitated the radicalisation process of two different revolutionary groups: the Revolutionary Popular Movement (LEA) (1965 – 1974) and the Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) (1975 – 2002). By combining a process-oriented approach with an analysis of the groups' collective action frames and framing strategies, this thesis traces the similarities and dissimilarities of the two contentious episodes, revealing the recurring mechanisms that triggered the revolutionary groups' emergence, resilience and decline in Greece.



## *List of Most Important Abbreviations*

17N: Revolutionary Organisation November 17

1MA: Organisation 1 May

20Oct: 20 October Movement

29M: 29 May Movement

ARF: Aris – Rigas Feraios

CCF: Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire

CPA: Contentious politics approach

CTS: Critical terrorism studies

DA: Democratic Defense

DOC: Dynamics of contention

DYL: Democratic Youth Lambrakis

EAT-ESA: Special Interrogation Unit of the Military Police

EDA: United Democratic Left

EEC: European Economic Community

EK: Centre Union

EKIN: Greek-European Youth Movement

EKKE: Revolutionary Communist Movement of Greece

ELA: Revolutionary Popular Struggle

EMEP: Society for the Study of Greek Issues

ERE: National Radical Union

FEA: Student Committees of Struggle

J78: Group June 1978

KKE: Greek Communist Party

KKE-ES: Greek Communist Party-Interior

KYP: Central Intelligence Service

LEA: Popular Revolutionary Resistance

LMAT: Lumpen Grand Bourgeois Class

MAT: Unit for the Restoration of Order

ND: New Democracy

O80: Revolutionary Organisation October 1980

PAM: Patriotic Antidictatorship Front

PAK: Panhellenic Liberation Movement

PASOK: Panhellenic Socialistic Movement

RF: Rigas Feraios

RS: Revolutionary Struggle

SMT: Social movement theory



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## *Chapter 1: Introduction*

### 1.1 Background of the Thesis

Defined as the clandestine left-wing organisations that engage in the most radical forms of collective action in order to disrupt a state's established regime and cause fundamental political change (Crenshaw 1972; Della Porta 2013), revolutionary groups have been one of the main forms of political violence that Greece has faced in its modern history. The roots of the phenomenon can be traced back to the civil war (1946 – 1949) and the military dictatorship (1967 – 1974), making Greece the oldest and most protracted case of revolutionary violence in Europe and one of the most enduring globally. Despite of the phenomenon's endurance, revolutionary violence in Greece is severely under-researched as there is a scarcity of either Greek or English literature on the topic. Most importantly, there is a notable absence of focus on the reasons of the emergence and persistence of revolutionary groups. In an attempt to fill this research lacuna, this thesis delves into the political history of modern Greece, in order to identify the contextual, cognitive and relational factors that facilitated the occurrence and resilience of armed left-wing groups in the country.

Scholars of political violence have frequently associated revolutionary groups with the “New Left” or the third wave of armed groups in the modern history of international terror (Rapoport 1992, 2004). This wave of radical groups emerged in the late 1960s and was stirred to action by the anarchist and communist movements of the first decades of the 20th century, the anti-colonial campaigns of the Third World and the victory of the Viet Cong against the United States (Varon 2004). Such groups operated around the globe: namely, in the Americas (e.g. Tupamaros, Weatherman), in Asia (e.g. Japanese Red Army) and in Europe (e.g. Red Brigades, Red Army Faction) (Alexander and Pluchinsky 1992; Della Porta 1995; Zwerman, Steinhoff and Della Porta 2000). According to conventional wisdom, revolutionary violence peaked between the 1970s and 1980s and faded away substantially during the last decade of the twentieth century, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. However, in the Greek case revolutionary groups have been a rather persistent phenomenon. Indeed, the number of attacks claimed by radical leftist groups in Greece

has been continuously escalating: from 17 attacks in the 1970s (1968 – 1980) and 66 attacks in the 1980s (1981 – 1990), to 120 in the 1990s (1991 – 2000) and 148 attacks in the 2000s (2001 – 2010) (RAND Corporation 2016; also see Anagnostou and Skleparis 2015). The data from the previous decade (2001 – 2010) reveal that only in this period 68 different groups have claimed responsibility for attacks in Greece (RAND Corporation 2016) and that approximately 82 per cent of the total attacks claimed by similar organisations in Western Europe are attributed to Greek groups (in absolute contrast with only 3 per cent of the 1970s) (START 2016). At the same time as the volume of attacks has risen, the threshold of violence has dropped as the striking majority of groups has perpetrated attacks of a low-level nature against symbolically important targets (buildings or objects) (Karampampas 2014a). Then again, revolutionary groups have been one of the most resilient forms of contentious politics since the 1960s in Greece.

To begin with, leftist urban guerrilla in Greece has its origins in the era of the military junta, when due to intra-movement competition within the ranks of the antidictatorship movement a revolutionary faction was formed (Notaras 1999). These groups did not only fight for overthrowing the authoritarian regime as the bulk of the resistance groups, but also for bringing radical change in Greece (Nikolinakos 1975). One such group was the Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA), which envisaged the demise of the democratic system and its replacement with a revolutionary socialist regime (Papahelas and Telloğlu 2002; Kiesling 2014). The group managed to perform during its lifespan (1969 – 1974) nine bombing attacks that caused only material damages, including one that hit the US embassy (August 1972). Even so, the attacks of LEA, as well as the violence of the armed groups in general, were proved inadequate to threaten the dictatorship (Serdedakis 2006). Whereas revolutionary groups failed to overthrow the military rule, a student occupation of a university building was meant to play a significant role in the delegitimation of the regime. This was the Athens Polytechnic uprising that took place some months before the junta's collapse (Davanellos 1995). During the night of the 17 November 1973, 24 people died and two thousand got injured due to the brutal army crackdown on the students' takeover of the Polytechnic building in Athens (Kallivretakis 2010). This event is recognised as the decisive moment of radicalisation of one significant section of the Greek population, as well as one of the most influential events in the development of the



phenomenon of revolutionary violence in the country (Kassimeris G. 2005a). Actually, one of the major revolutionary organisations in Greece had its origins in this era; namely the Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) (Kassimeris G. 2001a). Motivated by a Marxist-Leninist class analysis the group adopted a violent repertoire of contention with low (against objects) and high-level (against human targets) attacks, in an attempt to rally the Greek proletariat against the local and foreign capitalists. 17N was meant to be one of the most active armed groups in Greece with 111 attacks<sup>1</sup>, as well as the one of the most violent with 23 executions in 27 years of operation (1975 – 2002). The group's perseverance for almost three decades remains up to this day one of the most interesting questions in the literature of political violence, especially in the face of the widespread perception that left-wing groups tend to last less than a year (Rapoport 1992; Phillips 2017).

While the arrest of the 17N in 2002 caused the temporary decline in clandestine activity in the country (Xenakis 2012), a new generation of revolutionary groups was already on the rise. Indeed, the emergence of groups such as the Revolutionary Struggle (RS) (2003 – 2009) (Kassimeris G. 2011) and the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire (CCF) (2008 – 2014) (Kassimeris G. 2012) that were inspired by radical anarchist ideas (Karampampas 2018, forthcoming), revealed the growing influence of anarchism in the revolutionary groups' milieu and the ideological multiplicity of Greek militancy<sup>2</sup>. More recently, the fact that leftist clandestine groups have assumed responsibility for attacks in commonly crowded places (bombs in a tube station in February 2012 and a mall in January 2013) and against human targets (shooting of two Golden Dawn members in November 2013) has amply demonstrated the phenomenon's criticality as well as its ability to reproduce and endure in time.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of 17N's operations is based on the group's communiqués and the testimonies of the arrested militants during the group's trial in 2002 (Theodorakis 2002).

<sup>2</sup> The country has witnessed throughout the last fifty years the rise of various armed groups from the whole array of the radical Left: such as Marxist, Maoist, Trotskyist and anarchist. The radical leftist orientation and the ideological multiplicity of Greek militancy made the use of "revolutionary violence" more apt for the description of the phenomenon than that of "terrorism"; since the first encapsulates the common elements of the groups and facilitates the exposition of their differences, while the second mystifies rather than illuminates their characteristics (Mahmood 2001).

## 1.2 Scope of the Thesis

Based on the above account of revolutionary violence in Greece, this thesis looks into the dynamics that facilitated the emergence and resilience of revolutionary groups through a cross-temporal comparative design across generations of clandestine groups by combining frame analysis and mechanism-based process tracing. Greece is ideal for the cross-temporal examination of clandestine organisations' radicalisation process, as the country has experienced a great volume of violence as well as multiple generations of armed groups. Hence, by studying the contentious episodes of two revolutionary groups from different generations, namely of the LEA and the 17N, this thesis attempts to unravel the dynamics of radicalisation in each episode, to trace the similarities and differences between the groups' radicalisation process and to track the causal pattern that enabled the reproduction of the phenomenon through time. Consequently, this thesis addresses the following research questions:

- What are the causal mechanisms that facilitated the emergence and decline of LEA?
- What are the causal mechanisms that facilitated the emergence and decline of 17N?
- What are the similarities and differences in the radicalisation process of the two groups?
- How has the phenomenon of revolutionary groups been resilient in Greece since the 1960s?
- Has there been a recurring causal pattern that has facilitated the proliferation of the phenomenon through different generations of militants?

Greece acts as a critical (Yin 1994; Snow and Trom 2002; Flyvbjerg 2006) and instrumental (Stake 1995, 2005; Yin 2011) case study for the exploration of radicalisation dynamics, as the analysis of the country's experience significantly enriches the wider literature on social movements and contentious politics. Initially, this thesis provides an alternative way of studying a movement's trajectory through the interaction of the dynamics of meaning formation and the dynamics of radicalisation. Regarding the meaning formation dynamics, this thesis aims to contribute to social movement theory (SMT) and particularly to the framing approach (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) with the development of an approach that analyses how a movement's collective action frames

interact with the dominant master frames of a given society as well as how movements constantly frame and reframe their context, tactics and goals (longitudinal interactive approach). Additionally, through the introduction of a mechanistic framework for the enhancement of mechanisms' measurement (Falleti and Lynch 2008, 2009) this thesis aims to contribute to the expanding body of relational sociology that studies collective action through the identification of causal mechanisms and their interactions (Alimi, Bosi and Demetriou 2012; Della Porta 2013; Bosi, Demetriou and Malthaner 2014a). Besides, the implementation of a local process account<sup>3</sup> (Tilly and Tarrow 2007) and the adoption of a cross-temporal comparison aim to contribute to the contentious politics paradigm (CP) (McAdam et al. 2001; Alimi et al. 2015; Demetriou and Alimi 2018) by highlighting the role of causal sequences<sup>4</sup> (Seawright and Collier 2010) of mechanisms in the proliferation of contention through time. The application of the cross-temporal comparative framework also contributes to the existing studies on left-wing radicalism, as it challenges the dominant views on the emergence of violent groups either at the end (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Della Porta 1995) or at the peak (Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005, 2012) of a protest cycle. Instead, in the Greek case violent groups formed in the beginning of protest cycles as a continuation and an evolution of previously established holdover organisations (Taylor 1989; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 1995, 1997) and thanks to the key individuals that acted as brokers of violent tactics (Han 2009; Vasi 2011). Along these lines, this research highlights the importance of agency (Chabot 2010, 2012) in the diffusion of the dynamics of contention through time, underscores the importance of the micro-level of analysis and adheres to a multi-level relational analysis of a group's radicalisation process (Bosi and Della Porta 2012, 2015, 2016). Finally, through the detailed analysis of the case study in question this thesis aims to both challenge mainstream interpretations in the wider SMT/CP literature and to draw attention to a severely under-researched case of contentious collective action – namely that of Greek revolutionary groups.

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<sup>3</sup> A local process account entails the systematic study of two or more episodes from the same stream of contention through the use of an established theoretical model (Tilly and Tarrow 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Seawright and Collier (2010) defined a causal sequence as “two or more steps in a causal chain that generally correspond to a chronological sequence” (p. 337).

## 1.3 Outline of the Thesis

While the previous sections provided the background information about revolutionary groups in Greece and introduced the theoretical framework and the research objectives of this study, this section explains the overall rationale for the structure of the thesis and offers a chapter-by-chapter summary. More specifically, this thesis can be divided in three parts: the conceptual basis of the thesis (Chapters 2 and 3), the case study analysis (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and the discussion (Chapters 7 and 8). Hence, the first part covers the theoretical and methodological background of the thesis, the second part centres around the case study of the thesis (revolutionary groups in Greece) and the third part goes over the thesis' findings – in relation to the preliminary research questions – and their implications to the existing research.

The thesis starts with a discussion of the key literature that has addressed the emergence, resilience and operation of clandestine groups. In particular, *Chapter 2* provides the theoretical backdrop of the thesis, by covering the fields of terrorism studies, social movement theory and contentious politics. Instead of a simple account of the different fields though, this chapter offers a critical reflection of each body of thought and identifies their strengths and shortcomings. Particular attention is paid to the framing perspective of SMT and the relational approach to radicalisation of CP, two areas that this thesis aspires to contribute to through the study of the dynamic interaction of a movement's frames and mechanisms of radicalisation. While chapter 2 covers the theoretical premises of the thesis, *Chapter 3* delineates the methodological challenges that this thesis faces. Hence, issues such as the research design, the case selection, the data collection as well as the two methodological approaches – frame and process tracing analyses – that were used in order to study the interactive and co-constitutive relationship of a group's dynamics of meaning formation and radicalisation were covered.

The next three chapters focus on the thesis' case study, namely the revolutionary groups in Greece. Initially, *Chapter 4* sets the sociopolitical context that facilitated the emergence of revolutionary violence in Greece and provides a theoretically-driven analysis of the post-civil war history of the country (1945 – 2002). Then, *Chapter 5* applies a combination of frame analysis and mechanism-based process tracing to the contentious episode of the LEA (1965 – 1974), as it materialised in the context of the fervent Greek 1960s, the military dictatorship and the anti-junta struggle. Hence, it

delineates the political environment, the frames and the mechanisms that triggered, intensified and dwindled the radicalisation process of LEA. Similarly, *Chapter 6* delves into the contentious episode of 17N (1975 – 2002) and indicates the contextual, cognitive and relational factors that sparked the emergence of the armed group in the 1970s and enabled its endurance for almost three decades. The two chapters identify – through the adoption of a mechanistic framework of analysis – the sub-mechanisms that constituted the central relational mechanisms and propelled the groups’ radicalisation in each contentious episode.

The detailed description of the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms that drove the radicalisation processes of LEA and 17N enables the systematic comparison of the two episodes. Therefore, *Chapter 7* brings together the two cases in order to identify the similarities and dissimilarities in terms of the sequence (variety of radicalisation) and composition (particularity of radicalisation) of their central relational mechanisms across the different stages of the groups’ radicalisation process (early, stepped-up and slowed down radicalisation). Through this cross-temporal comparative framework this chapter also sheds light to the research conundrum of the thesis – namely the resilience of the phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece since the 1960s. Hence, the role of the causal sequences of mechanisms in the movement-security forces and the intra-movement arenas of interaction is recognised as critical for the proliferation of revolutionary violence through time and from one generation of militants to another. Finally, *Chapter 8* offers further discussion of the thesis’ findings and presents suggestions for future research. Moreover, it summarises the key contributions of the thesis to the study of radicalisation and the wider social movement theory and contentious politics literature, at the same time as it provides answers to the research questions that were set in the outset of the thesis.

## *Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework*

This literature review covers the main fields of social sciences that have engaged with the study of political violence, defined as the “heterogeneous repertoire of actions oriented at inflicting physical, psychological and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change” (Bosi and Malthaner 2015, p. 439). Hence, fields such as terrorism studies, social movement theory and contentious politics that have traditionally occupied with questions over the rise, persistence and decline of protest and violence (contentious collective action) are outlined. This chapter identifies the key conceptualisations of the three fields and provides the rationale for the adoption of an integrated SMT/CP framework for the study of Greek revolutionary groups. Special focus is laid on the framing perspective of social movement theory and the relational radicalisation of contentious politics, which constitute the main areas that this thesis aspires to contribute to through the introduction of the dynamic interaction of frames and causal mechanisms to the study of a movement’s radicalisation. After the presentation of the thesis’ theoretical background, it is deemed necessary to include a review of the study of contentious politics in Greece – with a special focus on the Greek revolutionary groups that comprise the central object of this thesis. Then, the chapter proceeds as follows: the first section describes the different theoretical bodies, as well as their advantages and limitations on the study of radical groups; the second section traces the study of contentious politics and revolutionary groups in Greece; and finally, the third section outlines the theoretical framework of the thesis.

## 2.1 Theories of Contentious Collective Action

### 2.1.1 Terrorism studies

One of the main disciplines that study political violence and specifically its most extreme kind – namely, clandestine violence<sup>5</sup> – is terrorism studies. Having its origins in security and counterinsurgency studies, the field has been primarily preoccupied with practical policy concerns, such as handling security crises, predicting evolving trends and tracing terrorist groups' dynamics (Ranstorp 2009). Research on terrorism grew after the end of the Cold War and especially after 9/11, when scientific articles on the topic tripled between 2001 and 2002 (Silke 2009). Notwithstanding this augmentation in research stimulus, a great number of limitations can still be traced in the field. At the outset, terrorism research is often described as episodic and event-driven, “with some peaks in periods of high visibility of terrorist attacks, but with little accumulation of results” (Della Porta 2008, p. 221). In particular, it is deemed as largely driven by policy concerns and as limited to government agendas. Consequently, a significant part of the theory in the field refers to responses to acts of terrorism and not to terrorism itself (Silke 1996, 2001). Terrorism studies have been also “criticised for treating political violence as more of a ‘threat’ and less as ‘a social phenomenon’” (Brannan, Esler and Strindberg 2001, p. 21). This tendency is commonly recognised as the effect of terrorism experts in the field, since many of them have been directly or indirectly involved to counter-terrorism business (Goodwin 2004; Stampnitzky 2013). Additionally, terrorism research is frequently characterised as a state-centric endeavor, as “a lens through which the state can explain terrorism, particularly in relation to state security” (Franks 2009, p. 155). By embracing a state-centric viewpoint, terrorism's intelligentsia tends to promote an agenda that affirms state legitimacy and hegemony and neglects the effect of state practices on the evolution of political violence (Stohl 2008). Indeed, the predisposition of the field to recognise terrorism as a particularly non-state phenomenon, has often used to justify the violence of the state in the name of counterterrorism (Jackson 2005). Moreover, it disregards the terrorism that the

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<sup>5</sup> Defined as “the extreme violence of groups that organise underground for the explicit purpose of engaging in the most radical forms of collective action” (Della Porta 2013, p. 7).

Western countries have committed throughout the years, while constructing “terrorist identities”, through a binary logic of in-group/out-group distinctions based upon sovereignty and legitimacy (Franks 2009). Hence, it has facilitated the simplification of complex historical, cultural and political premises to an “us” versus “them” dichotomy, where the terrorists are characterised as “evil” and “uncivilised” and their grievances are discounted and refuted (Butko 2009). Along these lines, much of terrorism studies discourse functions to delegitimise any type of non-state violence, marginalising at the same time state terrorism to only a “ghostly outline” (Jackson 2008), mainly with reference to the form of state-sponsored terrorism. Indeed, according to Jackson (2012) there is an observed practice in terrorism studies to subjugate knowledge and to create “unknown known” concepts, such as state terror, the unlikeness of WMD (weapons of mass destruction) use by terrorists and the statistically minor security threat that terrorism poses globally.

Terrorism research has also pronounced as a “stagnant, poorly conceptualized, lacking in rigor, and devoid of adequate theory, data, and methods field” (Stampnitzky 2011, p. 3). To begin with, there has been a profound absence of consensus over a common definition, which has been one of the main reasons that terrorism is still considered as one of the most abstract and controversial phenomena within social sciences (Schmid 1983). Moreover, there is a recurring tendency of terrorism scholars to concentrate on terrorist violence *per se* and to identify it as a *sui generis* phenomenon (Gunning 2009). This has as a result the isolation of the study of terrorism from the larger political system and the negligence of the wider social and historical environment that facilitated the emergence of the phenomenon in the first place; while the field is often criticised for “a-historicity” (Breen-Smyth 2007). Thus, a lot of studies on terrorism have essentially ignored the interaction of terrorist violence and other forms of political violence, or the relationship between militants, non-militants and the public, to such an extent that terrorism seems to have emerged in a social vacuum (Alimi 2006a). There is also an observed lack of multi-level analysis on terrorism, namely of a parallel consideration of the macro (political system), the meso (group) and the micro-levels (individual) of analysis, as the majority of the empirical studies usually concentrates to only one level (Della Porta 1995). Finally, there is a deficiency of comparative, geographical and historical, approaches in the field (Crenshaw 1995), while it is commonly considered as an a-



theoretical undertaking that lacks self-reflexivity and where theoretical and methodological issues are rarely discussed.

Nevertheless, terrorism studies have also produced a number of informative analyses, such as case studies of individual clandestine groups (Karagiannis E. and McCauley 2006; Gunning 2008), of specific types of groups (Hegghammer 2010; De la Calle and Sánchez Cuenca 2012), or of waves of political violence (Cavanaugh 2009; Malthaner 2011). A rather significant stream of research in the field, has been that of critical terrorism studies (CTS) (Gunning 2007; Breen-Smyth, Gunning, Jackson, Kassimeris, G. and Robinson 2008), which has kept a skeptical stance towards the “traditional” or “orthodox” terrorism studies (Jones D. M. and Smith M. L. 2009). Having as a starting point the social construction of security and its bases on the Welsh school of critical security studies (Booth 2005), CTS try to deconstruct the prevailing problem-solving approach that characterises terrorism’s discipline nowadays (Jackson 2009). Based “upon an understanding of knowledge as a social process constructed through language, discourse and inter-subjective practices” (Jackson 2007a, p. 246), they criticise the field’s methodological weaknesses, the role of the terrorism experts and the marginalisation of state terrorism (Jackson, Breen-Smyth and Gunning 2009). In contrast, critical terrorism studies argue for the destabilisation of this hegemonic terrorism perception through the study of discourse and the social conditions that enable the states to exploit the notion of terrorism (Herring 2008). However, CTS have also faced a fair amount of criticism, as they tend to exaggerate the current affairs of the non-critical terrorism studies and overstate the novelty of their case, they have an ambiguously defined ontological status and they show extreme focus on discursive practices (Horgan and Boyle 2008; Weinberg and Eubank 2008). Another point of critique, has been their relative ineffectiveness, following the example of mainstream terrorism studies, to produce a robust framework for the understanding of the causes of groups’ radicalisation and the emergence of clandestine violence (Alimi et al. 2012).

## 2.1.2 Social Movement Theory (SMT)

### Schools of thought

Social movement theory (SMT) is recognised as the discipline that examines the organisation, mobilisation and protest action of social movements, defined here “as a (i) collection of informal networks, based (ii) on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilise about (iii) conflictual issues, through (iv) the frequent use of various forms of protest” (Della Porta and Diani 1999, p. 16). Despite, though, the fact that SMT emerged as a theory for studying contentious action, the link between social movements and political violence was for years treated as controversial at best. In fact, it was the emergence of a research stream during the 1980s that demonstrated how violent groups commonly develop inside social movements as by-products of larger protest cycles (Gamson 1975; Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Della Porta 1992), which instigated the recognition of political violence as one of research objects of the field.

SMT, though, is far from homogenous, as it contains a multitude of schools that understand social movement dynamics and collective action in diverse ways. One of the first schools that developed in the field was that of strain and breakdown theories (Marx and Wood 1975; Snow and Oliver 1995), which focused on the individual and the interaction of psychological and systemic causes as main causes for the rise of collective action (Smelser 1962; Miller, Bolce and Halligan 1977; Gurney and Tierney 1982). The most important variants of this theoretical tradition have been the mass society theory (Gusfield 1994), the absolute deprivation theory (Van Dyke and Soule 2002) and the relative deprivation theory (Davies 1962; Gurr 1970); with the latter still having considerable impact in scientific research in social sciences (Walker and Smith H. J. 2002; Smith H. J. and Pettigrew 2015). According to this school of thought, social movements – and non-institutionalised political participation in general – were a byproduct of increasing popular grievances and they were classified into the same category with other forms of deviant and anomic behavior such as crime and mental illnesses (Oberschall 1980).

It was the rise of political process theories in the early 1970s, along with the normalisation of protest in the 1970s and 1980s, which facilitated the demise of this

perception (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001; Giugni and Grasso 2016). In its place, an emerging body of work challenged the importance of grievances to the rise of collective action, as well as the impulsive and irrational character that deprivation theorists assigned to protest actors (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977; Oberschall 1973). Conversely to the former, political process scholars not only rejected the notion of protest as an emotional reaction to grievances, but also recognised their existence as a relatively constant feature of modern societies (Snyder 1978). Besides, due to the relative deprivation's conceptual vagueness and its failure to stand up to the empirical scrutiny (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Muller and Seligson 1987; Wang, Dixon, Muller and Seligson 1993), the theory was deemed as a perspective of "irreparable logical and empirical difficulties" (Tilly, Tilly and Tilly 1975, p. 290) and it was significantly marginalised. Variants of political process theories are the political opportunity theory (Kriesi, 1989; Tarrow 1994), the power contention theory (Muller and Weede 1994), the various applications of rational choice theory in the study of collective action (Friedman and McAdam 1992; Opp 2013), as well as the resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy and Zald 2002; Edwards and McCarthy 2004) that can be seen as the one of the most dominant theories of movement emergence in the literature (Westby 2002). Resource mobilisation emphasised the importance of resources and organisational structures as necessary for group mobilisation (McAdam 1982). At first, the theory assumes that all individuals are rational actors that weigh the costs and benefits of protest participation, calculate the chances of likely success and seek to maximise their power or resources. Hence, participation in every form of protest is contingent on a cost-benefit calculus and occurs when the costs of participation are outweighed by its benefits (Muller and Opp 1986). Whereas resource mobilisation emphasised the importance of material and organisational resources for the action of social movements, political opportunity model drew attention to the role of the political environment as the context that critically influences a movement's choice of goals, strategies and tactics (Meyer 1990, 2004). Hence, the latter focused on the political opportunities and constraints (or threats) that increase or decrease a movement's capacity for mobilisation (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). In particular, central place in the model had the concept of political opportunity structure, which is identified with the "dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow 1994, p. 85). Political opportunities, then, can be seen as those

structural factors that influence the contentious repertoire, the outcomes and the impact of activists on their environment, but are external to them (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). These factors, despite the relative lack of uniformity in the literature (Koopmans and Olzak 2004), can be summarised in: the openness or closure of the political system and its institutions; the stability of the political elite; the presence of elite allies; and the state's capacity and propensity for repression (McAdam 1996).

The structural bias of the political process theories towards political factors and opportunities was a recurrent issue of dispute for researchers that maintained a cognitive stance to collective action (Klandermans 1984; Ferree and Miller 1985; Goodwin and Jasper 1999). Hence, a number of new approaches that incorporated the insights from social psychology emerged in the 1980s, underlying the role of identity (Cohen 1985; Melucci 1988), culture (Swidler 1986; Johnston and Klandermans 1995) and emotions (Zurcher and Snow 1981; Jasper 1998); forming, what was later named, the social-constructionist perspective in the study of social movements (Oliver, Cadena-Roa and Strawn 2003). Part of this perspective were also the “new social movement theory” and the framing approach. “New social movement theory” (Touraine 1981; Offe 1985; Melucci 1989) drew attention to the role of identity and culture in the new movements emerging in post-industrial societies since the 1960s, which set them apart from the old social movements – characterised by hierarchical organisation and class focus (Grasso and Giugni 2015). Framing approach (Gamson, Fireman and Rytina 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; Gamson 1992), on the other hand, highlighted the interpretive and strategic understandings – or frames – that social movements construct and employ, in order to understand their political environment and legitimate their tactical repertoires

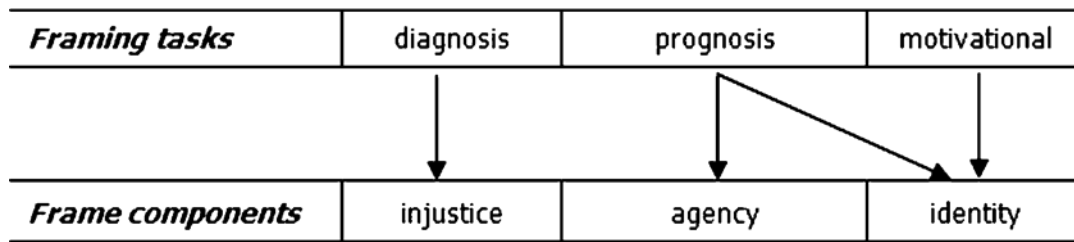
### Frame theory

Recognised as one of the most influential theories within the field (Ketelaars, Walgrave and Wouters 2017), framing approach has contributed a series of compelling concepts in social movement research. Starting with the frame itself, namely the “interpretive schema that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of action within one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford

1992, p. 137), framing perspective identified movements as signifying agents of their own constructed reality. Hence, with the use of collective action frames, recognised as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate activities and campaigns” (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614), movements generate and maintain certain understandings for their constituents, antagonists and bystanders (Snow and Byrd 2007). Collective action frames are, according to the literature, distinguished by four interactive elements: the framing tasks, the framing components, the framing processes (mechanisms) and the frame resonance. Through the articulation of the collective action frames movements try to attend to three framing tasks: the diagnostic, the prognostic and the motivational. These can be seen as a three stages’ process, consisting of problem(s) identification, proposing solution(s) and rallying support (Fisher 1997). The *diagnostic frames* interpret an issue as problematic and attribute blame or responsibility to an agent or agents (Mooney and Hunt 1996). The *prognostic frames* outline a plan for redressing the identified nuisance, including an elaboration of specific targets, strategies and tactics (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994). Subsequently, the *motivational frames* provide the rationale for action and function as a call to arms to a movement’s adherents (Benford 1993).

Subsequently, framing tasks are shaped by three framing components, namely: the identity, injustice and agency frames (Gamson 1992; Williams 2003). The *identity frames* distinguish “an aggrieved group with shared interests and values” (Noakes and Johnston 2005, p. 6) and – as a result – differentiate a common “we” from and against a rival “them.” Then, the *injustice frames* define as disturbing a given situation, for which the already constructed “them” is culpable. Ultimately, the *agency frames* refer to the idea that “we” – as agents of our own history – are able to change the detrimental for us situation to our advantage via action (Gamson 1992, p. 7). Hence, according to Vicari (2010), tasks and components are fixed in an interconnected scheme (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Relation of Framing Tasks and Framing Components**



(Source: Vicari 2010, p. 508)

Consequently, a frame’s diagnostic task is responsible for expressing its injustice component. Indeed, by diagnosing a situation as problematic a frame “calls attention to the grievance, names it as unjust and intolerable, [and] attributes ... responsibility” (Valocchi 2005, p. 54) to the respective antagonists. Subsequently, the prognostic task of a frame echoes both its agency and identity components. Thus, proposing a plan of action to counter the acknowledged as displeasing circumstances presupposes the construction of a sense of agency, which then facilitates the creation of a common identity. Finally, the motivational task, by making reference to a movement’s history and ideology, fortifies further the idea of a shared identity between its constituents and adherents; while at the same time constructs a boundary between the movement and its antagonists (Polletta and Ho 2006).

In order, though, for social movements to generate, develop, and modify their collective action frames they employ a series of framing processes (mechanisms). Most important of these are the *frame alignment processes (mechanisms)* that movements deliberately deploy to link their frames with the interests of prospective constituents, and to both legitimate and motivate collective action (Walgrave and Manssens 2005). This set of processes is comprised of: *frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation*. The *frame bridging* refers to the amalgamation of two or more ideologically consistent, but previously unconnected, frames concerning a specific issue. Then, the *frame amplification* includes the clarification or invigoration of certain values or beliefs, so as to strengthen a frame and making it more compelling. Successively, the *frame extension* involves a frame’s outreaching over issues that although were not considered primarily important for a group in the first place, are considered of great significance

for its potential supporters. Finally, the *frame transformation* entails the utter reconstitution of old frames and the production of new ones (Snow 2004).

However, the most critical element of the whole framing process is *frame resonance*. Frame resonance refers to the relevance, effectiveness and mobilising potency of a movement's frames in relation to an audience's phenomenological world (Snow and Benford 1988). A movement's success is contingent on the degree to which its frames resonate with the values, beliefs and interests of the targets of mobilisation (Berbrier 1998). These framing elements are in a state of continuous interrelation as movements through the articulation of collective action frames strive to simultaneously fulfil the framing tasks, operationalise frame alignment mechanisms and achieve frame resonance.

### Frames and political opportunities

Despite their different epistemological origins, political opportunity and framing approaches have been combined in studies at least since the 1980s. One of the earliest attempts to incorporate constructionist insights into the framework of the political process model was McAdam's (1982) concept of "cognitive liberation," which argued that protest depends not only on the availability of political opportunities, but also on "whether favorable shifts in political opportunities will be defined as such by a large enough group of people" (p. 48). Several similar efforts took place following this in seeking to widen the model's reach with the inclusion of cognitive processes (Morris A. D. and Mueller 1992; Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield 1994). By the mid-1990s, framing was integrated in the political process model as its third pillar, together with political opportunity and resource mobilisation approaches (Koopmans and Statham 1999), as more and more movement scholars came to recognise the equal significance of mobilising resources, the structure of political opportunities and the framing processes in the study of contentious collective action. According to this "tripartite" framework (Beck 2008), the existence of political opportunities and resources is not considered sufficient for the rise of mobilisation but is recognised merely as a precondition to collective action that only offers a "latent" potential (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak and Giugni 1995). Consequently, in order to understand how mobilisation escalates it is necessary to also study the collective processes of

interpretation, attribution and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996a). The construction of the political opportunity structure itself, then, can be described as “a struggle over meaning within movements” (Gamson and Meyer 1996, p. 289). Following this, the objective shifts in the political opportunity structure are intrinsically interlinked with the subjective movements’ frames, and the extent to which the former facilitate or constrain collective action is partly dependent on how they are framed by movements (Koopmans and Duyvendak 1995). Then again, a movement’s discursive practices are co-shaped by the “discursive opportunity structure” (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; McCammon, Muse, Newman and Terrell 2007), defined as the “institutionally anchored ways of thinking that provide a gradient of relative political acceptability to specific packages of ideas” (Ferree 2003, p. 309) in a given society.

That is also the case during phases of heightened collective action, or during “cycles of protest” as they are largely acknowledged, when the political opportunity structure expands on account of deep grievances for a number of groups, triggering the escalation and spread of contention throughout society (Tarrow 1989, 1994). During these periods, social movements play a key role in the construction of the political opportunities through the elaboration of “new or transformed frames of meaning to justify and dignify collective action” (Tarrow 1989, p. 48). Likewise, Snow and Benford (1992) assert that the emergence of such cycles of protest is associated with the formation and development of master frames, identified as generic modes of punctuation, attribution, and articulation that exert influence and constrain the orientation and content of any movement-specific frame in a cycle of protest. Hence, movements use frame alignment mechanisms to associate their frames to the existing master frames, as the success of a collective action frame is dependent on its congruence with the dominant master frame during a protest cycle or in a given political phase (Bosi 2011).

The observed interrelation between political opportunities and master frames also led Diani (1996) to formulate a framework for the study of mobilisation in different political systems, by focusing on the stability of political alignments and the perceived opportunities for autonomous action of the challengers. By cross-classifying the two variables – the opportunities that rise by the crisis of dominant cleavages with the opportunities for autonomous action – he outlined four different



configurations of opportunity structures conducive to certain framing strategies and their analogous master frames (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Most successful framing strategies according to different configurations of the political opportunity structure*

	Opportunities for Autonomous Action		
		HIGH	LOW
Opportunities Created by the Crisis of Dominant Cleavages	HIGH	Realignment Frames	Antisystem Frames
	LOW	Inclusion Frames	Revitalisation Frames

(Source: Diani 1996, p. 1056).

The implication of this is that when greater opportunities created by the crisis of dominant cleavages are combined with the perception of ample opportunities for independent action, there is a higher likelihood of success for *realignment master frames*, which emphasise the need for reconstruction of collective identities without suggesting the abolition of the existent political procedures. In contrast, when greater opportunities for autonomous action coincide with stable political alignments, Diani (ibid) asserted that *inclusion master frames* expressing new challengers' aspirations to be recognised as legitimate part of the political system are most likely to be successful in mobilising constituents. The combination, though, of stable political alignments and low opportunities for autonomous action means fewer chances for challengers to rise, and the primacy of *revitalisation master frames* that entail the involvement of political actors within the already established institutions in order to attain their goals. The final possible configuration of the opportunity structure is the one characterised by greater opportunities created by the crisis of traditional political alignments and a perception of poor opportunities for autonomous action. During such conditions, the rise of *antisystem master frames* is considered as the most promising. These are master frames that directly challenge dominant cleavages and identities of a political system and advocate its radical transformation, as they deny "legitimacy to the routinised functioning of the political process" (ibid, p. 1057). Following Diani's (ibid) framework, Bosi (2006) later studied the development of the civil rights'

movement in Northern Ireland, in order to trace the evolution of its mobilisation message during the 1960s. He showed that the movement's message not only shifted according to the changes in the political opportunity structure and the activation of the different dominant master frames, but also that these shifts privileged the sectors of the movement that aligned their message to the master frames to promote their agendas and strategies over others. Hence, frames' capacity for mobilisation is contingent on their resonance with the dominant master frames of a given society; or, in other words, depends on their "cultural resonance" with a movement's broader political and cultural environment, as frames that achieve a higher degree of resonance are most likely to effectively mobilise collectivities (Babb 1996; McCammon 2009; Morrell 2015).

Nevertheless, movements' success and cultural resonance are not the same, as not all movements seek success in terms of the resonant institutionalised discourses of a polity (Ferree 2003). Indeed, while achieving consensus is an important step towards success for the majority of social movement organisations, some of them prefer to exclude themselves and to affirm their identity in the eyes of their constituents (Della Porta 1999); thus, opting for frame resonance with their adherents' ideology and values than cultural resonance with the political environment (Kubal 1998). Along these lines, Swart (1995) distinguished between *frame alignment* and *master frame alignment process*, as the former refers to a movement's attempt to link its activities, goals and ideology with those of its adherents, and the latter with those within the broader cultural and political context. Hence, *frame alignment* can lead either to *master frame alignment*, when a group strives to achieve cultural resonance with the dominant master frames, or to *master frame dealignment*, when the endeavour to capture its supporters' consensus leads to a group's dissociation from the cultural resonant discourses (Della Porta 1999). Then again, while master frame alignment is attained through the use of frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation, master frame dealignment is realised through a set of different mechanisms, namely through: *boundary framing*, *adversarial framing* and *counter-framing*. *Boundary framing* consists of the employment of in-group/out-group distinctions in order to differentiate one group from others (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994; Silver 1997; Hunt and Benford 2004). *Adversarial framing* entails the use of negative terms to portray another actor's stance, ideology and behaviour, so as to

construct an image of the “other” as the enemy a group should stand against (Gamson 1995; Klandermans, de Weerd, Sabucedo and Costa 1999). *Counter-framing* involves the application of frames that aim to discredit competitors’ views, whereas they promote the opinions of an own group (Zuo and Benford 1995; Benford and Snow 2000). This set of mechanisms helps to create distance and to clarify the boundaries between contending groups, as well as to stimulate cohesiveness in the intra-organisation level (Brewer 1999; Desrosiers 2012, 2015). Master frame dealignment is a common process among radical groups as they struggle to distinguish themselves in time and space from the rest of the groups within a collective action field (Taylor 1989; Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994). Hence the more radical the message of a group gets, the less it resonates with a society’s hegemonic discourse, giving the opportunity to a movement to challenge the established power relations (Steinberg 1999; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht 2002), and the more effective it becomes in mobilising its targeted audience (Máiz 2003a). In other words, radical groups often choose to align their discourse to the goals and the ideology of their constituents, disengaging and at times utterly opposing the dominant master frame – thus, following a strategy of master frame dealignment (Máiz 2003b).

Conclusively, focusing on the interrelation between collective action frames, framing strategies and frame alignment and dealignment mechanisms, we can trace the operation of master frame alignment and dealignment processes, through which social movements associate or distance their discourse from the institutionalised public discourse. By unravelling then these two antithetical processes we gain valuable insights into the development of a social movement network, its intra-movement dynamics, as well as the resonance of the message of the diverse groups within a network through time – and specifically the message of radical and violent groups that constitute the main research object of this thesis. Table 2 provides an overview of the frame alignment process, as well as the mechanisms that constitute the master frame alignment and dealignment processes.

Table 2: Overview of frame alignment process

Frame Alignment Process						
Master Frame Alignment				Master Frame Dealignment		
Frame Bridging	Frame Extension	Frame Amplification	Frame Transformation	Boundary Framing	Adversarial Framing	Counter-Framing

### Approaches on political violence

Apart from the diverse schools of thought (strain and breakdown, political process and social-constructionist theories) that have emerged in the field of SMT, someone can also identify different approaches on the study of political violence. In particular, Tilly (2003) recognised three different strands of understanding political violence. According to his categorisation, there are the *behaviour* people, who highlight the significance of emotions, impulses and passions; the *idea* people, who stress strategy, ideology and costs as the basis for violent mobilisation; and the *relation* people, who elevate the interactions between different actors, institutional and non-institutional, to the centre of the study of political violence. Then, Alimi et al. (2015) distinguished between two clusters of explanations: one focusing on *why* the shift to political violence occurs and another that explores *how* and *when* the shift to political violence unfolds. The first cluster includes all these explanations that respond to the *why* question by underlining the effect of root causes and facilitative opportunities either in the macro (system) or the micro-level (individual) of analysis, such as the effect of grievances, ideologies, impulses, motives and environmental opportunities. In contrast, the second cluster of explanations demonstrates how and when specific root causes get activated, interact and eventually transform during a process of contentious interaction. In this cluster belong all these explanations that acknowledge pre-existing motivations as potentially necessary yet never sufficient conditions for the rise of political violence, which is seen as only one of the tactics in the array of group’s contentious repertoire – triggered under specific political and social circumstances (Alimi 2011). In order to facilitate the operationalisation of the above dichotomy over the focus of explanation of Alimi et al (2015), we can label the first cluster of explanations as *deterministic* (Dépelteau and Powell 2013), as they argue for the

causal efficacy of one or a combination of root causes that engender violence; while we can term the second cluster of explanations as *processual* (Emirbayer 1997), since they recognise political violence as the result of a dynamic and interactive process that a group undergoes within its political environment.

Hence, in the first category of the deterministic explanations we can locate the behavioural and ideational explanations (Shadmehr 2014). Initially, as behavioural can be acknowledged all the grievance-based explanations to political violence, originating from the strain and breakdown theoretical tradition. Grievance-based approaches suggest that grievances, which are “triggered by some breakdown, strain, or disruption in normal social routines” (Buechler 2004, p. 49), are the basic and instigating cause of collective and violence. These approaches understand the eruption of violence, as well as of every other form of non-institutionalised political action, as an impulsive and anomic tension release, stimulated by the aggregation of grievances and perpetrated by “arational if not outright irrational” actors (Jenkins 1983, p. 528). Conversely, as ideational explanations to political violence are seen those based in the political process school of SMT. These explanations understand the use of violence as a calculated and rational option of individuals and groups, influenced by a state’s political opportunity structure and the availability of certain resources (Khawaja 1994). Thus, conflict emerges since collective violence is recognised as an effective way to compete for resources or power with other groups and/or the state (Jacoby 2008). Other factors that may encourage the use of violence by decreasing the cost of political protest are solidarity incentives, social networks and group identification (Gamson 1975; Tilly 1978; Diani and McAdam 2003; Moskalenko and McCauley 2009). However, these two kinds of explanation are not able to account for those cases where either violence did not erupt despite the presence of root causes (Weisburd and Lerner 2006), or where violence only materialised partly and not to its full intensity despite the existence of facilitating factors (Goodwin 2007; Gupta 2014).

In the processual category, second on our scheme over the explanations of political violence in the field of SMT, we can find the strategic interactionist and relational explanations. Strategic interactionist explanations are those that recognise violence as: a group’s strategic choice, as a part of an interactive process that unfolds during a contentious episode, and as a tactic in a continuum of various forms of both non-violent and violent methods (Alimi, Gamson and Ryan 2006). Despite, though

the consequential contribution of strategic interactionist literature in the study of political violence (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Wieviorka 1993; Della Porta 1995; Hoffman 1998; Oberschall 2004), certain issues such as the tendency to focus on one level of analysis (individuals, groups or political system) or on specific stages of political violence (emergence, intensification or slowdown), have hindered the development of a holistic approach from their end. Relational explanations to political violence, on the other hand, emphasise the role of causal mechanisms, which have wide applicability in different geographical and historical settings, and posit the content of interactions as key to the understanding of groups' violence; therefore, providing a rather versatile framework for the comprehension and analysis of political violence (McAdam et al. 2001; Pearlman 2011; Alimi et al. 2012; Alimi et al. 2015).

### 2.1.3 Contentious Politics Approach (CP)

#### Dynamics of Contention

Characterised as “the most notable development in research on political violence” (Bosi, Demetriou, Malthaner 2014b, p. 1), contentious politics was the path-breaking approach introduced in the *Dynamics of Contention (DOC)* by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001). Based on the premises of relational sociology (White H. C. 1992; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Bunge 1997; Mische 2011; Powell and Dépelteau 2013), which “sees relations between social terms or units as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances” (Emirbayer 1997, p. 289), the approach aimed to provide an inclusive framework for the study of all the manifestations of collective violence. Hence, following a long tradition of scholarship in social sciences (Merton 1968; Elster 1989; Stinchcombe 1995; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 1996; Hedström and Swedberg 1998; Tilly 1998, 2000, 2001), the authors called for attention to mechanisms and processes of contention.

This book, along with the authors' subsequent publications (Tilly 2003, 2008; McAdam 2003; Tilly and Tarrow 2007), developed a *process and mechanism-oriented paradigm* for the analysis of contentious politics; defined as the “interactions

in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, p. 4). Key unit of analysis, according to this approach, was that of *causal mechanism*, which constituted "a delimited class of events that changes relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam et al. 2001, p. 24). These were classified in:

- environmental mechanisms, such as opportunity spirals and resource depletion/enhancement, which alter relations between the social circumstances and their external environment;
- cognitive mechanisms, such as framing and attribution of threat/opportunity, which operate through alterations of individual and collective perceptions; and
- relational mechanisms, such as object shift and emulation, which modify connections between individuals, groups and networks (Tilly 2003).

Without undermining the influence of the other two kind of mechanisms, particular emphasis was given, though, to relational mechanisms; as the focus on social interaction, instead of ideas or context, promotes a more dynamic and interactive analysis of contention. Mechanisms were also used as units of comparison between different cases of contention, as they possess causal efficacy and they compound into processes. *Processes* are regular sequences of mechanisms that produce similar – generally more complex than the former – transformations of those elements (McAdam et al. 2001). Hence, mechanisms can be seen as constitutive sub-processes that combine in different sequences to interactively produce distinct processes. Indeed, the authors recognise that processes and mechanisms form a continuum and, therefore, the choice to classify a phenomenon accordingly is arbitrary and dependent on the scope of the analysis (ibid, p. 27). This mechanism-oriented analytical framework can be then used for the study of: *streams of contention*, identified as connected moments of claim making singled out by observers for explanation; or *episodes of contention*, recognised as bounded sequences of continuous interaction produced usually by an investigator's chopping up longer stream of contentions into segments for purposes of systematic observation and comparison (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, p. 203).

*DOC* was part of a broader movement in social sciences that emphasised the role of mechanistic explanations for social phenomena (Mahoney 2001; Mayntz 2004), as well as an important attempt to connect structure and agency in the study of contentious politics (Aminzade, Goldstone, McAdam, Perry, Sewell, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Goldstone 2003; Martin and Miller 2003). This book, though, more than any other else, generated a lively debate in the field of social movement studies. Particularly, the authors' ambition to foster a conceptual and methodological reorientation of the study of non-routine politics, was characterised as provocative towards the dominant classic agenda of social movement theory (Polletta 2002), or imperial since it jumbled under its "theoretical canopy" a series of distinct political phenomena (Osa 2004). Other points of critique were the conceptual vagueness over the relationship of mechanisms and processes (Rucht 2003; Welskopp 2004), the abundant number of mechanisms compared to the little attention to their empirical demonstration (Kjeldstadli 2004; Staggenborg 2008) and a lack of analytical and methodological rigour (Simeon 2004; Norkus 2005). However, the most penetrating criticisms were those on the definition and measurement of mechanisms, as critics stigmatised the authors' indifference towards the methodological elucidation of the framework and the relationship of mechanisms with variables (Lichbach 2005, 2008). As a response, McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2008a, 2008b) proposed a number of methods for the detection and measurement of mechanisms, such as systematic events data analysis, conversationalist analysis and statistical analysis; identifying at the same time as their premise that "a range of methodological strategies are compatible with a mechanism-based approach to the study of contention" (McAdam et al. 2008a, p. 310).

Described from Charles Tilly himself as the "most successful failed experiment he had ever been involved in" (cited in McAdam and Tarrow 2011, p. 6), contentious politics paradigm became, despite the various criticisms, the object of critical acclaim as well. By focusing on a mechanistic explanation of contention, *DOC* managed to go beyond the dominant dichotomy between structuralist and culturalist approaches in social movement studies, challenging at the same time the prominence of the tripartite synthesis that explained movements' mobilisation based on the intersection of opportunities, resources and frames (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996b). By recognising this classic social movement agenda as static, McAdam et al. (2001)



developed a dynamic and interactive model for the analysis of contentious politics. Indeed, their emphasis on causal mechanisms and processes inspired a multitude of studies on diverse subjects, such as on transnational activism and movements' mobilisation (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Olesen 2009; Beissinger 2011; Karapin 2011; Vasi 2011), economic contention (Kousis and Tilly 2005), NIMBY mobilisation (Sherman 2008, 2011), state repression (Tilly 2005a; Johnston 2006; Boykoff 2007) and movements' radicalisation/deradicalisation (Alimi et al. 2012; Della Porta 2013; Bosi, Demetriou and Malthaner 2014b; Karpantschhof 2014; Alimi et al. 2015; Bosi and Della Porta 2015); and generated a discussion over the enrichment of the analytic framework itself. Some of the most significant calls for improvement were made in the name of enhancing mechanisms' validity and causal explanation (Earl 2008; Falletti and Lynch 2008, 2009; Demetriou 2009, 2012a). Hence, while Earl (2008) suggested the study of the interaction of mechanisms and rival mechanisms and its (dis)continuity across time and space, Falletti and Lynch (2008) proposed the disaggregation of mechanisms in terms of their "extension" and "intension" (Sartori 1970)<sup>6</sup>, in order to elucidate their conceptualisation and to maximise the validity of their measurement. In their framework (Falletti and Lynch 2008), mechanisms can be categorised in terms of their intension to *general processes/mechanisms*, *mechanisms-as-types* and *mechanisms-as-examples*, and in relation to their extension to *general processes/mechanisms*, *mechanisms-as-causes* and *mechanisms-as-indicators*. Consequently, a process/mechanism can be categorised into *mechanisms-as-types* that constitute mutually exclusive sets of the specific process/mechanism; as *mechanisms-as-examples* that are instances of the general process/mechanism or the subtype mechanisms; as *mechanisms-as-causes* that make a process to happen through their interaction; and *mechanisms-as-indicators* that alert us for the presence, in time and place, of the former causal mechanisms (ibid, pp. 334 – 336). Using then the process of scale shift as an example (*top-level process*) (see Table 3 below) – recognised as "a significant change in the number of participating units and/or range of identities in coordinated action across some field of contention" (McAdam et al. 2008, p. 312) – the authors (Falletti and Lynch 2008) argued that its two variations, namely the upward scale shift and the

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<sup>6</sup> This mechanistic typology is based on what a mechanism denotes and what it connotes, where denotation entails the class of things to which a concept applies and connotation the collection of properties that determine the things to which a word applies (Falletti and Lynch 2008, p. 334).

downward scale shift can be seen as *mechanisms-as-types* of the high-level process (scale shift).

*Table 3: Disaggregation of processes and mechanism by level of abstraction using the example of scale shift*

Level	Concept	McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2008a)
1	Top-level process/mechanism	Scale shift
2	Mechanism-as-type	Upward scale shift, downward scale shift (types of scale shift)
3	Mechanism-as-example	Parliamentarisation (example of upward scale shift)
4	Mechanism-as-cause	Boundary deactivation (cause of upward scale shift)
5	Mechanism-as-indicator	Bargaining (indicator of boundary deactivation)

(Source: Falleti and Lynch 2008, p. 335)

Furthermore, they argued that parliamentarisation can be seen as a more specific instance of the broader upward scale shift process, and therefore as a *mechanism-as-example* of the former. Moving afterwards to the component mechanisms of the scale shift process, they identified boundary deactivation as a true *mechanism-as-cause* of the upward scale shift as it triggers the operation of the general process and bargaining as a mechanism-as-indicator of the boundary deactivation mechanism. Hence, according to Falleti and Lynch's (2008) framework in order to make a causal claim about a process, one must identify and measure, through the detection of the mechanisms-as-indicators, the operation of mechanisms-as-causes. In a subsequent article, the authors (Falleti and Lynch 2009) elaborated further on the concept of

mechanism and its differences with that of intervening variables; since the latter measure the attributes of the units of analysis and mechanisms uncover the social processes that connect actors, contexts and variables. Hence, mechanisms have three main characteristics: they are *portable*, as they can operate in different contexts; *context-dependent*, as they are affected by the nature and attributes of the context they operate; and *indeterminate*, as their outcome is not fixed but dependent on the interaction between mechanisms and context (ibid).

Equally important to the clarification of mechanism's definition, was the contribution of Demetriou (2009, 2012a), who pinpointed the inconsistency between the *formal* and the *practical* conceptualisation of mechanism in the contentious politics paradigm. Tilly (2003) identified a mechanism as "similar events that produce essentially the same immediate effects across a wide range of circumstances" (p. 20). Schematically, this can be presented as  $X \rightarrow Y$ , where  $X$  is the initial conditions,  $Y$  the outcome and the arrow is the concatenation of "events" or sub-mechanisms. Hence, this *formal definition* of mechanism entails that the constitutive events of a mechanism's outcome are the same across different empirical contexts; a fact that is empirically untenable (Koopmans 2003; Oliver 2003). Interestingly enough though, both Tilly and his collaborators (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 2003; Tilly and Tarrow 2007) do not stick to this conceptualisation, as they practically acknowledge that the concatenation of mechanisms can vary across empirical contexts in generating the same outcomes. However, this *practical conceptualisation* seems to suggest that there is constitutive pattern between mechanisms, events and outcomes, which indicates that the schema  $X \rightarrow Y$  would appear as a package from one contentious episode to another (Demetriou 2012a). In contrast to both understandings of mechanisms then, Demetriou (2009, 2012a) proposes an *outcome-driven* definition. According to this logic, every process or mechanism is defined by its constituent outcome, independently of either the initial conditions or the events that concatenated to generate the given outcome. Thus, the mechanism of decertification for example, defined as the lack or withdrawal of support and recognition by an external authority to a political actor (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, p. 215), is observed not because of a specific modus operandi, namely owing to a predefined sequence of events that remain the same across different contexts, but because of the outcome "decertification" (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 29).

Despite its framework's weaknesses, recognised in due course by the authors of *DOC* as well (McAdam et al. 2008b; McAdam and Tarrow 2011), contentious politics approach made a fundamental contribution to the analysis of non-institutional politics. Particularly, by criticising the dominant perspectives in social movement theory and adopting a broad programme of inquiry (Barker 2003), the approach facilitated the rise of an influential post-classical agenda in the study of social movements and contentious politics as a whole (Markoff 2003).

### Relational approach to radicalisation

Drawing on the contentious politics approach (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 2003, 2005; Tilly and Tarrow 2007), earlier relational studies on political violence (McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; Della Porta 2013) and their previous work (Alimi 2003; 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b 2009, 2011, 2015; Alimi et al. 2012; Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012; Bosi 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2013; Bosi and Giugni 2012; Bosi et al. 2014b; Demetriou 2007, 2009, 2012a, 2012b), Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2015) came up with their own relational approach to radicalisation in their latest book, *The Dynamics of Radicalisation*. By defining radicalisation as “the process through which a social movement organisation shifts from predominantly nonviolent tactics of contention to tactics that include violent means, as well as the subsequent process of contention maintaining and possibly intensifying the newly introduced violence” (ibid: 10), the authors proposed an interactive and mechanism-oriented framework for the comparison of radicalisation processes across time and space. Using three case studies of clandestine groups, namely of Brigade Rosse (Red Brigades), EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) and al-Qaeda, they located the similarities and dissimilarities in the groups' radicalisation process. While recognising the soundness of the contentious politics paradigm, the book still acknowledged certain ambiguities that left the project open to criticism (Earl 2008; Demetriou 2009). Consequently, the authors (Alimi et al. 2015), in order to enhance the explanatory power of their approach, suggested a number of conceptual adaptations – by integrating previous criticisms to the *DOC*'s framework – and introduced the concepts of sub-mechanisms and interactive relational arenas.

Initially, Alimi et al. (2015), adhering to Demetriou's (2009, 2012a) outcome-driven conceptualisation of mechanisms and Falletti and Lynch's (2009) characteristics of mechanisms, they redefined the relationship between mechanisms and processes. Hence, whereas mechanisms combine to constitute a process, this does not mean that a predefined sequence of mechanisms remains always constant and produces the similar processes across different empirical contexts; as McAdam et al. (2001) seemed to argue in their formal definition of mechanisms. On the contrary, a process is not expected to be constituted by the same concatenation of mechanisms from one context to the other. Along these lines, mechanisms are not seen as constitutive events of specific processes and processes are not reducible to certain mechanisms; a relationship that emphasises the processual emergence of radicalisation through contentious interaction. Following the same logic, the authors also introduced the notion of sub-mechanisms, recognised as constitutive events of, but not bounded to, mechanisms. Consequently, every process of radicalisation is composed by a varied, not constant and cross-context combination of mechanisms and sub-mechanisms (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 31), while both mechanisms and sub-mechanisms are characterised by portability, context-dependency and indeterminacy. Along these lines, this approach sticks to a model of "fluid causality" (Bosi et al. 2014b), as opposed to the relatively deterministic "billiard ball" model of causality used in the contentious politics paradigm – in which a mechanism is "a delimited class of events that changes relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam et al. 2001, p. 24).

On the other hand, the authors (Alimi et al. 2015) – following the example of the contentious politics paradigm – recognised radicalisation as a process that involves the interaction of relational, cognitive and environmental mechanisms and argued for the primacy of the former over the other two types of mechanisms. Therefore, cognitive and environmental mechanisms acquire their consequentiality only through the interaction with relational mechanisms, which mediate the salience of ideas (cognitive) and contextual stimuli (environmental) during the unfolding of a given process. However, is not the impact of particular relational mechanisms that matters, but their combination and the way they reinforce each other's influence that drives a radicalisation process. What is more, they reckoned that relational mechanisms operate in five distinguishable arenas of interaction, identified as the

contexts that individual and collective actors interrelate during a contentious episode. These are: the *arena between the movement and its political environment*; the *arena between movement activists and security forces*; the *arena within the movement*; the *arena between the movement and the public*; and the *arena between the movement and a counter-movement* (Alimi et al. 2015, pp. 15-16). Moreover, the authors asserted that every arena of interaction corresponds with one central relational mechanism, responsible for capturing most efficiently the relational dynamics within each arena of radicalisation. Hence, the most crucial relational mechanisms per interactive arena are:

- *Upward spirals of political opportunities*, identified as the changes in a movement's political environment that alter the constraints, possibilities and threats the movement faces and enable/inhibit its collective action, in the arena between a movement and its political environment;
- *Outbidding*, recognised as the action-counteraction dynamics between a movement and the security forces of a state as they struggle for control, in the arena between a movement and a state's security forces;
- *Competition for power*, described as the struggle between two or more political competitors within a movement regarding issues of strategy, tactics and goals, in the arena between movement actors;
- *Dissociation*, associated with the increase in organisational independence of a movement or parts of it from its supporters and third parties, in the arena between the movement and the public; and
- *Object shift*, acknowledged as the change in the objects of claims and targets of attacks by one or more movement organisations, in the arena between a movement and a counter-movement (ibid, pp. 42 – 51).

From this schema, though, the authors distinguished three mechanisms and arenas of interaction as more consequential in a process of radicalisation. In particular, the upward spirals of political opportunities, the outbidding, and the competition for power mechanisms, which take place in the movement – political environment, the movement – security forces, and the within-movement arenas respectively, are considered as the most robust mechanisms for the analysis of radicalisation, since they involve actors who are always present in episodes of contention. The other two mechanisms and their corresponding arenas of interaction, namely the dissociation

(movement – public arena) and the object shift (movement – counter-movement arena), they are not as recurring as the former or they are not necessarily present during every radicalisation process; therefore, their consequentiality is likely to be generated in conjunction with the more frequent and central mechanisms. Besides, Alimi et al. (ibid), in an attempt to enhance mechanisms' analytic rigour, embraced Earl's (2008) suggestion to study the interaction between mechanisms and rival mechanisms, by introducing the concept of reverse mechanisms; a logical equivalent of each mechanism that operates in the opposite direction, produces the opposite outcome and can impede the radicalisation process. Thus, they also identified the mechanisms of downward spirals of political opportunities, underbidding, consensus mobilisation and association (as reverse mechanisms of upward spirals of political opportunities, outbidding, competition for power and dissociation respectively), whose operation can lead to the deceleration or discontinuation of radicalisation (deradicalisation process) or can prevent the switch to violence altogether (non-radicalisation process) (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 56). Ultimately, with the aim of strengthening the comparative rigour of their approach, the authors introduced a comparative framework of four concepts that facilitate the identification of similarities and dissimilarities between different episodes of contention. These are:

- the *particularities of radicalisation*, which refer to the composition of sub-mechanisms comprising a mechanism during an episode of contention; and
- the *varieties of radicalisation* identified as the ways that mechanisms concatenate to form a certain sequence (ibid: 172 – 173).

Conclusively, Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi argued that to study a radicalisation process means to examine the operation and interrelation of the central relational mechanisms in/between the interactive arenas, as well as to trace the concatenation and composition of sub-mechanisms that forge these mechanisms in a given contentious episode. Indeed, the authors managed, through the redefinition of mechanism/process relationship, the innovation of the arenas of interaction, the introduction of sub-mechanisms and reverse mechanisms and the formulation of the comparative framework of similarity and difference to drastically evolve the contentious politics project. More specifically, with the introduction of the above adaptations, Alimi et al. (2015) present us with a framework that contributes considerably to the study of political violence and radicalisation from a reinvigorated

relational perspective. A perspective that understands radicalisation as not a deterministic trajectory, but rather as possible progression resulting from a movement's decisions and actions pursued within frameworks of interactions and relations (ibid, p. 22).

## 2.1.4 Contribution of SMT and CP to the Study of Political Violence

While the study of political violence through a social movement theory perspective can be nowadays seen as a growing tendency in the field, it has not always been the case. In fact, up until the 1980s violent groups remained largely outside the realm of social movement research (Steinhoff and Zwerman 2008). It was the work of some authors studying the emergence of violent groups during the New Left protest cycles of 1960s and 1970s in Western democracies (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Della Porta 1988, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Tarrow 1989; Steinhoff 1992; Zwerman 1992) that challenged the field's disposition and recognised political violence as part of a movement's broader repertoires of action. Despite though this research stream and a few more exceptions (White R. W. 1989, 1993; Wiewiorka 1993), the study of violent groups lingered on the fringes of the discipline up to the 9/11 (Goodwin 2012). Hence, the last years several authors have used SMT's conceptual tools in the study of radical movements (Bosi 2006; Gunning 2007; Araj 2008), whilst theoretical approaches from social movement studies have influenced previously remote fields, such as those of Islamic studies (Hafez 2003; Wiktorowicz 2004; Hegghammer 2010; Malthaner 2011) or the study of civil wars (Wood 2003; Kalyvas S. N. 2006; Viterna 2013). Framing (Snow and Byrd 2007; Johnston and Alimi 2012; Brown 2014; Granzow, Hasenclever and Sändig 2015; Karampampas 2018) and contentious politics (Alimi 2006a; Demetriou 2007, 2012b; De Fazio 2013, 2014; Malthaner 2014; Marsden 2016) approaches have also been employed in both comparative and single-case studies of radical groups. Indeed, the use of an integrated framework of SMT, which includes the classic (opportunities, resources and frames) and post-classic agendas (CP), can significantly enrich the study of political violence, and especially that of terrorism research, as: it can broaden and deepen its intellectual body, challenge many



of its underlying assumptions and accelerate the discipline's critical turn (Beck 2008; Gunning 2009).

Particularly, the employment of a SMT/CP perspective relocates clandestine groups within their social context, namely as part of a wider social movement, and interacting with other political actors, the society and the political system more broadly (Alimi 2006b). Hence, a group is not recognised as monolithic entity, but as a part of field of different actors that interact formally or informally with each other (Tilly 2004). This has as a result the de-exceptionalisation of clandestine violence, as it takes the phenomenon out of its sterile box and re-conceptualises it as a part of a spectrum of possible movement tactics. Besides, a SMT/CP framework relocates clandestine violence within its accurate temporal context; namely, within the historical and political environment in which each group emerged, as well as underlining the fluidity of violent tactics throughout different phases of an organisation (Money, McCarthy and Yukich 2012). As follows, the social and temporal relocation of political violence as an object of study, has a great impact in countering the accused "a-historicity" and lack of context in the field (Ranstorp 2009).

A SMT/CP perspective, also, facilitates the integration of the different levels of analysis; recognised as the approach "in which the systemic, organizational, and individual perspectives – in other words, environmental conditions, group dynamics, and individual motivations – are all taken into account" (Della Porta 1995: 10). Moreover, it draws attention on frequently neglected areas of terrorism research such as the state and its policies towards political violence, the internal dynamics of organisations, and the relation between militants and the radical milieu (Waldmann 2008). Similarly, it draws attention to the state and its practices on the intensification of political violence (Araj 2008); as even though most of the authors agree on the interaction of state's repression and the protesters' choice of tactics, state's policies have remained relatively under-studied in the terrorism discipline (Della Porta, Peterson and Reiter 2006). Another contribution of the perspective is that it examines political violence in relation to the internal dynamics of a social movement. Subsequently, violence is not seen simply as a group's tactical choice, but also as the product of a dynamic process within the wider social movement, shaped by the different factions, ideas and interests that it encompasses (Wiktorowicz 2006).

Furthermore, the use of a SMT/CP framework in the study of clandestine violence puts into question the image of militants as socio- or psychopaths, consistent with the strain and breakdown theoretical school, which up to the present day exerts significant influence on the study of violent groups (Beck 2008). Successively, it can also lead to the de-orientalisation of traditional terrorism research (Wiktorowicz 2004), with the parallel deconstruction of the “Islamic terrorism discourse” that gained much of its current validity after the 9/11 (Jackson 2007b). Besides, engaging SMT/CP literature with the field of terrorism research can increase the self-reflexivity and intra-paradigm critique, encourage the broader theoretical and methodological study, and de-subjugate marginalised concepts of the field such as that of state terrorism; therefore, accelerating its critical turn (Toros and Gunning 2009). A SMT/CPA perspective can also generate further insights into the drawing of counter- and anti-terrorism policies, as it provides additional knowledge in the areas of perceptiveness, discernment and pragmatism (Alimi 2006a), and offers a better understanding of the diffused and less hierarchical “new” terrorist organisations.

All in all, according to this perspective political violence does not emerge “from nothing” or develop in a vacuum and cannot be attributed merely to macro-level root causes or radical ideologies at the micro-level (Alimi 2016). Conversely, it is the outcome of the dynamic interaction of various political actors, namely of movements, counter-movements and states, and is located within the context of the broader cultural, political and social conflicts that a given society faces during a certain period of time (Bosi and Malthaner 2015).

## 2.2 The Study of Contentious Politics and Revolutionary Groups in Greece

While research on social movements and contentious politics was growing in the United States and Western Europe since the 1960s, the study of collective action occupied a rather marginal place in Greek social sciences up until the 1990s (Kanellopoulos 2015; Kornetis and Kouki 2016). This came as a result of the dominance of two interrelating interpretative frameworks during the early

Metapolitefsi<sup>7</sup> – namely of the dependency theory (Mouzelis 1985, 1986) and the “underdog” thesis (Diamandouros 1994; Mouzelis 1996; Kokosalakis and Psimmenos 2003; Stefanidis 2007). The former divided the world into a capitalist and industrialised “core” that exploited a dependent and underdeveloped “periphery”; with Greece itself situated in the “semi-periphery” due to its unevenly developed capitalist infrastructure and its long-established dependency to the West. The country’s backwardness in relation to the West, witnessed also from its belated industrialisation and modernisation, has also been a basic feature of the “underdog” thesis. Based on the deeply entrenched influence of cultural dualism in Greek academia (Tsoukalas 1981a, 1983; Demertzis 1994; Liakos 2004; Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2009), the “underdog” thesis – as was epitomised by Diamandouros (1993, 1994) – recognised two antagonistic political cultures in Greece: a modernising, reformist one and an underdog, traditionalist one. The first is rooted in the ideas of the Enlightenment and political liberalism, is secular and extrovert, favours capitalism and market economy and looks of the West for inspiration and support (Diamandouros 1994, pp. 22 – 23). On the contrary, the underdog political culture is rooted on the Ottoman and Byzantine legacy of the country, is nationalistic and introvert, favours paternalism and protectionism and is hostile towards the West and its institutions (ibid, pp. 12 – 13). With an inherent fear towards reforms, the “underdog” political culture has been recognised as a major obstacle to the country’s modernisation, as well as the root for the perpetuation of many of its “national” anomalies, such as corruption, populism and clientelism (Kouki and Liakos 2015). Hence, over the past decades, the “underdog” category has been synonymous to fraudulence, disorganisation and inefficiency, including every kind of attitude, value, belief or political practice that has been considered as wrong or problematic (Xenakis 2013). Indeed, the theory has been so influential that “has become a reference point for understanding modern Greece” (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Kouki 2013a, p. 3) and it has been used as a framework for the explanation of as different phenomena as the rise of PASOK to power in the 1980s (Diamandouros 1993; Tsakalotos 1998), Greece’s Europeanisation process (Featherstone, Kazamias and Papadimitriou 2001; Kazakos 2004; Pagoulatos 2004), the recent economic crisis (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Kouki 2013b; Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou and Exadaktylos 2014) as well as

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<sup>7</sup> As the period since the fall of the Military Junta (1974) has become known, precisely depicting the transition from authoritarianism to democracy as the word literally indicates the polity’s change.

SYRIZA's electoral upsurge (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2013). This has been also the case of the most acts of disobedience, protest or political violence in Greece, as they have been habitually attributed to the “underdog” political culture, or to an “endemic culture of violence” that has characterised the Greek society historically (Sotiris 2010; Psimitis 2011). As a result, the study of contentious politics and political violence was usually marginalised as an anomic behaviour rooted in the dominant “underdog” political culture of the Greek population for the most part of the post-junta period (Sotiris 2013).

This attitude started to change only in the 1990s when a new group of researchers generated a series of systematic studies on Greek social movements and brought the national academia into contact with the international developments in the field of social movement research. Characteristic examples of this research stream, which by the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century had managed to put Greece in the map of social movement literature, are: works on the country's labour (Seferiades 1995, 1998, 1999), environmental (Botetzagias 2001; Kousis 2003, 2007; Alexandropoulos, Serdedakis and Botetzagias 2007) and new social movements (Simiti 2002); explorations of theoretical and methodological themes of SMT and their application to the Greek context (Kousis 1998; Psimitis 2006; Seferiades 2006, 2007); and comparative assessments of Greek and other Southern European movements (Kousis 1999a, 1999b, 2004; Eder and Kousis 2001; Kousis, Della Porta and Jimenez 2008). What acted, though, as a catalyst for the intensification of the study of contentious politics in Greece was the December 2008 events. Instigated by the killing of a 15-year-old teenager by a policeman on the 6th of December, a wave of protest and rioting took place in Athens and all major cities of the country that lasted for three weeks. The ferocity, duration and innovation of the protests prompted the global interest, and became a recurrent object of study in terms of the analytical tools to decipher the events (Kotronaki and Seferiades 2012; Theocharis, Lowe and Van Deth 2015; Papanikolopoulos 2016), their causes (Economides and Monastiriotis 2009; Lountos 2012; Sakellariopoulos 2012; Xenakis and Cheliotis 2016) and their effects (Kalyvas A. 2010; Iakovidou, Kanellopoulos and Kotronaki 2011). The side-effect of December 2008 was a renewed interest for contentious politics and social movements in the country (Kanellopoulos 2009; Seferiades and Johnston 2012; Kornetis 2013a; Kotronaki 2015), which came once again at the forefront of international research

after 2010 with the rise of the anti-austerity protests (Diani and Kousis 2014; Kousis 2014; Kanellopoulos, Kostopoulos, Papanikolopoulos and Rongas 2016; Voutyras 2016; Karyotis and Rüdig 2017) and the Indignant movement (Sotirakopoulos and Sotiropoulos G. 2013; Petropoulos 2014; Prentoulis and Thomassen 2014; Simiti 2015).

Regardless of the intensification of interest for contentious politics in Greece that was observed the last decade, the study of revolutionary groups has remained rather marginal; with the prevailing scarcity of research rendering the topic one of the most under-researched in Greek politics. Then again, the majority of what has already been published is a rather descriptive account of the phenomenon (Karampelas 1985; Bossis 1996; Papahelas and Telloglou 2002; Pappas T. 2002; Pretenteris 2002; Chalazias 2003; Nomikos 2007) and often tends to recognise political violence – through the dominant framework of the “underdog” thesis – as a product of the country’s “culture of sympathy” towards acts of resistance (Kalyvas S. N. 2008a, 2010; Andronikidou and Kovras 2012; Psychogios 2013). Besides, apart from very few exceptions (Kassimeris G. 2013a, 2016; Kiesling 2014), most of the studies of revolutionary violence in Greece tend to focus at the “groups at risk”, and not in the context and interactions that facilitated the radicalisation of the groups at the first place (Bosi, O’ Dochartaigh and PISOIOU 2015), while there is a notable lack of comparative works. Another common limitation of the current literature is the perception of clandestine groups as only a phenomenon that emerged during the Metapolitefsi and is disconnected from the anti-junta struggle; identifying the former as terrorism and the latter as resistance to the military regime. Yet, the studies that recognise the connection between the two eras, are often inclined to rather partisan views of the phenomenon, with those on the Right of the spectrum discrediting the anti-junta groups as merely terrorist organisations (Pretenteris 2002) and those on the left romanticising the violence of the groups after the country’s transition to democracy (Karampelas 1985). Moreover, there is a striking absence of the study of the reasons of the emergence and persistence of revolutionary groups in the country, a tendency that has significantly hindered the holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Xenakis 2012).

Contrariwise, noteworthy studies that focus on the Greek revolutionary movement have appeared in diverse scientific fields such as in anthropology (Kitis

2015; Kitis and Milani 2015; Apoifis 2016, 2017), criminology (Xenakis 2011, 2012; Tsoukala 2014) and security studies (Karyotis 2007). The two fields, though, that have led the research on the topic are history and terrorism studies; in direct opposition to social movement research, which apart from very few exceptions (Serdedakis 2006, 2012; Karampampas 2014a, 2018, forthcoming), has focused on non-violent movements (Serdedakis 2007a, 2015; Seferiades 2010a, 2010b) and has largely neglected the study of clandestine groups. In historical studies, a new research stream has embarked on an attempt to re-evaluate the anti-junta struggle and the relationship between contentious and non-contentious repertoires of action (Asimakoulas 2009; Voglis 2011; Kornetis 2013b, 2015), based on previous historic and biographic accounts of scholars (Nikolinakos 1975; Yiannopoulos 1976; Notaras 1999; Rigos 1999; Kleitsikas 2000) and militants (Liakos 1988, 2001, 2004; Dafermos 1999; Katsaros 1999; Darveris 2002; Anagnostopoulos 2003). In terrorism studies, a case that deserves special reference, is the work of George Kassimeris, as he was the first to draw attention to a globally neglected political phenomenon and to the notorious operation of Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) in Greece, with his book *Europe's Last Red Terrorists* (2001). Through his research, he explored the phenomenon, from the first groups of the 1970s (Kassimeris G. 2005a) and with a special focus on 17N (Kassimeris G. 1995, 2005b, 2006, 2007), to the contemporary clandestine groups, such as the Revolutionary Struggle (RS) (Kassimeris G. 2011) and the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire (CCF) (Kassimeris G. 2012). Despite the volume and the quality of Kassimeris' writings, the author however does not provide a clear picture over the causes of the appearance and resilience of revolutionary groups in the country (Karampampas 2014b), in accordance with the overwhelming majority of analyses.

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

Drawing on the literature of social movement studies and contentious politics, this thesis applies a process and mechanism-oriented perspective to the study of Greek revolutionary groups. Main characteristics of this perspective are that is *relational*, as it locates political violence in the radicalisation of conflicts that involve the

interactions of both institutional and non-institutional actors; *constructivist*, as it takes into account the social construction of reality by the various actors; and *emergent*, as it aims to reconstruct the causal mechanisms that connect the macro-level in which political violence arises, the meso-level identified with the clandestine organisations, and the micro-level within a militant group (Della Porta 2013, p. 5). Nevertheless, whereas most of researchers have opted for studying the outcomes of a specific process in different political and social settings (Della Porta 2013; Alimi et al. 2015), this thesis pursues another route. Hence, it focuses on the analysis of a single process in one political setting. Through the use of the relational model of radicalisation, as it was established by Alimi et al. (2015), it studies two episodes of a stream of contention situated in the same location; or more specifically the radicalisation process of revolutionary groups in Greece between 1965 – 2002. Thus, in order to facilitate the systematic observation, comparison and explanation of the radicalisation process, two *episodes of contention* are identified for examination:

- the contentious episode of Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA) between 1965 – 1974, and
- the contentious episode of Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) between 1975 – 2002.

Subsequently, using both the arenas of interaction and the comparative framework of similarities/dissimilarities (Alimi et al. 2015), the thesis locates the particularities and varieties of radicalisation that characterised the two contentious episodes, in order to thoroughly compare and reach explanations over the emergence and endurance of the above clandestine groups.

Employing the above-presented model to the radicalisation process of two revolutionary groups, means to study the interaction of the core relational mechanisms (upward spirals of political opportunities, outbidding, competition for power, dissociation and object shift) and their sub-mechanisms that facilitated the adoption and intensification of violent tactics. However, in an attempt to increase the validity of mechanisms' conceptualisation and measurement, and to counter the descriptive bias of the approach – inherent in any relational analysis (Goodwin 2009; Beck 2016) –, this thesis introduces the mechanistic framework of Falleti and Lynch's (2008) in the study of radicalisation. According to this framework, then, in order to increase a

mechanisms' conceptualisation, we can differentiate a general process/mechanism<sup>8</sup> to *mechanisms-as-types* and *mechanisms-as-examples*, where the former constitute mutually exclusive categories of the process/mechanism, and the latter are examples of either the main or a sub-type process/mechanism. For the enhancement of mechanisms' measurement, the authors suggested the disaggregation of a top-level process/mechanism to *mechanisms-as-causes* and *mechanisms-as-indicators*, where the former instigate through their interaction the process/mechanism and the latter inform us for the presence of the causal mechanisms or sub-mechanisms (ibid).

Main argument of this thesis is that the dynamics of meaning formation are consequential for the activation of the process of radicalisation. Thus, in order to study a group's radicalisation process, it is necessary to delve into the manner in which the group assigns meaning to its external reality, and therefore to examine its framing process. Analysing the framing process, though, entails tracing a movement's framing alignment mechanisms, through which it attaches or detaches its frames from the dominant master frame in a certain time and place – namely the mechanisms of master frame alignment and dealignment. These two opposing mechanisms can be seen as more specific types of framing alignment and can be partitioned further to more precise mechanisms, such as to frame bridging or to boundary framing. Table 4 presents the different levels of framing alignment mechanism disaggregated by the volume of intension<sup>9</sup> – namely from the least to the most specific mechanism.

According to the table below then, master frame alignment and master frame dealignment (*mechanisms-as-types*) are two mutually exclusive types of frame alignment (*top-level mechanism*), while frame bridging and boundary framing are examples of the above types respectively (*mechanisms-as-examples*). Hence, in moving from the first level (top-level mechanism) to the second (mechanism-as-type) or the third (mechanism-as-example) level of the table – e.g. from frame alignment to frame bridging – we substitute a broader class of events with a more specific instance.

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<sup>8</sup> Following the example of McAdam et al. (2001) and Alimi et al. (2015), this thesis recognises the relationship between mechanism and process as analytical. This means that the choice to assign the label “process” rather than that of “mechanism” to a specific phenomenon is dependent on the scope of a given analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Intension is recognised as the collection of properties that determine the things to which a word applies, while extension as the class of things to which a concept applies (Falleti and Lynch 2008, p. 334)



*Table 4: Disaggregation of frame alignment mechanism by level of intention*

Level	Concept	
1	Top-level mechanism	Frame alignment
2	Mechanism-as-types	Master frame alignment, Master frame dealignment (types of frame alignment)
3	Mechanism-as-examples	Frame bridging (example of master frame alignment), Boundary framing (example of master frame dealignment)

[Based on Falleti and Lynch 2008, p. 335.]

Additionally, framing, identified as the “collective process [mechanism] of interpretation, attribution, and social construction, [that] mediates between opportunity and action” (McAdam et al. 2001, p. 41), is a crucial element in processes of political contention and radicalisation (Desrosiers 2015). Indeed, only through exploring the ways that activists “frame and reframe their sociopolitical environment we can argue convincingly that a particular change in the political conditions acted as an incentive for contentious politics” (Alimi 2007a, p. 13). Besides, the study of framing mechanisms can increase our understanding over the various interactive arenas, as it can shed light on the historical and social conditions in which contention develops (arena between a movement and its political environment); on how a movement copes with repression (arena between a movement and a state’s security forces); on the internal dynamics and the relationship between different groups inside a movement (arena between movement actors); on how a movement interacts with its adherents (arena between the movement and the public); and on the interrelation of a movement with one or more counter-movements (arena between a movement and a counter-movement) (Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012; Alimi et al. 2015). Consequently, this thesis recognises framing alignment mechanisms as *mechanism-as-indicators* of the relational, cognitive and environmental sub-mechanisms that concatenate and constitute the crucial relational mechanisms (*mechanisms-as-causes*) that drive the

radicalisation process (*top-level process*). For example, the mechanism of boundary framing (see Table 5 below), identified as the use of in-group/out-group distinctions to differentiate one group in time and space from others (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994), can be recognised as a mechanism-as-indicator of boundary formation, namely the “creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors” (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, p. 215). The latter, then, can be seen as a true mechanism-as-cause of radicalisation, as it is the mechanism that makes – through its interaction with other mechanisms – the process of radicalisation to take place, while boundary framing merely alerts us for the presence of boundary formation, and is not consequential for radicalisation in the first place. Following the same logic, adversarial framing can be perceived as a mechanism-as-indicator of polarisation mechanism, itself a cognitive sub-mechanism and a mechanism-as-cause of a radicalisation process.

*Table 5: Disaggregation of radicalisation process by level of intention*

Level	Concept	
1	Top-level process	Radicalisation
2	Mechanism-as-causes	Boundary formation, Polarisation (causes of radicalisation)
3	Mechanism-as-indicators	Boundary framing (indicator of boundary formation), Adversarial framing (indicator of polarisation),

[Based on Falleti and Lynch 2008, p. 335]

In accordance with the above table then, boundary formation and polarisation are mechanisms-as-causes of radicalisation, whereas boundary framing and adversarial framing are indicators of the two above mechanisms respectively. Thus, in moving from the first (top-level process) to the second (mechanism-as-causes) level of the table we disaggregate the process of radicalisation into component causal

mechanisms, while from the second to the third (mechanism-as-indicators) level we disaggregate the causes to indicators.

Accordingly, the application of the above framework to the analysis of the Greek revolutionary groups has as a result the identification of framing alignment mechanisms, as the mechanisms-as-indicators of the sub-mechanisms that drive radicalisation and constitute the mechanisms-as-causes of the process. Hence, this thesis argues that in order to reconstruct, as accurately as possible, the radicalisation process of a movement, is considered essential to study its framing alignment mechanisms that point out the activation and operation of the relational, environmental and cognitive sub-mechanisms that constitute the consequential relational mechanisms of every radicalisation process (Alimi et al. 2015). Then again, it goes without saying that the study of groups' collective action frames and their framing alignment mechanisms is used in order to corroborate the detection of mechanisms and sub-mechanisms, and not to substitute altogether the process tracing approach that has been commonly used in similar analyses (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 2003; Alimi 2016; Grimm and Harders 2018).

Consequently, through an approach that combines the analysis of the causal mechanisms of radicalisation and the examination of the framing mechanisms this thesis aims to provide answers to the research questions outlined in the introduction. Hence, it traces the causes of the resilience of revolutionary groups in Greece in terms of the proliferation of the phenomenon through time. Indeed, by employing a relational approach this thesis unearths the causal mechanisms that triggered the radicalisation process of two revolutionary groups of two different generations, applying a cross-temporal comparison to the case of Greece. By unravelling the radicalisation process of the LEA and the 17N this thesis pinpoints the similarities and differences of the two contentious episodes regarding: the composition (particularities of radicalisation) and concatenation (varieties of radicalisation) of sub-mechanisms in the consequential relational mechanisms of radicalisation as well as the gravity of mechanisms in the process of radicalisation (modalities of radicalisation). Besides, the assessment of the groups' communiqués gives us the opportunity to compare the diverse ways these two clandestine groups attributed blame (diagnosis), devised a plan for action (prognosis) and legitimised their violent campaigns. Finally, through the parallel examination of the groups' framing

mechanisms and the causal mechanisms of radicalisation this thesis observes the interaction of the dynamics of meaning formation (or interpretation) and radicalisation; or how the construction of a group' reality interrelates with the process of radicalisation.

## *Chapter 3: Methodology and Data*

This chapter describes the methodological choices of the thesis, as they derived from the assumptions drawn in the theoretical section. Following the intellectual tradition of relationalism this thesis identifies political violence as a product of the dynamics that develop during contentious politics between non-institutional and institutional actors (Tilly 2004; Tilly 2005b; Bosi et al. 2014b). The adoption of a relational perspective means the application of a process-oriented approach to the study of political violence and entails tracing the causal mechanisms that drive the radicalisation process; identified as the process through which a group shifts from predominantly nonviolent to violent tactics of contention. Such a model is the relational approach to radicalisation, as it was established by Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2015; Alimi et al. 2012), which focuses on the recurring relational mechanisms and their sub-mechanisms that constitute a process of radicalisation, as well as on their interaction across different arenas of interaction. However, in an attempt to increase the validity of the mechanisms' measurement, this thesis introduces Falleti and Lynch's (2008) framework to the study of radicalisation process, by identifying the framing alignment mechanisms as mechanisms-as-indicators of the core relational mechanisms and the latter as the mechanisms-as-causes of the radicalisation process. Moreover, tracing the groups' collective action frames and framing alignment mechanisms entails the use of a textual analysis technique; therefore, this thesis employs a frame analysis to the documents of the two clandestine organisations, comprised of the total number of the communiqués disseminated throughout their lifespan. Afterwards, for the delineation of the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms of radicalisation, the use of a mechanism-based process tracing approach is applied. Taking everything into account then, the chapter proceeds as follows: the first section delineates the thesis' research design and the case selection process; the second section delves into the employed methods and the methodological contribution of the thesis; and the third section describes the data collection, their limitations and the codification process.

### 3.1 Research Design and Case Selection

Situated between structuralism and rationalism, relationalism is the theoretical tradition that posits the interactions among social units as the starting point of sociological analysis (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Emirbayer 1997). Hence, instead of focusing on the role of self-subsisting entities (structuralism) or on that of individual human action (rationalism), it emphasises the role of social relations or of *transactions* between units as the primary object of analysis (Tilly 2005c). Transactions are the dynamic processes during which both structures and actors acquire their meaning through the roles they play and the interrelation between them. Hence, both the characteristics of social units and the events that unfold in the social sphere are recognised as outcomes of interactions or processes. Putting into effect this relational perspective has a number of consequences in the ontological and epistemological realm. Firstly, since all social units acquire their significance through social interaction, they are inseparable from the relational contexts within which they are embedded (Emirbayer 2010). Based on this logic, social reality can be only understood in dynamic and processual terms and is irreducible to its individual elements. These ontological presuppositions result in an epistemological approach that argues that to explain scientifically social phenomena is to describe the operation of the processes, within which they are involved in and of the sub-processes (mechanisms) that constitute them (Tilly 1995; Demetriou 2012a). In other words, this approach recognises “as explanation the identification of causal chains consisting of mechanisms that reappear in a wide variety of settings but in different sequences and combinations, hence with different collective outcomes” (McAdam et al. 2001, p. 23). Thus, the introduction of a mechanism-based explanation entails the adoption of a comparative research design that checks the variability of mechanisms in different political settings (Tilly 2001; Alimi et al. 2012).

In recent years, mechanistic explanations have spread rapidly throughout social sciences, facilitating the comparative – both quantitative and qualitative – study of social and political phenomena (Gerring 2010; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010). The two main ways that mechanisms have been employed in comparative designs are either as adjunct to variable covariance or within a case study format (Caporaso 2009). According to the first approach, mechanisms are considered compatible with

correlational analyses and are used to explain the covariation between variables; acting as intervening variables that illustrate why a correlation exists between an independent and a dependent variable (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Hedström and Swedberg 1998; George and Bennett 2005). According to the second approach, mechanisms are seen as the causal factors that explain sociopolitical phenomena in the cases under examination. More specifically, since most case study analyses follow Mill's (1973) methods of similarity and difference, as causal factors/mechanisms of an outcome are considered as either those that are present in all the examined cases (most-similar systems design) or those that their absence corresponds with the absence of the previously observed outcome (most-different systems design) (Tarrow 2010a). Consequently, while the case of variable covariance provides a "covering law" type of causal explanation, as mechanisms enable the production of a universal account of a given phenomenon (Gerring 2005), the case study approach offers a functional type of explanation, as mechanisms are recognised as the necessary causal factors for the occurrence of a political outcome (Bunge 1997). Contrary to the above explanations, this essay follows a process-based approach and provides a mechanistic type of explanation to radicalisation (McAdam et al. 2001; Alimi et al. 2012). By recognising radicalisation as a process constituted by the varied combination of sub-processes (mechanisms), this approach enables the systematic observation and comparison of the most robust mechanisms/sub-mechanisms within different episodes of contention (Alimi et al. 2015). Focusing then on the interaction and concatenation of mechanisms and sub-mechanisms, it demonstrates how different constitutive forces combine to trigger the same process in a wide range of contexts. Hence, this mechanism and process-based approach challenges both the deterministic positivism of large-N studies that generate probabilistic statements based on law-like regularities (Little 1991), as well as the holism of case studies that recognise cases as manifestations of broader phenomena with pre-set characteristics and generated by the same combination of factors (Demetriou and Roudometof 2014).

Two of the pioneers of this mechanistic perspective, Tilly and Tarrow (2007), identified four different ways for its application in the study of contention. Hence, it can be employed: a) by studying a particular form of contentious politics and the processes that enable its occurrence in different locations (common process account); b) by outlining the relationship of an established model of a process with a series of

episodes of a stream of contention located in one setting (local process account); c) by developing a model of a contentious process and test it against different episodes and locations (process generalisation account); and d) by comparing different countries or types of regimes to determine the differences in the frequency, origin or consequences of a process (site comparison). Following the above classification of the ways to analyse contention, this thesis focuses on the relationship of a single process with a particular stream of contention – recognised as the sequence of collective claims singled out for explanation (*ibid*, p. 203) – in one setting. Hence, in contrast to Della Porta (2013) who carried out a common process account by studying clandestine violence and the different processes that facilitated its emergence across a variety of sites (see also McCauley and Moskalenko 2008, 2011), and to Alimi et al. (2015) who employed a process generalisation account by outlining a model for the study of radicalisation and test it against different episodes and locations, this thesis puts into action a local process account. Thus, in order to trace the reasons (mechanisms) that have facilitated the resilience of the phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece, it outlines the relationship of the dynamics of radicalisation model, as it was established by Alimi et al. (*ibid*), with a series of contentious episodes; or more specifically with the radicalisation process of two revolutionary groups in Greece between 1965 –2002.

Despite the witnessed rise in mechanism-based studies in the field of political contention and violence (Auyero and Moran 2007; Owens 2014; Asal and Phillips 2015; De Fazio 2017), there is an observed lack of cross-temporal analyses both in the international and intra-national level (but see Romanos 2014). This thesis aims to fill this lacuna by applying a local process account to a rather critical case (Yin 1994; Snow and Trom 2002). Indeed, Greece is ideal for the cross-temporal examination of clandestine organisations' radicalisation process, as the country has experienced a great volume of violence as well as multiple generations of violent groups during its recent history. Besides, the striking endurance of some groups, such as the 17N that remained active for almost three decades (1975 – 2002), gives us the opportunity to carry out cross-time comparisons not only in the intra-national, but also in the intra-movement level. The selection of the contentious episodes under examination, namely that of the LEA and the 17N, was made based on three criteria. The episodes involved violent groups that: a) were radical left-wing in their ideology; b) were organised underground; and c) made use of radical forms of violence. In fact, these groups



represent the most violent organisations of each generation, as their operations were typified by the highest degree of violence in each era: with the LEA using low-level attacks against symbolically important targets during the anti-junta period, and the 17N employing mostly high-level attacks against people, including shootings, kneecappings and car bombings<sup>10</sup>. These two groups were also chosen in order to facilitate the comparison between the two different generations of Greek revolutionary groups. Finally, regarding the delimitation of the two episodes adheres to the following logic: we follow secondary accounts for the definition of each episode's starting point, while its ending point is identified with the termination of the group's militant activity signified either by the cessation of violence (LEA) or the arrest of its key members (17N). Identifying the ending point of an episode with a group's termination of operations permits us to study: the different stages of radicalisation (early radicalisation, stepped-up radicalisation and deradicalisation)<sup>11</sup>; the concurrent interaction between mechanisms and reverse mechanisms; as well as the slowdown in the operation of mechanisms.

## 3.2 Methods

### 3.2.1 Frame Analysis

Since the establishment of the framing perspective in social movement theory in the 1980s (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988), frame analysis has been used extensively in the field of social movements; with Lindekilde (2014) describing it as “the most common technique for studying cognitive processes of interpretation and meaning making” (p. 197) among social movement scholars. The application of frame analysis to a movement's texts (e.g. press releases, communiqués, websites, media statements and interviews with movement activists) exposes the core functions of

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<sup>10</sup> It is worth mentioning that almost the total number of attacks of the two groups belonged in the category of selective violence, which includes the attempt to harm or the harm against specific civilians or their property because their behaviour is deemed harmful (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 12).

<sup>11</sup> Alimi et al. (2015, p. 12) identify early radicalisation as the phase that witnesses the emergence of violence and may include both non-violent and violent actions. When violence occurs during this phase there is usually no separation between the target of political claims and the target of violence. In contrast, stepped-up radicalisation is characterised by the escalation of violence and includes the perpetration of violence that the target of political claims and the target of violence are different. Finally, deradicalisation is identified as the slowdown or the termination of a radicalisation process.

frames, which focus attention to what is important (in-frame) and divert attention from what is not (out-of-frame), they act as articulation mechanisms by connecting concepts together and creating a unified story and they transform the way units of social reality are perceived from a movement's constituents (Snow 2004). Despite the significant contributions of the framing perspective to the field, a number of criticisms has been also raised against the current state of the framing literature, as it is characterised by a lack of systematic studies across movements and time, a descriptive bias and a tendency to understand frames as things rather than as dynamic processes (Benford 1997; Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt and Fitzgerald 2014). These three points of critique can be summarised in the fact that while much research has identified movement-specific collective action frames, comparatively little research has examined the discursive processes through which frames evolve, develop and change (Snow 2013).

One of the most accomplished attempts to counter the above shortcomings has been the framing-grammar approach, as it has been established by Johnston in cooperation with Alimi (Johnston 1995a, 2002, 2005a, 2015; Johnston and Alimi 2012, 2013; Alimi and Johnston 2014). Building on Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, this approach re-introduces to the study of frames the concepts of "primary frameworks," "keying processes" and "frame rims." The primary frameworks are basic frames that are used by individuals to make sense of everyday life. As the political and social context changes, new interpretive layers or frame rims are applied to primary frameworks instigating their alteration – a process that is called keying. In order to trace the changes in the primary frameworks and the operation of the keying process, then, Johnston and Alimi (2012) drew on Franzosi's (1999, 2004) "story grammar" approach – developed for the analysis of protest events – and applied the semantic triplet of subject-verb-object to the analysis of movement documents. According to this approach, every action follows a simple grammatical structure comprised of a subject (who is doing the action/claim), a verb (what is the action entails) and an object (who is the target of the action/claim). By applying this framework to representative documents of key actors before and after critical junctures, the authors (Johnston and Alimi 2013) demonstrate the changes in a movement's interpretative schemata regarding itself, its actions and its targets; thus, providing valuable insights into a movement's temporal frame dynamics (how frames change from one point in time to

another), the intramovement frame dynamics (how important actors within one movement frame issues) and the internal frame dynamics (how the relationship between the frame components changes through time) (Alimi and Johnston 2014). Besides, this approach follows the logic of the contentious politics approach (McAdam et al. 2001), as it seeks to identify the operation of generalisable causal mechanisms (keying process) in the framing process (Johnston and Alimi 2012).

In spite of the observed merits of the framing grammar approach, its focus on the relationship of frames with critical junctures or transformative events (McAdam and Sewell 2001) that influence decisively a movement's political environment renders it inadequate for the thesis's research objectives. Hence, instead of a "focused" approach that draws attention to snapshots of frames before and after important events, this thesis provides an alternative longitudinal approach to the study of framing processes. Consistent with this is the conduct of "population studies"; namely, the identification of a group's framing strategies through the sampling and analysis of all its produced texts (Lindekilde 2014). Drawing on the merits of the traditional frame theory and methodology then, this thesis studies frames through the analysis of master frame alignment and dealignment processes and outlines the interactive relationship between collective action frames, framing alignment mechanisms and framing strategies. Likewise, this longitudinal interactive approach allows for the examination of the way social movements frame and reframe their political environment in a constant interaction with the dominant master frames (Alimi 2007b).

### 3.2.2 Mechanism-Based Process Tracing

While process tracing has been one of the most popular methods in the field of history and psychology, the method failed to have a significant impact in political science up to the late 1970s (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Falletti 2016). One of the first attempts to incorporate the technique in the discipline's toolkit was made by George (1979), who proposed the use of historical enquiry for assessing whether the statistical correlation between a dependent and an independent variable is of causal significance. Since then, the application of process tracing in the field has grown exponentially, resulting into the emergence of different variants of the method (Skocpol 1984; George

and McKeown 1985; Aminzade 1993a; Hall 2003; Mahoney 2004; Bennett 2008; Collier 2011; Beach and Pedersen 2013). Diverse types of the approach have also been employed in the study of social movements (Della Porta 2002), such as that of paired comparison of uncommon (McAdam et al. 2001; Tarrow 2010a) or most different cases (Della Porta 2013). Despite the observed diversity, the common denominator of the different alternatives is that it entails the systematic comparison of a small number of cases in order to unearth the causal relationships (mechanisms) that bring together the causes and the outcomes of a social phenomenon by tracing its historical trajectory through time (Ritter 2014).

The variance between the sub-types of process tracing is attributed to the disagreements over the application of the method that stem from the ontological and epistemological differences of researchers (Hall 2003). In particular, approaches are diversified in terms of the understanding of causality into deterministic and probabilistic, and in terms of the reasoning of research into deductive and inductive (Trampusch and Palier 2016). The first distinction has to do with the definition of causal mechanisms (Bennett and Checkel 2015). Consequently, whereas a deterministic view maintains that a mechanism's operation remains always constant and produces the same result in different contexts, adhering to a strict "billiard ball" model of causality (Mahoney 2001; Mayntz 2004; Beach and Pedersen 2016); a probabilistic account argues that the context of a mechanism influences its operation in such a degree that its result cannot be predicted beforehand, thus leaving room for contingency and following a fluid model of causality (Falleti and Lynch 2009; Alimi et al. 2012; Bosi et al. 2014b). The second distinction regards the discrepancy between the deductively and inductively-oriented use of process tracing (Venesson 2008). Indeed, while the application of the method can involve both the inductive and deductive study of the events, researchers tend to give relative weight to one of the two modes (Bennet and Elman 2007). Hence in the more deductive form, process tracing focuses on hypotheses testing and makes use of empirical observations to accept or reject a theory's predictions (Van Evera 1997; Hall 2013). In this form, process tracing is often used in conjunction with statistical analyses with the intention of validating their results and identifying the causal process between independent and dependent variables (George and Bennet 2005; Beach 2016). Contrariwise in the more inductive type, the examination of a process's historical trajectory aims at uncovering

its causal mechanisms in action (Aminzade 1993b; Büthe 2002). In this fashion, inductive process tracing can contribute to theory building and the generation of new hypotheses over the connection between a process's causes and effects (Mahoney 2004).

Out of the crowd of the different types of process tracing, this thesis adopts the mechanism-based process tracing as it was developed by Alimi et al. (2015). Founded on the premises of relationalism, this approach makes an innovative operationalisation of process tracing in the study of radicalisation. Hence, it combines a probabilistic view of causal mechanisms with a method that draws in both the inductive and deductive study of historic events. In particular, by assuming an outcome-driven conceptualisation of causal mechanisms – namely the idea that every mechanism is defined solely by its repercussions (Demetriou 2012a) –, Alimi et al. (2015) recognise mechanisms as context-dependent, portable and indeterminate. Given that, a process is not comprised by identical mechanisms from one context to the other, but it is constituted by a diverse, not constant and cross-context combination of mechanisms and sub-mechanisms. Furthermore, the fact that the approach is firmly based on the contentious politics programme (McAdam et al. 2001), while at the same time gives central attention to the empirical investigation of processes facilitates a middle ground research strategy between deduction and induction. Hence, the application of a mechanism-based process tracing concurs with an inductive, but deductively disciplined, mode of investigation (Alimi et al. 2015); as it is not just restricted to the mere observation of historical context, but rather employs a theoretically informed analysis to the process of radicalisation and looks for causal chains between the various events (Trampusch and Palier 2016). Moreover, this approach uses mechanisms not only as a way to trace the development of a process, but also as units of comparison between different cases. Indeed, through the introduction of sub-mechanisms this type of process tracing enables the comparison of violent phenomena at both the mechanism and sub-mechanism levels. Conclusively, mechanism-based process tracing provides a comparative, contingent and conjunctural framework for the study of a group's radicalisation process and political violence – which is recognised as the result of a complex web of relational patterns that are shaped by the interactions among a variety of actors involved in contention and not as endogenous to a group quality (Alimi et al. 2015).

### 3.2.3 Methodological Contributions

Following a research perspective that adopts a framework of methodological triangulation for the measurement of causal mechanisms (McAdam et al. 2008a, 2008b; Mische 2008), this thesis applies a combination of frame analysis and mechanism-based process tracing in the study of the radicalisation process. Hence, a group's framing process, recognised as "the interpretive link between pre-existing and movement-based schemas of thought and action" (Mische 2003, p. 263), acts as a means to indicate the presence or absence of sub-mechanisms in the interactive relational arenas (Alimi et al. 2015) and to complement the process tracing of a contentious episode. In addition, by introducing Falleti and Lynch's (2008, 2009) mechanistic framework, this approach: enhances the validity of the mechanism-based process tracing in locating the activation and function of different mechanisms and sub-mechanisms; connects the operation of framing alignment mechanisms (mechanisms-as-indicators) with that of the consequential relational mechanisms (mechanisms-as-causes) that drive a group's radicalisation process (Alimi et al. 2015); and provides a new way of conceptualising the role of framing process/mechanism in the development of radicalisation process. Along these lines, this approach highlights the interactive and co-constitutive nature of the meaning-radicalisation relationship; or in other words the interrelation of the dynamics of meaning formation and the dynamics of radicalisation (Bosi et al. 2014b). Finally, through this interactive approach this thesis contributes to the expanding body of relational sociology that studies collective action through the identification of causal mechanisms and their interactions (Alimi et al. 2012; Della Porta 2013; Bosi et al. 2014a).

## 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

### 3.3.1 Data Collection

This thesis is largely based on the analysis of communiqués – namely the movement documents that the clandestine groups circulated in order to claim responsibility for their attacks, rationalise their actions and justify their strategy. While scholars have

begun to recognise the role of a group's oral and written communication in the emergence and resilience of radicalisation, the analysis of communiqués is still undertheorised in the fields of terrorism and social movements studies (Braddock 2015; Loadenthal 2016). Hence, although much research has been conducted on what perpetrators of political violence do, very little has engaged with what they thought they were doing (Cordes 1987; Toros 2008a). The main reasons for this situation have been the recognition of group violence as self-explanatory, the focus on countering rather than understanding the occurrence of such violence and the perceived legitimacy that any interaction with militants and/or their ideas provides to the "terrorists" (Zulaika and Douglass 1996; Toros 2008b; Honig and Reichard 2017). In fact, the "mere act of paying attention to what the terrorists have to say" (Zulaika and Douglass 2008) has been often seen as a step towards the justification of their means; a violation of a taboo that recognises "terrorists" as sheer fanatics or irrational individuals (Rubenstein 1987; Sluka 2008). This attitude has resulted in a longstanding trend of severe lack of primary sources in terrorism studies, (Silke 2001, 2004), which are often recognised as descriptive and merely condemnatory (Jackson 2007a).

In contrast to this trend, this thesis emphasises the importance of primary and internal data. Communiqués, in particular, are valuable primary sources, as they provide important insights into the mindset, the operational thinking and the strategic reaction of a group to the changes in the movement's political opportunity structure (Johnston and Alimi 2012; Morris T. 2014). Indeed, a group's leaflets provide a unique window into how perpetrators of political violence see themselves, what they think they are doing and what they think their actions will accomplish (Cordes 1987; Hoffman 2010). This subjectivity is often considered as the greatest limitation of the use of communiqués in the study of clandestine groups (Breen-Smyth et al. 2008; Zulaika and Douglass 2008). However, a central tenet of a scholar's job is not to find some objective "truth," but to understand those who engage in clandestine political violence (White R. W. 2000). Given that, communiqués offer an excellent opportunity to penetrate the clandestinity of such groups, as they give us an inside view of their operation and enable the reconstruction their external reality (Della Porta 1995). The latter is also the reason that communiqués are used as the main data for the analysis of Greek revolutionary groups, as they facilitate the apprehension of the dynamics of a

group's meaning formation and their interaction with the dynamics of radicalisation – which is one of the central research objectives of this thesis.

At the same time, the study of the two contentious episodes is also informed by other types of data, in order to strengthen the results' reliability and credibility (Yeasmin and Rahman 2012; Ayoub, Wallace and Zepeda-Millán 2014). Hence, this thesis benefitted significantly from the collection and analysis of both external, such as archival records, media reports and secondary sources, and internal data, such as biographical material (Liakos 1988; Katsaros 1999; Darveris 2002; Dafermos 2003; Koufontinas 2014; Xiros 2014) and interviews (Xiros and Karampampas 2014; Koufontinas 2016).

### 3.3.2 Data Analysis

The collection of the groups' leaflets required the use of several data gathering techniques. Initially, the selection of LEA's leaflets entailed the conduct of a copious archival research. For that, the consultation of the ASKI Archives (Contemporary Social History Archives) in Athens was decisive for assembling the 11 leaflets that were circulated during LEA's lifecycle (1969 – 1974). In contrast to the first case, the movement documents of 17N were conveniently available in an edited volume (Revolutionary Organisation 17 November 2002). Hence, the analysis of 17N's frames involved the examination of 78 communiqués, covering the period since the group's appearance in 1975 and up to its arrest in 2002. Contrariwise, 8 communiqués were excluded from the analysis, as they have been recognised as forged, by both the largest part of the Greek media and by two of the most important members of the group (Koufontinas 2014; Xiros 2014).

Table 6 presents the aggregated number of the analysed groups' documents, divided in attack communiqués (propagated to claim responsibility for an attack and explain the rationale of selecting a specific target), strategic communiqués (disseminated for providing strategic direction to a group's constituency), special communiqués (generated for addressing non-attacks events such as important anniversaries) and internal documents (circulated inside a group for the ideological



and strategic direction of its members) (Pluchinsky 2015). These were also complemented by the analysis of a number of letters in the media, declarations in court and autobiographical accounts of guerrillas (Koufontinas 2014, 2016; Xiros 2014).

*Table 6: Analysed communiqués of the revolutionary groups per type*

Revolutionary Group	Type of Communiqués				Total number
	Attack communiqués	Strategic communiqués	Special communiqués	Internal documents	
Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA)	3	5	2	1	11
Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N)	40	13	24	1	78

For the study of the groups' frames the *unit of analysis* was their communiqués. The analysis of the communiqués followed three key steps. First, each leaflet was assigned a (1) code comprised from the group's acronym and the year of its distribution and then it was coded regarding the (2) source of the leaflet (e.g. newspaper's title), (3) the type of the source (archive or book) and (4) the type of the leaflet (attack, strategic, special, or internal). Then, each one of them was read and then coded in terms of: i) the group's name, ii) the number of claimed attacks per communiqué, iii) the location of the attack(s), iv) the method of attack(s), v) the target of attack(s) and vi) the outcome of the attack(s). Followed by a thorough re-reading, the entire number of a group's vii) diagnostic frames, viii) prognostic frames and ix) frame alignment techniques were also identified in the second step. This thesis concentrated its attention to the groups' diagnostic and prognostic framing as these are the most appropriate for demonstrating how the revolutionary groups delegitimised the Greek political system and the legitimised their violence, and for tracing their use of framing alignment techniques.

Table 7 exhibits an example of the coding sheet employed for the analysis of the communiqués, by examining LEA's communiqué (*LEA 1971 I*<sup>12</sup>) found in ASKI Archive and by uncovering some of the frames and frame alignment techniques that the group employed. LEA distributed this leaflet after the detonation of three bombs in one week in Athens (July 1971). The first bomb exploded on 6 July in the Ministry of the Presidency of the Government, the second one went off on 8 July in a fuel tank of ESSO-Pappas Oil Company and the third bomb damaged the building of the Hellenic-American Union on 14 July. LEA used these three bombs to express its hostility towards the military junta and its US patrons, who controlled the country through the imposition of the authoritarian regime (diagnosis) (*ibid*). Responsible for the country's complete subjugation to US imperialist interests was also the pre-coup political establishment, which had facilitated the US interventionism in Greece since the civil war (diagnosis) (*ibid*). Hence, LEA legitimated this operation as part of a revolutionary strategy that aspired not only to overthrow the dictatorship, but also to destroy the post-civil war *status quo* (prognosis) (*ibid*). Moreover, the group attempted to dealign its message from the resonant antidictatorship master frame that advocated the reconstitution of pre-coup democratic regime. Hence, LEA differentiated itself from the bulk of the antidictatorship movement by advocating the collapse of the political establishment and the institutions (e.g. the monarchy and the parliament) that facilitated the imposition of the military coup in the first place (boundary framing) (*ibid*).

This was the coding process that was followed for the total number of the communiqués of the two Greek revolutionary groups (89) that were assembled during the data collection stage of the thesis.

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<sup>12</sup> In *italics* is the code of the cited communiqué, comprised from the group's acronym and the year of circulation. In the case of multiple communiqués in one year from one group, the use of Latin numbers (e.g. I, II, etc.) was applied to differentiate them. All groups' communiqués are analytically presented in the Appendix.

*Table 7: Example of coding sheet for the analysis of the communiqués.*

	Coding Category	Communiqué
1.	Item code	LEA 1971 I
2.	Source	ASKI
3.	Type of source	Archive
4.	Type of communiqué	Attack communiqué
i.	Group's name	LEA
ii.	Number of claimed attacks per communiqué	Three
iii.	Location of attack(s)	Athens city centre
iv.	Target of attack(s)	Ministry of the Presidency of the Government Fuel tank of ESSO-Pappas Oil Company Hellenic-American Union
v.	Method of attack(s)	Bomb
vi.	Outcome of the attack(s)	Limited Material damages No injuries
vii.	Diagnostic frames	US imperialism as responsible for the military junta
viii.	Prognostic frames	Revolutionary violence as the only way to overthrow the military regime and the relationship of dependency with the United States
ix.	Frame alignment mechanisms	Collapse and not reconstitution of the pre-coup democratic regime (boundary framing)



## *Chapter 4: The Context of Radicalisation*

Following a relational and mechanism-oriented approach to a group's radicalisation process, entails the examination of its contentious episode within the historic context that precipitated the emergence of violence. Hence, this chapter delves into the political and social developments of the post-civil war Greece that facilitated the rise of the antidictatorship and revolutionary Left movements, parts of which were the two groups under study – namely LEA and 17N respectively. For LEA's contentious episode then, it is necessary to examine the wider antidictatorship movement and the military regime that instigated it. However, the antidictatorship struggle had its origins in the massive democratisation movement that emerged during the 1960s in Greece and peaked in July 1965 events, when the king forced the elected government of Centre Union (EK)<sup>13</sup> to resign (Athanasatou, Rigos and Seferiades 1999a; Seferiades 2010a). Hence, the first section of this chapter describes the era between the end of the civil war (1949) and the imposition of the junta (1967) and outlines the historic and political context of the democratisation movement's radicalisation. The second section covers the period of the military dictatorship (1967 – 1974), delineates the different phases of the authoritarian regime and outlines the three waves of the antidictatorship struggle. The rest of the chapter looks into the era from the collapse of the authoritarian regime in 1974 and up to the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a period that largely coincides with what came to be known in Greece as *Metapolitefsi* (1974 – 2010)<sup>14</sup>. This was the period that saw the emergence of a revolutionary left movement in Greece and the operation of the 17N. Particularly important was the period of early *Metapolitefsi* (1974 – 1981), as it was decisive for the development of the revolutionary left movement, within which the 17N along with a number of other leftist urban guerrilla

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<sup>13</sup> Centre Union (EK) was a centrist political party, which was created from the merger of four smaller centrist parties in 1961, in order to unite the Centre against both the Right and the Left.

<sup>14</sup> Although *metapolitefsi* was originally used to describe the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, as the term literally means the change in the political system, it has been used to describe the whole period of the Third Hellenic Republic (1974 onwards) (Avgeridis, Gazi and Kornetis 2015). In this thesis, it is used with small "m" (*metapolitefsi*) when it refers specifically to the transition and with capital "M" (*Metapolitefsi*) when it denotes the entire historical period. The latter covers the period between the reconstitution of the democratic regime in July 1974 and up to the onset of the economic crisis in May 2010 with the adoption of the first Memorandum of Understanding (Vernardakis 2011; Panagiotopoulos 2015).

groups emerged as a radical flank of the movement (Haines 2013). The next sections describe the eras of intermediate (1981 – 1990) and late (1990 – 2002) Metapolitefsi, which saw the development of 17N to one of the most elusive urban guerrilla organisations in Europe (Kassimeris G. 2013a).

## 4.1 From the Civil War to the “Stunted” Democracy

The Greek civil war (1946 – 1949), one of the three major modern European civil wars next to the Russian and the Spanish (Kalyvas S. N. 1999), is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential events in modern Greek history. It was a traumatic experience that through its profound and long-lasting repercussions defined Greek politics of the whole post-war period up to the collapse of the military junta in 1974. In recent years, a considerable amount of literature has been published over the conflict that took place during the 1940s (Mazower 2000; Carabott and Sfikas 2004; Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004), making the decade as one of the most well-studied eras of Greek history. Notwithstanding, there is a striking absence of consensus over its causes among researchers, rendering the civil war the most divisive chapter of the country’s modern history (Sfikas 2007; Antoniou and Marantzidis 2008). The conflict, which broke out almost immediately after the liberation of the country from the German forces (October 1944) was fought between the right-wing Greek National Army (GNA) – supported by the government of national unity, the British, and the United States – and the left-wing Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), backed up from the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the communist governments of Yugoslavia and Albania (Namchani 1990; Marantzidis 2010). In fact, the volume and significance of the foreign intervention in the civil strife are the reasons that it has been regularly considered as one of the first major episodes of the cold war.

The termination of the civil war signified the final victory of the Greek Right and the indisputable integration of the country in the Western sphere of influence; a process that had already been under way since the “Percentages Agreement” (October 1944), which had assigned Greece within the British sphere (Botsiou 2012). When the United States, though, took over from Britain in 1947 this process deepened further, as the Truman administration saw in Greece an opportunity to demonstrate globally

the determination of the United States to contain the expansion of Soviet communism (Jones H. 1989; Gaddis 2005); a policy that came to be known as the Truman Doctrine<sup>15</sup> (March 1947) (Botsiou 2009). Indeed, in spite of the severe disagreement among researchers over the causes of the onset of the conflict (Kalyvas S. N. 2000, 2008)<sup>16</sup>, the role of the great powers and the Cold War, the KKE's strategy (Alexander and Loulis 1981; Sfikas 2014) and even the periodisation of the fight itself (Iatrides and Rizopoulos 2000), there is considerable consensus over its effects. Undoubtedly, the most severe of these were the 158,000 dead and the 100,000 emigres to the countries of the Eastern Bloc (Kornetis 2013b, p. 10)<sup>17</sup>. What is more, the end of the strife is commonly identified with the birth of a regime that came to be known as "stunted democracy" (Nicolakopoulos 2001) – a political system that regularly operated under the overpowering influence of the monarchy, the army and the US foreign policy (Alivizatos 2008). Indeed, the aftermath of the conflict saw the coexistence of a parliamentary democracy with the systematised repression of the Left and the subsistence of a deep state mechanism in a regime that is often recognised as quasi-authoritarian (Seferiades 1986).

Fundamental characteristic of the post-civil war regime was its rigidly anti-communist stance, which characterised all the aspects of political and every-day life. Despite the fact that state persecution towards communist and left-leaning citizens had already started since the end of 1920s, it escalated further during the civil war and especially after the prohibition of KKE and EAM<sup>18</sup> in 1947. One of the most common measures was the expulsion of dissidents to labour camps in small islands of the Aegean (Voglis 2002; Panourgiá 2009)<sup>19</sup>. During the exile, the imprisoned were regularly subjected to torture in order to sign declarations of repentance – a document through which they were asked to publicly renounce their communist ideology.

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<sup>15</sup> This US foreign policy was designed to counter – what was recognised as – Soviet expansionism in Greece and Turkey. It was the precursor of the Marshal Plan and the American policy of containment in Western Europe that later led in the establishment of NATO.

<sup>16</sup> The discussion over the causes of the civil war has been recently revived in Greek historiography, due to the emergence of the so called "new wave" school at the beginning of the previous decade (see Gkotzaridis 2011 on the revisionist debate in Greece).

<sup>17</sup> On top of these someone should also add the 550,000 deaths, the 8 per cent of the Greek population, which had already perished during the WWII (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, p. 142)

<sup>18</sup> EAM (National Liberation Front) was the most massive resistance group during the Axis occupation of Greece. It was a coalition of left and centre-left factions dominated by the Greek Communist Party (KKE).

<sup>19</sup> Red Cross' figures suggested that a total of 40,000 persons were in exile by the end of the conflict (Close 1993).

Another policy against left-wingers and fellow travelers was that of the certificates of social convictions, which were necessary for all encounters between the citizens and the state; from applying for public jobs to obtaining a Greek passport (Samatas 2004). These certificates were issued from the police in direct relation to an individual's file, which included surveillance records on him and his family. According to these files, every citizen then was assigned to categories depending on the national loyalty criteria that separated the "nationally-minded" from the leftists and the communists; while "national-mindedness" became the official ideology of the state (Papadimitriou 2006)<sup>20</sup>. These oppressive mechanisms had as a result the creation of an "apartheid system" (Tsoukalas 1981b) for the defeated of the civil war and the segregation of the country's population between patriotism and "unpatriotism" (Pashaloudi 2008). This dominant cleavage legitimised further the Left's subjugation and assigned to the traditional left/right distinction an exceptional, in comparison to other European countries, importance (Moschonas 1994). Hence, the next two decades found the country largely polarised in two ideologically irreconcilable camps pitted against each other: the nationalists against the traitorous "Slavo-communists" and "communist-bandits" in the interpretation of the Right; or the left-wing patriots against the "monarcho-fascists" and the agents of "national subjection," in the interpretation of the Left.

The harassment of the Greek Left, which took the form of a state-organised anti-communist campaign and was summarised rather eloquently from Samatas (1986) as "Greek McCarthyism", was facilitated by two other factors. These were the perpetuation of a state of exception in the legal framework, which was invoked during the civil war and was officially retained until 1962, only to endure essentially up to the end of the military junta (Alivizatos 1981); and the "foreign factor", namely the US involvement in Greece that was so all-embracing that was considered as "unique among non-colonial situations" (Fatouros 1981, p. 239). Hence, since its decisive intervention in the civil war – that largely determined the final outcome of the conflict – the United States exercised an extraordinary degree of control over the country and key sectors of the state bureaucracy, so as to manage the distribution of the large-scale economic and military assistance that the Marshall Plan conditioned (Maragkou

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<sup>20</sup> "National-mindedness" was the official state ideology between 1949 and 1974, and it was a mix of anti-communism, nationalism, royalism and the belief in the Orthodox faith.



2009)<sup>11</sup>. US aid was designed not only to foster the economic reconstruction of the country, but also to secure the geostrategic interests of the Western alliance in Greece against the internal and external “Communist threat” (Wittner 1982; Sfikas 2011). Exploiting the allegedly imminent, but rather overstated, threat of Soviet expansionism and the “communistophobia” that arose from it, the US Embassy in Athens had the principal say in issues such as the formation of the Greek cabinet, the command of the armed forces and their size, or even the holding of elections (Kassimeris C. 2009). Other developments that further strengthened the US influence in Greece were: the incorporation of Greece into NATO (1952), the agreement for the establishment of US military bases in Greek soil (1953), the foundation of KYP (Central Intelligence Service) (1953) – the Greek internal security agency that was under the strong influence of the CIA station in Athens – and the formation of a “stay-behind” force (1955) – codenamed “Operation Red Sheepskin” – that could provide guerrilla resistance against a possible communist rebellion (Murtagh 1994)<sup>21</sup>.

Another characteristic of the post-civil war era was the significant reinforcement of the role of the armed forces in Greek politics. As a matter of fact, the civil war precipitated the politicisation of the army, which was ready, if necessary, to circumvent the parliamentary system in order to secure the status quo (Tsarouhas 2005). This process had already started since the end of the WWII, when the British military mission encouraged a regime of semi-autonomy for the Greek army. The United States later intensified this practice in an attempt to safeguard its influence and to pursue the fight against communism, as they facilitated the development of an oversized military mechanism that was largely dependent on the steady flow of US resources for its maintenance and operation. Indeed, between 1950 and 1967 the United States were responsible for the 57 per cent of the total security expenses of the country, which especially after the Korean War (1950 – 1953) was considered as a key point for the deterrence of communist expansion (Zachariou 2009). It is also worth mentioning that the Greek armed forces emerged from the civil war as an ideologically

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<sup>11</sup> Through the Marshall Plan, Greece received over 5 billion dollars of post-war reconstruction and security assistance aid between 1947 and 1977 – a fact that makes the country the single-largest recipient of Western aid in all of post-war Europe.

<sup>21</sup> This “stay-behind” force was similar to the “Operation Gladio” that was active during the Cold War in Italy (Willan 2002; Ganser 2005). In contrast to the latter though, whose connection with right-wing clandestine attacks during the 1970s and 1980s in Italy has come to light, there is a dearth of evidence for the Greek “stay-behind” operation and its role in the Greek affairs (Bogiopoulos 2006a; 2006b).

homogenous anti-communist body, due to a series of purges against liberal officers throughout the 1940s. One critical actor for the propagation of anti-communism within the ranks of the army was IDEA (Holy Bond of Greek Officers), a clandestine group organised by monarchist and conservative officers. IDEA's main task was to secure the appointment of nationalist and to block that of republican officers in the high ranks of the army (Karagiorgas 2003). The group's influence grew substantially during the civil war, as it successfully campaigned for the appointment as commander-in-chief of the GNA of General Alexandros Papagos (1948) – a renowned for his nationalist views officer. Consequently, the crucial role of the army in the win over the Left, in conjunction with the inability of the weak political system to effectively exercise control over the country, elevated the armed forces to a dominant actor of the post-civil war regime.

The other non-parliamentary institution that found its role greatly fortified after the end of the civil strife was monarchy. In contrast to the divisive part that the royal family had played since WWI (Mavrogordatos 1981), the restoration of king George II in 1946 rallied the bourgeois political system and the army against the communist threat and reinstated the Palace as a symbol of state unity (Botsiou 2008). The Crown also enjoyed the support of the Western allies, who recognised the king as guarantor of the Greek political order and the state's alliance with the West. Critical for the role of the monarchy in the post-civil war era was the enactment of the 1952 Constitution, which bestowed to the king significant executive powers (Alivizatos 1995). Thanks to this legislation, the royal family was then able to follow a rather interventionist policy in the political affairs, by applying pressure for the formation and resignation of electoral majorities or for the appointment and dismissal of ministers of their choice. Moreover, the king had a special relationship with the army, as he traditionally had great influence in the appointment to senior posts of military hierarchy, as well as in the nomination of the Minister of National Defense (Veremis 1997); a fact that buttressed farther the army's disrespect for parliamentary authority.

The rising interventionism of the king and the army in everyday politics as well as the low opinion that a part of the Right shared towards parliamentarism resulted in the sustenance of a "para-state" apparatus throughout the period between the end of the civil war and the demise of the military junta (Lentakis 2000). This apparatus was comprised of a set of organisations on the state's margins, which maintained a degree

of cooperation, enjoyed often the protection of the state and were used to persecute dissidents or to influence elections on behalf of the Right (Tsarouhas 2005). Stemming their origins from the paramilitary militias of the civil war, these groups were initially manned with ex-fighters of anti-ELAS<sup>22</sup> resistance groups or collaborationist units such as the Security Battalions<sup>23</sup>, since the great majority of the collaborators escaped the legal purge (Kousouris 2014a). In fact, the justice system in the aftermath of the civil war legalised the reintegration of the collaborators, many of whom even hold public office in the post-war era (Kousouris 2014b; Mazower 1995)<sup>24</sup>. Notorious examples of the deep state mechanism were the violence of the Battalions of National Security (TEA) on behalf of the right-wing party of National Radical Union (ERE) in the rigged national elections of 1961 (Seferiades 1986); and the case of the “Redpin” organisation that was behind the murder of Grigoris Lambrakis, a MP of the United Democratic Left (EDA)<sup>25</sup> party, in 1963 (Dordanas 2008).

Consequently, the end of the civil war prompted the establishment of a regime that safeguarded the prevalence of the Right in the party politics and of anti-communism as official state ideology. Based on the anti-ELAS front, which had forged during the civil war between pre-war bourgeois parties, right-wing resistance groups and collaborationist elements, and with the support of a nexus of power that included the United States, the monarch, the army and the “para-state”, this regime enforced the restoration of the pre-war *status quo* and the political oppression of the Left (Hasiotis 2012). Hence, in Greece the end of the WWII – contrary to what happened in other countries of Western Europe – did not lead to the adoption of a liberal democratic regime, but instead was followed by a “repressive parliamentarism” (Mouzelis 1978) – in which the civic and political rights of the left-leaning citizens, or everyone suspected as such, were severely restricted<sup>26</sup>. These tendencies continued also in the

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<sup>22</sup> The ELAS (Greek People's Liberation Army) was the military wing of the EAM.

<sup>23</sup> The Security Battalions (SB) were paramilitary armed units organised by the Greek quisling administrations with the assistance of the Axis forces during the occupation of the country. They were responsible for protecting the regime, supporting the occupation forces and fighting the rise of communism (Hondros 1983; Kalyvas S. N. 2008b).

<sup>24</sup> Greece had one of the lowest rates of purges against wartime collaborators in Europe as only the 15 per cent of all cases (2,200 out of 16,000) ever reached public hearing, while the most of them got cleared by preliminary orders, which resulted in 95 convicted for collaboration per 100,000 inhabitants (Kousouris 2014b, p. 146 and 155).

<sup>25</sup> The EDA was the moderate public face of the banned since the civil war KKE (1947).

<sup>26</sup> While some rights were enjoyed mainly by the non-communists “national-minded” citizens, such as the rights of free speech, free association and political representation, other such as the right of striking for the public servants were completely banned (Mouzelis and Pagoulatos 2002).

1950s, which found the country in a post-traumatic shock after a decade of continuous fighting. Central features of the Greek state remained the polarisation between the winners and the losers of the civil war along the lines of “national-mindedness” and the interventionism of the non-parliamentary institutions. Given that, Greece can be classified as a “high-capacity undemocratic regime,” as the state had the power to considerably affect the activity and resources of the population and the distribution of political rights was narrow and unequal (Tilly and Tarrow 2007; Papanikolopoulos 2014). In this context, the political opportunities for autonomous action were critically constrained and the emergence of any kind of dissent was met with state repression. At the same time, the protracted repression gave rise to a “subculture of accommodation”<sup>27</sup> (Scott 1985, 1990; Johnston and Snow 1998) within the leftist population of the country, in an attempt to avoid the persecution of the state.

However, a series of new developments during the 1950s such as the country’s economic reconstruction, the reorganisation of the Left and the split within the post-civil war political elites laid the bases for the formation and rise of a democratisation movement, which put in jeopardy the structure of the post-civil war regime during the 1960s (Serdedakis 2007). More specifically, during this decade the Greek economy witnessed a rapid growth through a combination of private and state investment (Bermeo 1995). A critical result of this development was the expansion of the secondary and third economic sectors, the former of which overcame by the end of the decade for the first time the contribution of the primary sector to the GNP (Kazakos 2001). The industrialisation of the country was followed by the rise of urbanisation, the growing abandonment of rural areas and the establishment of a new middle class in the urban centres. At the same time, the economic and social modernisation of the country was in direct contradiction with the political system itself, which remained closed and authoritarian; thus, engendering to the further escalation of grievances for all those feeling excluded from the system (Serdedakis 2008). The intensification of grievances was advantageous for the rise of EDA, a leftist coalition that was founded in 1952 and became the unofficial front of the exiled Communist Party in Greece. With the KKE outlawed since 1947 and operating from Bucharest, Romania, a dual structure

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<sup>27</sup> A “subculture of accommodation” is characterised by high behavioural but low value congruence with the culture of a society, as while the beliefs of the subculture are hostile to the dominant norms of the society its behaviour mirrors the latter out of fear of punishment (Johnston and Snow 1998; Johnston and Aarelaid-Tart 2000).

consisting of an external and an internal political centres was created, with KKE pulling the strings from the exile (Vernardakis and Mavris 1991). Despite the influence of the KKE, EDA gradually became relatively independent and followed a moderate agenda, which advocated the democratisation of the political system, in contrast to the KKE that held on to its revolutionary ambitions. In fact, EDA managed to grow, in the face of the persecution of the regime, from 10 per cent in 1952 elections to 24 per cent in the election of 1958 and to become the main political opposition (Seferiades 1986). The success of the Left was rather alarming for the political establishment and the right-wing government of the National Radical Union (ERE), which in the aftermath of the elections intensified the repression and the propaganda against the EDA.

The rise of the left party and the ferocious reaction of the regime were two important reasons for the irrevocable rupture of the traditional political alignment between right and centre political forces that had been forged since the civil war (Papanikolopoulos 2014). Main source of the friction was the result of the elections of October 1961, or the “elections of violence and fraud” as they became known ever after, which brought the right-wing ERE once more in governance with a dominant 50 per cent of the vote (Pappas T. S. 2003). The electoral result, which was a product of systematic falsification and included the violent intimidation of voters from the armed forces and the deep state, saw the newly-established Centre Union (EK) party in the second place with 33 per cent and EDA in the third place with 14 per cent of the vote (Seferiades and Hatzivassiliou 2008). Hence, while the formation of the EK before the elections – as a coalition of small parties of the Centre – was facilitated from the political establishment in order to halt the rise of EDA (Couloumbis 2008), the widespread aggression against leftist and centrist citizens alike changed to hostile the party’s stance towards the regime. As a result, both the Left and the Centre denounced the elections’ result, with Georgios Papandreou – the leader of the EK – proclaiming an “unyielding struggle” against the government and in support of free elections. This campaign, which was not only opposed to the right-wing government of ERE but also to the army, the Crown and the United States, signified the *de facto* fragmentation of the post-civil war anti-communist front and the creation of a dividing line between right and anti-right political forces that gradually substituted the old cleavage between “national-minded” and communist blocs.

However, boundary deactivation – defined as the shift toward decreased difference between within-boundary and cross-boundary interactions (Tilly 2003) – had been underway at least since the late 1950s, when the populous protests in support of the anti-colonial struggle of Cyprus transcended the social dichotomies and mobilised for the first time in the post-civil war era citizens of diverse political affiliations (Serdedakis 2015). Indeed, the claim of the Greek-Cypriot majority of the island for the union of Cyprus with Greece and the suppression of the movement from the British colonial administration rallied not only conservative and right-wing elements, but also progressive and leftist parts of the Greek society. According to the latter especially, the fight of the Cypriots was about the right to self-determination and was recognised as part of the global anti-colonialist movement that emerged after the WWII (Stefanidis 2008). Hence, the Left grasped the opportunity to reclaim its patriotic credentials and to manifest its social grievances “in the privileged, for the winners of the civil war, field of national interests” (Serdedakis 2007, p. 4). Besides the negative stance of the United States and Britain against the Greek initiative to raise the issue of self-determination of Cyprus to the United Nations, had as a consequence the appearance of anti-American and anti-imperialist slogans in demonstrations, alongside cries against state suppression and the restriction of social and political rights.

If the mobilisation for Cyprus was an initiator movement, the declaration of the “unyielding struggle” was the catalyst for the emergence of the democratisation movement, as well as for a contentious cycle that rose in 1961 and peaked in the summer of 1965, when the “royal coup” brought out for a period of two months hundreds of thousands of protesters in the streets. The protest cycle of the 1960s was distinguished by the rapid diffusion of collective action, the appearance of new movements and the innovation in the collective action frames (Seferiades 2008). Significant role throughout the cycle of contention had the leftist and centrist protesters, who stimulated by the spirit of the “unyielding struggle” and the delegitimisation of the regime by the opposition parties, demanded the resignation of the government and the conduct of new elections (Seferiades 2010a). The protesters’ claims got continuously more politicised during the course of the decade, as the sectoral strikes of the beginning of the 1960s (Lampropoulou 2008) gave place to the passionate student demonstrations of 1962 – 1963, and the latter to the violent anti-

regime protests of the “July events” in 1965. Critical point for the intensification of the contentious cycle was definitely the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis in Thessaloniki in May 1963 (Gkotzaridis 2016). The killing of the left-wing MP from right-wing extremists with connections to the “para-state” mechanism became a symbol of the regime’s oppression, triggered the politicisation of thousands of previously apolitical citizens and sparked a domino of political developments (Rizas 2008; Gkotzaridis 2012). Indeed, only days after his death, Lambrakis inspired the creation of a new youth movement that was named after him, the Democratic Youth Movement Grigoris Lambrakis – later renamed to Democratic Youth Lambrakis (DYL) after its integration with the youth wing of EDA (1964) (Sain Martin 1984). The role of DYL in the protest cycle cannot be overstated, as the group managed to create two hundred offices throughout Greece, to enlist 37,000 members and to mobilise up to 100,000 campaigners by 1965 (Vernardakis and Mavris 1991) – thus becoming a truly mass movement for the democratisation of the political system (Asimakoulas 2009). The Lambrakis incident was significantly exploited by the EK and the EDA that blamed the ERE government as responsible for the murder. In the face of the rising political and popular pressure that manifested in violent demonstrations around the country demanding the resignation of the government, prime minister Constantinos Karamanlis stepped down in June 1963, leaving in his place a caretaker government. The general elections of November 1963 resulted in a narrow victory for Georgios Papandreou and the EK. The win of the centrist party meant the first non-right-wing government in the country since the early 1950s; while the party strengthened further its rule some months later with the win in the snap elections of February 1964. The ascendance of EK to power resulted in the introduction of a number of liberalisation measures, such as the softening of the anti-communist legislation, the closing down of some internment camps and the repatriation of a number of exiled to the Eastern Bloc countries (Kornetis 2013b). However, these measures did not bring about the pacification of the protest movement, which apart from a period of grace to the newly-elected government continued to grow. Indeed, the abundance of political opportunities created by the liberalisation of the regime, led to the intensification of protest and of the political demands during the two years EK stayed in power, as the protesters kept on calling for the further democratisation of the country.

The combination of the liberalisation policies with the “radicalisation” of popular claims was not received favourably from the post-civil war political establishment (Botsiou 2008). Moreover, the emergence inside the EK of a centre-left wing led by Andreas Papandreou, the son of the prime minister and a rather radical for the period politician, raised fear of an imminent change in the structure of the established power relations. The deteriorating relationship between the government and the Crown reached a climax over the appointment of the Minister of National Defense in June 1965. The refusal of the King Constantine II to accept the proposal of Georgios Papandreou to assume himself the control of the Ministry, amidst widespread rumors of a looming left-wing coup organised around Andreas Papandreou (ASPIDA scandal)<sup>28</sup> (Murtagh 1994), resulted in the resignation of the prime minister. The king’s stance led to a severe political crisis that lasted up to the military overthrow of April 1967 and instigated the formation of a series of unstable governments by EK defectors. Direct consequence of the “royal coup” was also the rise of a huge protest wave that for almost 70 days campaigned for the reconstitution of the elected government of EK. Indeed, the “July events” were characterised by: the massive participation of protesters as several hundred thousand people participated in around 400 open-air rallies; the radicalisation of protest claims as demonstrators were calling for the abolishment of monarchy; and the violent diversion of protest events, as many ended in clashes between protesters and the security forces, with one occasion even leading to the death of a student in the hands of the police (Serdedakis 2008; Seferiades 2008, 2010a). It was also the first time since the end of the civil war that protesters instead of dispersing they fought back police violence through the use of barricades and firebombs. The protesters’ violent repertoire of action and the extent of violence itself, which without a doubt surpassed the accepted levels of violence of the post-civil war period, stunned the political system in such a degree that EDA even claimed that the clashes were staged by the police and agents provocateurs (Voglis 2011; Papanikolopoulos 2014). The summer of 1965 also signified the apogee of disillusionment of leftist activists with the official Left, as EDA held a moderate line throughout the events and failed to recognise the period as a “revolutionary moment” (Kornetis 2015). At the same time, the most militant members of DYK and of smaller groups of the extra-parliamentary

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<sup>28</sup> ASPIDA (shield in Greek) was the codename of an alleged left-wing cabal within the Greek armed forces headed by Andreas Papandreou, which conspired for the preparation of a communist take-over of the country.



Left believed that the “July events” provided the “objective conditions” for a general uprising against the regime<sup>29</sup>. This disparity between the party and the radical flanks of the movement led some individuals to consider, already during the summer of 1965, the adoption of more violent tactics, such as that of clandestine armed action (Katsaros 1999; Serdedakis 2012). The political conditions began to change by the end of August 1965, when the fatigue of the protesters combined with the police repression led to the decrease of the protest movement. The protest cycle declined also as a result of the role that both EK and EDA played during and after the “July events”, as they tried to control the contention and to mediate for the pacification of the protests (Seferiades 2008). Hence, the end of the “Greek 1968” (Vernardakis and Mavris 1991) signified the decline of the contentious cycle of the 1960s, which was typified in this last phase by a return to more conventional protest actions (e.g. assemblies, petitions) from the majority of the movement and a resort to violent tactics (e.g. vandalisms, arsons) from a small minority (Seredakis 2007, 2012). Despite the de-escalation of protests, political instability remained a distinguishing characteristic of the post-July events era, creating the opportunities for the impending deviation of democracy. Indeed, the period between July 1965 and April 1967 saw the formation of five different governments, which one after the other failed to secure a vote of confidence and therefore resigned within months or even days of their inception. In this political environment, the scheduled elections of May 1967 seemed as the only way out of the constitutional impasse. However, the prospect of a landslide win of EK and the return of Georgios Papandreou as the country’s prime minister, triggered the military coup of April 1967.

## 4.2 The Junta and the Antidictatorship Struggle

Staged by a group of middle rank officers on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1967, the putsch took by surprise the political establishment as a whole. Indeed, whereas the rumours of an upcoming coup were common since the “apostasy” of 1965<sup>30</sup>, the seizure of power by

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<sup>29</sup> The “July events” were formative for the rise in prominence of a number of radical left organisations, such as the Maoist group that was formed around the journal “Anagennisi” (Renaissance) that promulgated a tiermondiste discourse and criticised the revisionism of the KKE (Kornetis 2013).

<sup>30</sup> “Apostasy” was named the defection of several EK MPs from the government of Georgios Papandreou that led to the crisis of July 1965.

the “Colonels”<sup>31</sup> caught unaware the Palace, the security forces and the party system (Clogg and Yannopoulos 1972). Particularly surprising was the identity of the perpetrators, as it was organised by a “Revolutionary Council” (a group of 12 colonels) directed by Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, Colonel Nikolaos Makarezos and Brigadier Stylianos Pattakos, at the same time as generals loyal to the king were already planning the military takeover of the country before the elections of May 1967 (Maragkou 2006). For the execution of the coup, the plotters invoked “Prometheus,” a NATO-designed emergency plan devised for the prevention of an attack and the neutralisation of domestic leftist opposition in case of war with a Warsaw Pact state (Doulis 2011). Initial actions of the junta were the implementation of martial law, the dissolution of the parliament, the imposition of preventive censorship on the press and the suspension of the articles of the constitution that guaranteed civil liberties – such as the freedom of expression or the right of assembly. Other measures included the prohibition of demonstrations, the suspension of activity for all political parties, youth/student organisations and trade unions, the complete outlawing of EDA and the forced retirement of around 2,500 army officers (Murtagh 1994). The regime also followed a programme of mass arrests, as only in the first few days more than 10,000 people were captured and sent to exile on remote islands of the Aegean. Among those detained were not only the usual suspects, namely those citizens associated with the Left and the Centre-Left, but also a number of political leaders across the political spectrum – including the Prime Minister and leader of the right-wing ERE, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos<sup>32</sup>. Despite the fact that the coup itself was swift and bloodless, as soon as the junta came to power it instituted a regime of terror that was characterised by the surveillance, interrogation, torture and exile of “dissidents” (Asimakoulas 2009). Consequently, during the next seven years the systematic violation of human rights and civil liberties became part of everyday life, as the dictatorship established a “state of torture” in which the maltreatment of agitators was used as a means of public control and deterrence (Pedaliu 2016).

Enacted on the pretext of deterring a planned communist takeover, the junta self-identified as a “nation-saving revolution” with a mission to protect the country from

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<sup>31</sup> As the group behind the military intervention has become known ever since; while the military regime they imposed has been dubbed as the “colonels’ junta.”

<sup>32</sup> The Greek junta is unique, among other similar regimes globally, for its treatment of the parliamentary Right, as MPs of right-wing parties were also rounded up and jailed along with their centrist and left-wing colleagues in the aftermath of the coup (Bermeo 1995).

the internal enemy and the short-sighted political elite, as well as to defend the state's Greek values, summarised in the triptych of "homeland, religion and family" (Meletopoulos 1987; Manesis 1999; Van Steen 2015). The regime's ideology was a combination of zealous anti-communism and a devotion to the Helleno-Christian tradition and can be seen as an ultranationalist "version of the post-civil war ideological superstructure of the Greek state" (Kornetis 2013b, p. 40). Hence, the dictatorship can be recognised both as an intensification and as an outcome of the semi-authoritarian post-civil war political system (Kaminis 1999). It was the fear of the Greek Right of losing its supremacy that matured the political conditions for the coup, as especially after 1965 a significant part of the right-wing camp considered the prospect of a top-down intervention as necessary for safeguarding the "political normality" and pre-empting the rise of the Left. In accordance with this perspective, the coup was an attempt to perpetuate the status quo in Greece that was threatened from the emergence of the massive democratisation movement; as well as a radical redistribution of power within the prevailing political triarchy, consisted of the throne, the parliament and the army, in favour of the latter (Diamandouros 1986). Given that, the Colonels intervened to restore – what they recognised as – the endangered position of the army in the post-civil war power structure. At the same time, their decision was also guided by a need to protect their own career prospects, which were at risk due to the deepening of the democratisation process that the almost certain win of EK would have instigated (Zacharopoulos 1972; Veremis 1997). Indeed, the coup was not imposed by the military as an institution, but by a radical right cabal that was in isolation of both the high-ranking army officers and the rest of the armed forces (navy and air force) and ruled the military through the use of purges and perks (Tzortzis 2012).

Another facilitating factor for the imposition of the junta was the failure of the Greek political system to respond to the coup. Particularly indicative for the lack of preparedness was the powerlessness of EDA to organise any kind of resistance against the junta, as the party proved completely ill-equipped despite its vast clandestine network (Kassimeris C. 2006; Papathanasiou 2008). In fact, the weakness of the Left to react to the military intervention, along with a number of ideological and strategic divergences between EDA and KKE, led only some months later to the *de facto* schism in the ranks of the Greek Communist Party between an "interior" Eurocommunist

(KKE-ES) and an “exterior” pro-Moscow faction (KKE) (February 1968). In the meantime, the initial shock gave its place to a political inertia that characterised the whole seven-year period of the junta, as the pre-coup political establishment was under constant surveillance and lacking the necessary consensus for putting up any serious resistance to the regime. In that political environment, the main parties of the era, namely the right-wing ERE and the centrist EK, they went no further than publicly condemning the dictatorship; while the arrest of EDA’s leaders and numerous other members were insurmountable obstacles for the manifestation of any opposition. Only exception to the general rule was the failed attempt of the king to carry out a countercoup on 13 December 1967, which was averted relatively easily by the junta and led to the self-imposed exile of Constantine II in Rome (Botsiou 2008). Then again, the documented stagnation did not entail the legitimisation of the regime too, as the political world almost unanimously refused to cooperate with the Colonels and opposed the regime at every opportunity (Bermeo 1995).

Internationally, the dictatorship was originally met with mixed feelings, as the United States and other NATO allies adopted a “wait and see” policy (Chourchoulis and Kourkouvelas 2012). Later on, the staunch anti-communism of the regime and the intensification of the cold war antagonism in the late 1960s<sup>33</sup> prompted NATO to lift its initial reservations and to follow a “business as usual” policy (Pedaliu 2011). The US stance towards the regime specifically, shifted from tolerance to overt support during the Nixon era (1969 – 1974) and culminated with the signing of a homeporting agreement between Greece and the United States in January 1973 (Klarevas 2006); a line that for a significant part of the Greek population substantiated the instrumental role that the country had played to the realisation of the coup in the first place (Maragkou 2006). In contrast to the US position, a number of Scandinavian and Western European governments were quick to oppose the Greek dictatorship and to seek its expulsion for the Council of Europe as a violator of human rights; a campaign that finally led to the voluntary exit of Greece from the body in December 1969 (Maragkou 2009; Pedaliu 2016).

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<sup>33</sup> The regime’s rise to power coincided with a series of critical developments in the Mediterranean and the Middle East such as France’s withdrawal from the military wing of NATO (March 1966) and the Six Day War (June 1967) (Pedaliu 2009).

Within the country, the efficacy of the coup itself along with the ensuing brutality of the Colonels' regime engendered a generalised feeling of fear among ordinary people. Indeed, the thousands of arrests and the systematic use of torture led the striking majority of citizens to passivity. As a result, while a significant part of the Greek population despised the regime, they did not know how to react against it. This kind of helplessness was also intensified by the realisation that the regime proved to be more resilient than what was initially expected and by the popular belief that the coup was at least sanctioned, if not also planned, by the United States (Lialiouti 2015a). A side-effect of this suffocating atmosphere was that many people, students in particular, decided to flee the regime mainly for countries of Western Europe (Voglis 2011). On the other hand, passivity was not only a product of fear but also of tolerance, at least from a part of the Greek population that was traditionally identified with the national-minded camp that had ruled the country since the end of the civil war (Sotiropoulos D. A. 2010). Other reasons that encouraged a more tolerant stance were also people's disenchantment with the pre-dictatorial political system as a result of the protracted crisis of parliamentarianism after 1965, the relatively good performance of the Greek economy at least up to 1972 and the adoption from the regime of a package of populist policies (e.g. increase of wages, reduction of taxes, cancelation of debts) designed to contain popular discontent (Haralambis 1999; Kazakos 2001). Then again, the dictatorship's repressive nature and its lack of links with the civil society rendered the regime unwelcome for the majority of the Greek population (Sotiropoulos D. A. 1999).

In this climate of oppression, the organisation of resistance was meant from the very beginning to be a rather demanding and dangerous activity. Indeed, authoritarian regimes tend to play a decisive role in shaping and regulating contentious politics, as they reduce the possibility for collective action and increase the risks of political participation. Regardless of the repression, though, dictatorships do not eliminate contention, as the dynamics of opposition remain in play and lead to "an ebb and flow of mobilisation" (Larzilliere 2012, p. 11). Actually, in repressive settings mobilisation adheres to periods of expanded and contracted political opportunities. Hence, challengers act on the perceived political opportunities and threats, as they are manifested in the opening or closing of the political environment, the stability of political elites and the state's propensity for repression (Goldstone and Tilly 2001;

Almeida 2003). This was the case of the mobilisation against the Greek junta as well, as the seven-year reign of the Colonels witnessed the emergence of three broad waves of contention, consisting of both resistant and transgressive collective actions (Johnston 2006)<sup>34</sup>, during the liberalisation/hard-line cycles (phases) of the regime (Asimakoulas 2009). These phases were: i) an initial hard-line phase (April 1967 – November 1969), ii) a phase of limited reforms (November 1969 – December 1971), iii) a liberalisation phase (January 1972 – November 1973), and iv) a short phase of brutal repression that lasted up to the demise of the regime (November 1973 – July 1974) (Floros G. 1987; Kornetis 2013b).

#### 4.2.1 Hard-Line Phase and the First Wave of Antidictatorship Struggle (1967 – 1969)

The first phase covers the time from the outbreak of the coup (April 1967) to the abolition of preventive censorship (November 1969) and is recognised as the harshest period of the regime. It was characterised by the establishment of a brutal repressive mechanism that was originally materialised through the massive wave of purges. Other crucial features of this mechanism were the consolidation of a constant state of emergency through the Constitution of 1968, the construction of a wide surveillance network and the systematic use of torture carried out mostly by the Special Interrogation Unit of the Military Police (EAT-ESA)<sup>35</sup> (Alivizatos 1983). At first, the terror of the regime paralysed the country. Indeed, the majority of those who were against the regime confined itself in a kind of “passive resistance” through the circulation of political jokes against the dictators (Kornetis 2013b) – a type of oppositional speech act commonly observed in authoritarian systems and recognised as the “smallest” form of contention in such settings (Johnston 2005b). However, the combination of the shrinking of political opportunities and the crisis of the dominant cleavages that the putsch engendered had as a result the preeminence of an

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<sup>34</sup> According to Johnston (2006), resistant contention refers to the “smaller” collective actions that develop during the hard-line phases of an authoritarian regime, when repression and state surveillance is more intense, and fall under the radar of a regime’s security service; in contrast to transgressive actions that openly challenge a state’s security apparatus.

<sup>35</sup> Headed by the regime’s strongman and future tyrant, Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis.

“antisystem” framing strategy (Diani 1996) and the emergence of a resonant antidictatorship master frame. Main elements of this “elaborated”<sup>36</sup> (Snow and Benford 1992) master frame, were a hostility towards the junta, as it toppled the democratic regime and brought to an abrupt end the democratisation process of the 1960s; and a zealous anti-Americanism, since the United States was considered culpable to a great degree for the establishment of the dictatorship in the country (Voglis 2011). Indeed, during this era anti-Americanism became “a field of bipartisan convergence and ideological consensus” in Greece (Lialiouti 2015a, p. 41). Coupled with the dominant anti-American sentiment was also an anti-imperialist narrative, which framed the country as a victim of US imperialism. Although anti-imperialism had firstly manifested in Greece during the demonstrations for the independence of Cyprus (late 1950s – early 1960s), the coming of the junta gave new impetus to a perspective that construed Greece as a US colony and the fight against the regime as a national liberation struggle (Kornetis 2015).

Simultaneously with the rise of the antidictatorship master frame, a minority from the dissidents got organised in small clandestine groups<sup>37</sup>. Established around activists – who acted as brokers for the diffusion of the antidictatorship message (Han 2009; Vasi 2011) – and based on the pre-junta legal groups, the first resistance underground groups came to life in the aftermath of the coup. Indeed, with the EDA, the KKE and the DYK acting as lasting organisational remnants, or “holdovers” (Taylor 1989; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Van Dyke 1998; Almeida 2003), of the democratisation movement of the 1960s, groups such as the Patriotic Antidictatorship Front (PAM) or Rigas Feraios (RF) appeared (Notaras 1999)<sup>38</sup>. Resistance, though, was not only an endeavour of the Greek Left, as groups sprung also from the centre and the right of the political spectrum, such as the Democratic Defense (DA) or the Free Greeks (FG) (Papadimitriou 2012) respectively; while over 30 groups, mostly of left and centre-left orientation, started operating during the first years of the regime

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<sup>36</sup> Snow and Benford (1992) distinguished between elaborated and restricted master frames, as the first are more flexible and inclusive than the latter and allow to “numerous aggrieved groups to tap it and elaborate their grievances in terms of its basic problem-solving schema” (p. 140).

<sup>37</sup> Voglis (2011) gives an idea of the strength of the underground organisations based on official court proceedings. Thus, according to the military regime, between April 1967 and August 1971 military tribunals put on trial 3,363 citizens, of whom were adjudged as guilty 2,045.

<sup>38</sup> Both groups were at first affiliated with the KKE and the EDA and came closer with the “interior” wing of the KKE after the schism of 1968, which kept a positive stance towards contentious forms of resistance.

(Kornetis 2013b). These clandestine organisations made their presence felt at first through the use of unobtrusive forms of contention (Johnston and Mueller 2001; Johnston 2006) such as graffiti, dissemination of leaflets, hanging of banners in public buildings, broadcasting of anti-regime slogans and hit-and-run protests (Floros G. 1987). However, the ineffectiveness of the “smaller” acts to round up the society against the dictatorship, led some of the groups to the adoption of violent means of struggle – a highly contested issue inside the ranks of the resistance throughout the junta. First to espouse a dynamic repertoire of action<sup>39</sup> were centrist groups such as the DA, in contrast to left groups which were initially rather reluctant to adapt due to the KKE’s proclaimed opposition towards armed resistance (Notaras 1999)<sup>40</sup>. This strategy involved the detonation of small bombs against highly symbolic targets, such as public buildings (e.g. ministries), banks, statues and cars that were associated either with the regime or its US patrons. The groups made use of low capacity IEDs, taking at the same time the necessary precautions in order to avoid the possibility of casualties – yet not always with success<sup>41</sup>. The resort to violence was guided by a number of reasons, such as the fruitfulness of the non-violent repertoire to destabilise the regime, the desire of militants to distinguish themselves from the defeatism of the traditional Left and the influence of the anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggles of the 1960s (Serdedakis 2012). Declared goals of those underground organisations, which used the bombs as a mean to demonstrate their reaction and to mobilise the Greek masses and the foreign public opinion against the dictatorship, were the collapse of the regime, the reconstitution of democracy and the independence from US interventionism.

Part of this wave of contention, was also the emergence of a militant diaspora in West Europe. Indeed, based mostly on personal relationships an oppositional network was constructed in the aftermath of the coup, resulting in a constant flow of ideas, people and even explosives between Greece and Western European countries. As a result, new groups were established in small and big cities (mostly in France, Italy and West Germany), composed of students, migrants and emigres. Hence, the

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<sup>39</sup> The armed groups of the antidictatorship movement use to call their strategy “dynamic resistance,” in contrast to other non-contentious tactics.

<sup>40</sup> The pro-Moscow faction of KKE kept an ardent position against the use of armed resistance throughout the junta, promoting as an alternative the building of a grassroots movement that would put pressure to the regime and trigger its demise.

<sup>41</sup> Resistance organisations were responsible for the unintentional death of four people, two bystanders and two militants, due to bomb explosions during the junta (1967 – 1974).



antidictatorship movement took *de facto* the shape of a transnational social movement (Smith J. 2013), as these groups shared with the domestic resistance the goals of bringing down the Greek junta and reclaiming the country's lost sovereignty. However, influenced by the predominant in Europe during the 1960s third-worldist and anti-colonial ideas these groups did not advocate the return to the pre-junta limited democracy, but the radical political change in Greece. Inspired from the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese struggle against the United States and the May 1968 they promoted the use of armed struggle and the creation of militant cells as vanguards for a socialist revolution in Greece (Kornetis 2008; Papadogiannis 2009). As a result, there was an observed divergence in terms of the preferred tactics and frames between the homegrown resistance groups and the diaspora community, as the former frequently supported a more moderate and the latter a more radical strategy (Voglis 2011). Indeed, while it would be a simplification to draw a line between home and abroad-based groups, Greek diaspora acted more often than not as an agent of radicalisation<sup>42</sup> – as in the case of the Spanish resistance to Franco's regime (Romanos 2014; Kornetis 2015). Nonetheless, the revolutionary aspirations of the radical diaspora received low level of reception at first, as the groups did not manage to create cells and to operate fully in Greece during the hard-line phase of the regime; focusing instead their action on organising meetings and raising funds for the resistance (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002; Kiesling 2014). The most important cases of revolutionary groups were the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK), founded in March 1968 in Stockholm from Andreas Papandreou<sup>43</sup>, and the 29 May Movement (29M) and the 20 October Movement (20Oct) set up by students in Paris in 1967 and 1969 respectively.

All in all, the initial repressive phase of the regime concurred with the development of the first broad wave of contention that was distinguished by the formation of small clandestine organisations both within and outside Greece. Indeed, the time between 1967 and 1969 was the most active period of the armed groups during the junta, as they planted and detonated around 100 bombs against symbolic targets

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<sup>42</sup> Exception to this rule was the case of Popular Struggle (LP) that was established in 1969 in Thessaloniki. Influenced by the spirit of May 1968, the group supported the idea of "global revolution" and was of a Trotskyite nature. However, LP failed to play an important role in the antidictatorship struggle, as its members managed to carry out only "smaller" acts of resistance before their arrest from the police.

<sup>43</sup> Despite the fact that PAK had its origins in the Centre, during the junta adopted a rather revolutionary discourse and was in favour of armed resistance.

(Voglis 2011)<sup>44</sup>. Moreover, this period also saw the perpetration of the most impressive act of resistance against the dictatorship, namely the foiled assassination attempt of Colonel Papadopoulos by Alexandros Panagoulis in August 1968. Finally, this broad wave of resistance can be seen as an example of threat-induced contention, as the mobilisation rose as a response to the abrupt contraction of political opportunities caused by the imposition of the dictatorship (Goodwin 2001; Almeida 2003).

## 4.2.2 Phase of Limited Reforms and the Second Wave of Antidictatorship Struggle (1969 – 1972)

The end of 1969 signified the onset of a period of limited reforms through which the regime tried to legitimise its authority, to normalise the everyday politics and to gain the consent – if not the support – of Greek society. This phase of “controlled liberalisation” that commenced with the lifting of official censorship (November 1969) and lasted for two years, saw the softening of repression and the restoration of a number of constitutional rights (e.g. the right of association and assembly) that had been abolished with the implementation of the martial law of 1967 (Alivizatos 1983). These liberalising measures had as a result the relative expansion of political opportunities for challengers and led to the manifestation of new forms of contention. Hence, along with the continuing – resistant and transgressive – action of the traditional clandestine groups, this second wave of contention saw the occurrence of new unobtrusive forms of contention and the solidification of revolutionary groups’ presence in the country.

To begin with, the lifting of censorship had as a result the dramatic growth of publishing industry in Greece, with left-wing publishing houses launching a large-scale production of subversive books. Indeed, the semi-legal publication<sup>45</sup> of translations of socialist classics (e.g. Marx, Lenin) and works of the New Left (e.g. Marcuse, Sartre) – books whose circulation was forbidden during the first phase of the regime – facilitated the formation of an antidictatorial consciousness and the diffusion

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<sup>44</sup> Only in 1969 were documented 45 bombings and 18 foiled attacks (Asimakoulas 2009, p. 30).

<sup>45</sup> Publishing houses faced great difficulties, as the regime tried through intimidation, fines, confiscations and prison sentences to curtail the publishing activity.

of revolutionary ideas in the Greek society (Asimakoulas 2005). Those ends were also assisted by the stance of some newspapers, which since the relaxation of censorship laws published analytic reports from the trial of militants. Particularly, the presentation of the defendant pleas of the arrested had as a result the general public to come in contact with the groups' antiregime discourse, as well as with accounts of police brutality and torture. The description of the militants' persecution and their rationale, then, led to the politicisation of a younger generation of resistance. Moreover, the reconstitution of the right of association had as a result the establishment of two important "boundary spanning" groups – organisations that make use of institutional channels in innovative and transgressive ways in order to express their opposition against a repressive regime (O'Brien 2003; Johnston 2006). Such cases were those of the Greek-European Youth Movement (EKIN) and the Society for the Study of Greek Issues (EMEP), which since their foundation (1970 and 1971 respectively) they organised events and hosted talks focusing on cultural and educational themes (Tsiridis 2017). These groups provided the necessary "free space" (Morris A. D. 1984; Polletta 1999) for people with antiauthoritarian views to come together and exchange ideas outside the direct surveillance of the regime. While, though, the clandestine groups were a continuation of the pre-junta social groups and were conditioned by the traumatic experiences of the civil war and the "stunted democracy", these cultural organisations centred around a younger generation that came to age under the dictatorship (Serdedakis 2007; Notaras 1999). Hence, the EKIN and the EMEP played the role of meeting points for people with different political affiliations and backgrounds, acting as a connecting channel between different generations and waves of resistance and as a seedbed for the massive student movement that emerged during the dictatorship's liberalisation phase (Tsiridis 2017).

Despite the observed opening of the political regime, the period of "controlled liberalisation" was an era of realignments within the clandestine groups' milieu. Initially, this phase coincided with the dismantling (or near dismantling) of the most massive groups of the first wave of resistance, namely of PAM, RF and DA, already by the end of 1970. At the same time, ideological and tactical differences, especially over the use of armed methods, led to the creation of moderate and radical factions within groups and to their final split. This process had as an outcome the formation of new clandestine organisations with a revolutionary agenda such as those of LEA and

of Aris – Rigas Feraios (ARF), splinter groups of the 29M and the RF respectively. Moreover, this period saw the consolidation of revolutionary groups in the country's interior, as groups such as PAK, the 20Oct and LEA established their first cadres in Greece; comprised of a combination of repatriated emigres, disillusioned former members of moderate resistant groups and young radicals. Advocating their opposition towards the pre-coup political system and the Greek Left that failed to prevent the imposition of the junta, these groups recognised the use of violence as a means to cause the revolutionary change in the country. The ideological radicalism of the revolutionary groups, though, did not materialise in their tactics, as they stuck to the familiar method of symbolic bombs instead of opting for more radical forms of violence. Hence during this second cycle of the regime, revolutionary groups carried out several bombing attacks against targets connected with the dictatorship or the US interests in the country. Then again, these groups failed to seriously challenge the regime with their actions, in the same way as the activity of the traditional armed groups did not threaten the junta during the first period; while the threshold of violence of this phase did not reach the levels of 1967 – 1969. Moreover, the fact that the security forces managed by the end of 1971 critical hits to this milieu as well (e.g. arrest of 20Oct militants in October 1971), severely curbed the activity of clandestine groups at large (Floros G. 1987).

Conclusively, this phase of limited reforms signified a turning point not only for the armed groups, but also for the antidictatorship movement as a whole. Indeed, this period witnessed the activation of two opposing processes as a result of the changes that the regime underwent. On the one hand, the cracking down upon the clandestine groups resulted in numerous arrests of militants and constrained the groups' space of action. On the other hand, the opening of the regime gave rise to legal forms of resistance, as the creation of "boundary spanning" groups (EKIN, EMEP) that provided the context for the construction of an independent antidictatorship space away from the social divisions of the post-civil war era. The combination of these two processes had a number of significant effects on the clandestine groups' milieu. Initially, the intensification of repression had as a result the rise of a climate of cooperation between the groups, resulting in the creation of the National Resistance Council (EAS) in 1971 with the participation of the PAM, the DA, the FG and the Defenders of Freedom (a small clandestine group from the ranks of the Greek army);

a coalition, though, that did not materialise in greater operational coordination and soon was rendered futile by inter-group disagreements. Another consequence of this changing reality was that a considerable part of this first generation of anti-junta militants withdrew from active resistance. Indeed, the failure of the clandestine groups to “awaken” the Greek society and to create a mass movement, led some of their members – especially those that experienced first-hand through imprisonment and torture the terror of the regime – to disenchant with resistance (Liakos 2001; Voglis 2011). Another segment of this “historical” generation of the antidictatorship struggle found themselves steering away from illegal dynamic actions to more legal and less contentious forms of resistance, through their participation to the cultural groups of the era or to the student groups of the 1972 – 1973 period. Finally, a minority of the armed groups kept on their violent campaign, though with trivial success; while the form of “vanguard organizations [was becoming] increasingly obsolete” (Kornetis 2013b, p. 87) by the end of 1971. This constant flow of activists from clandestine to public transgressive contention, as the armed groups’ activity was gradually decreasing and was getting substituted by non-violent resistance, was also the distinguishing characteristic of this second phase of the dictatorship – a process that intensified further during the ensuing liberalisation phase of the regime (Tsiridis 2017).

### 4.2.3 Liberalisation Phase and the Third Wave of Antidictatorship Struggle (1972 – 1973)

This phase starts with the abolition of the martial law in the most parts of the country (January 1972) and covers the climax of the regime’s liberalisation process. During this period, the “liberalisation experiment” deepened further as the junta eased its control over the civil society and relaxed the restrictions on areas of public discourse. One of the most affected areas was that of the university, as the relaxation of the repressive measures facilitated the rise of mobilisations in support of student rights. As a result of the continuous normalisation, student protests grew rapidly reaching at times thousands of participants. The regime’s intransigence to student grievances

generated the gradual radicalisation of the protesters<sup>46</sup>. The confrontation between the two opponents climaxed, when the students occupied the Athens Polytechnic for three days and the regime replied to the stalemate with the violent repression of the protesters (17<sup>th</sup> November 1973). This tragic event, which was stigmatised by the death of 24 and the injury of two thousand people (Kallivretakis 2010), brought to an abrupt end the ongoing liberalisation and triggered a week later the countercoup of Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis (25<sup>th</sup> November 1973) that terminated this phase.

The distinctive feature of this phase was the escalation – both in volume and frequency – of open non-violent contention against the regime to the detriment of clandestine armed resistance, as the number of student organisations multiplied whilst that of armed groups kept diminishing. Indeed, while armed groups' violence remained around the same levels with the 1969 – 1971<sup>47</sup> period, a lot of groups got arrested (e.g. the 20Oct's Athens cell in June/July 1972) or remained inactive during this period. A minority of them tried to coalesce in order to organise better their action in face of the state suppression and the growing student mobilisation. Hence, despite the ongoing liberalisation, the dictatorship kept intact its repressive mechanism towards more threatening organisations, such as the clandestine armed groups, and retained a more lenient approach in a less challenging area as that of the education<sup>48</sup>. Thus, the gradual normalisation of academic life after years of extreme subjugation to the regime, which had violently dismantled the students' representative bodies in 1967, led to the emergence of a range of organisations within the university. One such case was the reopening of students' regional societies after years in abeyance (Rigos 1987). Regional societies followed the example of the cultural groups of the previous phase, which were banned by the regime after two years of operation (May 1972) and acted as “boundary spanning” groups – namely by providing the legal “safe space” (Gamson 1996) for antiregime activists to gather and express their grievances. Officially founded for the preservation of the local history and folklore of their region, groups

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<sup>46</sup> Before the rise of the student movement in 1972 – 1973, the only exceptions of massive protest events during the junta were those of the demonstrations that took place alongside the funerals of Georgios Papandreou in 1968, when around 300.000 people showed up, and of Georgios Seferis – a Nobel-winning poet – in 1971, whose service attended ten thousand people (Serdedakis 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Ios Press Group (1997) documented 35 successful and 11 foiled attacks between 09/1969 and 12/1971 and 40 successful and 7 foiled attacks between 01/1971 and 11/1973.

<sup>48</sup> Gartner and Regan (1996) argued that the relationship between state repression and oppositional violence is non-linear and depends of the nature of the threat posed from the antistate group. Regan and Henderson (2002) later demonstrated that the level of threat is positively and significantly associated with political repression.

such as the Cretan Society of Athens, facilitated the interaction between politicised and non-politicised members, as well as the build-up of antiregime consciousness between students (Kornetis 2013b).

The relaxation of repression and the rising of politicisation led students to verbalise a series of demands for the improvement of their rights in the university. Indeed, during this phase, student mobilisations took the form of symbolic contention (Johnston 2006, 2011), as the student protests acted as proxies for the emergence of antiregime claims and transgressive contention in the shape of a mass student movement. Contention was triggered particularly, over the right of the students to elect their own representative councils. Central to the coordination of the fight were the Student Committees of Struggle (FEA). Founded by students without party affiliation, FEA had a horizontal organisation and made use of a legal non-violent repertoire of action, such as meetings, assemblies and class boycotts in an attempt to bring together the students against the junta and to petition for the conduction of student elections (Tsiridis 2017). At the same time, a number of pre-junta political groups and resistance organisations became active in the area of university, establishing their own clandestine organisations amongst the students' ranks. Such cases were from the traditional Left those of the Anti-EFEE and the KOS, student branches of the KKE and the KKE-ES respectively; and from the revolutionary Left those of AASPE, the student organisation of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Movement of Greece (EKKE), and Panarmonia, the student branch of PAK (Ifantopoulos 2010). The upswing in student mobilisation finally pressured the regime to consent to the prospect of student elections, only to rig them afterwards in favour of the state-appointed National Student Union (EFEE) (October and November 1972) – escalating to the extreme the conflict with the students (Karamanolakis 2012). Greek Junta's determination to keep control over the universities, manifested in the recurring clashes between police and students and the brutality towards the protesters, led to the radicalisation of students' tactics. Thus, protesters gradually adopted a more confrontational repertoire of action consisting of rallies, sit-ins in public spaces and occupations of university buildings (Dafermos 1999). In that contentious environment, the early symbolic mobilisations over student issues gave increasingly their place to antiregime protests, while the student demands transformed into anti-junta slogans. More importantly, the student struggle gave rise to a new contentious subject, a mass

and independent student movement with thousands of participants that would soon genuinely challenge the regime (Dafermos 2015). Critical for the formation of this new subject were a series of occupations of the Law School of Athens during the first half of 1973 (14, 21 – 22 February and 20 March), which were cruelly suppressed from the dictatorship, instigating the further radicalisation of the student movement (Kornetis 2006).

At the same period, junta's "liberalisation experiment" reached its zenith, as Colonel Papadopoulos – the regime's main figure – attempted to metamorphose the regime to a democracy (Tzortzis 2016a). Motivated by the growing reaction against his rule in the civil society and in the armed forces, as the popular student protests and the failed coup of naval officers (May 1973) (Murtagh 1994) demonstrated respectively, Papadopoulos instigated a process to transfer power to a civilian government. First step was the decision of the dictator to abolish the already defunct monarchy, as the exiled king had backed up the failed conspiracy, and to call a referendum for the approval of the constitutional change (June 1973). The high rate of support at Papadopoulos' initiative in an undoubtedly rigged plebiscite laid the basis for him to amend the Constitution of 1968, to swear in as President of the Republic and to largely personalise the regime – as he also assumed the roles of minister of foreign affairs and minister of defence (August 1973). The process culminated with the agreed transition of power to the first civilian government since April 1967 headed by Spyros Markezinis, an old liberal politician that had served as a minister of economics during the 1950s, who also received the mandate to hold elections before the end of 1974 (Tzortzis 2012). In the meantime, Papadopoulos had introduced as a gesture of good will, a series of moderating measures such as the general amnesty to all political prisoners, the lifting of martial law throughout the country the and weakening of police violence.

The new measures caused the expansion of political opportunities, giving the necessary free space to the student movement to intensify further its struggle. At the same time, a part of the movement tended to see the Greek *reforma pactada* (Tzortzis 2016b) more as a threat, as a façade for the perpetuation of the authoritarian regime, rather than a sign of democratisation (Seferiades 2010b). Be that as it may, students chose to occupy the Athens' Polytechnic on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1973, as a response to the government's decision to postpone the student elections – an event that was meant to



become the most important act of resistance throughout the junta (Serdedakis 2015). The three days of the occupation saw the radicalisation of the student demands from claims over students' rights to passionate anti-regime slogans, which was later followed by a wave of solidarity among ordinary citizens that rallied in support of the students in Athens and other cities. Originally, the government was reluctant to suppress the protest events and kept a passive stance towards the demonstrators; however, by the time the seriousness of the events became apparent the use of police had already been insufficient to restraint the situation. The "Polytechnic uprising" came to an end only after the intervention of the army in the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1973, when an armed vehicle crushed the building's gate and the police with the help of the Marines evacuated the occupation.

In the aftermath of the uprising, the dictatorship reintroduced the martial law in an attempt to put under control the extremely volatile circumstances. With the "liberalisation experiment" discredited by the Polytechnic events, the growing dissatisfaction within the armed forces and the ongoing regime change, the Papadopoulos' seat became increasingly dubious (Kornetis 2013b). It was only a week after the brutal clampdown of the Polytechnic occupation, when Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis – one of the dictatorship's hard-liners – put into effect a counter-coup overthrowing Colonel Papadopoulos.

#### **4.2.4 Repression Phase and the End of the Junta (1973 – 1974)**

This phase lasted only for eight months (November 1973 – July 1974) and coincided with the duration of the regime that Brigadier Ioannidis imposed after ousting Papadopoulos. Ioannidis, one of the most trusted people of the dethroned dictator and head of the Military Police (ESA), materialised with the coup the deep-seated disappointment of a large part of the army with the regime. Papadopoulos' decision to liberalise the junta and exclude from power his co-conspirators, along with the emergence of widespread corruption among the ruling ranks, had led hard-liners to the opinion that the dictatorship had abandoned the original spirit of the "Revolution." Indeed, it seems that the Polytechnic uprising did not cause the regime change but just precipitated it, as there had already been underway a plot for bringing down

Papadopoulos months before its actual execution (Tzortzis 2007). Along these lines, Ioannidis' intervention was meant to be a return to the early days of dictatorship – a period of broad and brutal authoritarianism. Thus, the next day of the countercoup witnessed a wave of draconian measures and purges against members of the student organisations, which led a lot of activists to clandestinity and the student movement to stagnation. Nevertheless, Ioannidis' regime was destined to be short-lived, as the interference of the Greek junta in Cyprus triggered eventually its collapse. More specifically, the decision of Ioannidis to mastermind a coup against the democratically elected government of President Makarios on 15 July 1974, led some days later to a Turkish invasion of Cyprus and to skirmishes between Greek and Turkish armed forces<sup>49</sup>. The *de facto* partitioning of Cyprus, the fiasco of an unsuccessful general mobilisation of the Greek army<sup>50</sup> and the risk of a generalised war with Turkey<sup>51</sup> precipitated the fall of the authoritarian regime. Within 72 hours from the Turkish invasion and in an attempt to find a political solution to the ongoing crisis, the Greek armed forces removed their support from Ioannidis and decided to hand over power to a civilian government. The last act of the regime crisis was the return of Constantinos Karamanlis from Paris on 24 July 1974<sup>52</sup>. Ultimately, it was Karamanlis' assumption of the role of the head of a national unity government in order to oversee the process of democratic transition, which signified the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the era of Metapolitefsi (Diamandouros 1984).

### 4.3 The Early Metapolitefsi (1974 – 1981)

This section covers the early Metapolitefsi, namely the period that began in the aftermath of the demise of the Greek dictatorship in July 1974 and saw the country's

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<sup>49</sup> Turkey used as justification for the invasions of 1974 the Treaty of Guarantee (February 1959), which recognised the independent state of Cyprus and three guarantor powers (the United Kingdom, Turkey and Greece) responsible for preserving it. The agreement banned the country's union with any other state or the partition of the island and authorised the guarantor powers to take action to re-establish the bi-communal and independent state of Cyprus in case of violation. A provision that Turkey used in 1974 to perform two consecutive invasions in Cyprus and to occupy initially the three (20 July 1974) and later on the 36 per cent (14 – 16 August 1974) of the northern part of island.

<sup>50</sup> The execution of the order was characterised by the complete absence of coordination, while the Greek army was severely ill equipped, untrained and demoralised (Tsiridis and Papanikolopoulos 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Turkey was at that time one of the strongest members of the NATO alliance, second only to the United States (Panourgiá 2009, p. 150).

<sup>52</sup> Constantinos Karamanlis was in self-imposed exile in the French capital since June 1963.

democratic transition from an authoritarian to a multi-party system. The opening of the country's political opportunity structure after decades of state repression generated a "political fever" (Papadogiannis 2015a, p. 1), which was manifested in intense politicisation and mass mobilisation. Early *Metapolitefsi* also witnessed the incorporation of the marginalised and excluded since the end of civil war leftist strata, which had as a result the unprecedented rise of the traditional Left as well as the appearance of the extra-parliamentary Left in Greece. This period came to an end with the win of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in the national elections of October 1981, which signified the end of the long-lasting dominance of the Right in the country<sup>53</sup> (Diamandouros 1993).

At first, the sudden fall of the dictatorship and the return of Constantinos Karamanlis to Greece on 24 July 1974 caught by surprise the Greek society. The long-awaited political change, though, was not triggered by the antidictatorship resistance, but by the political crisis in Cyprus. Indeed, the utter powerlessness of the Greek army to prevent or resist the Turkish invasion in the island, generated a widespread feeling of national humiliation and delegitimised the role of the armed forces in the eyes of the Greek population. In this critical point, the transition of power from the military regime to the government of national unity was unexpectedly "velvet-smooth and instantaneous" (Voulgaris 2001, p. 25) – as it occurred within a matter of days and without any significant backlash. Karamanlis was considered as an ideal candidate to lead this process, as his anticommunist past<sup>54</sup> and his disapproving stance towards the junta, made him acceptable among the ranks of the military, the Right and the Centre (Karamouzi 2015). Initially, the civilian government took a series of measures in order to consolidate the democratisation process and to extricate itself from the anticommunist legacy of the post-civil war state. These included: the reinstatement of the 1952 constitution as the interim law of the country that reaffirmed the control of the executive over the army, the restoration of civil rights and the release of all political prisoners (Diamandouros 1984). As part of a policy of national reconciliation the government also proceeded to the legalisation of the parties of the Left – including the KKE, the KKE-ES and other smaller parties – that were free to operate for the first

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<sup>53</sup> The formation of PASOK's government was recognised as a milestone in modern Greek history as it was the first non-conservative government for over 45 years in the country.

<sup>54</sup> Karamanlis was the leader of the right-wing ERE and Prime Minister of Greece from 1955 up to 1963, when anticommunism and "national-mindedness" were dominant ideologies of the country.

time since the civil war (1947). At the same time, the ongoing aggression of Turkey against the country's national interests<sup>55</sup>, resulted in Karamanlis' decision to suspend the Greek participation in NATO military commands and exercises in protest against the Alliance's failure to intervene between the two countries (August 1974). Besides, it was the meteoric rise of anti-Americanism during the early *Metapolitefsi* that also prompted Karamanlis to follow a foreign policy that would distance Greece from the United States<sup>56</sup> (Lialiouti 2015b). Part of this policy was also the adoption of a more European stance, which culminated with the application to join the European Economic Community (EEC) (June 1975) (Diamandouros 1994). Consequently, Karamanlis through an all-embracing approach attempted to depolarise Greek political culture, as well as to alleviate the country's chronic plights, namely the systematic repression of one part of the population, the interventionism of the army and the US dependency.

Karamanlis also followed a policy of reforms within the bounds of the Greek Right. Determined to draw a clear distinction with the anti-communist legacy of right-wing politics in the country, he opted for the creation of the party of New Democracy (ND) (October 1974) (Dinas 2017)<sup>57</sup>. The new political formation, which defined its ideology as "radical liberalism" and was meant to be a liberal conservative party close to the Western European standards, acted as the vehicle of Karamanlis in the elections of 1974 (Pappas T. S. and Dinas 2006). Scheduled on the first-year anniversary of the Polytechnic uprising (17 November), the national elections – the first free elections after a decade – were a landslide win for ND<sup>58</sup> (Nicolacopoulos 2005). With a clear mandate in his hands, Karamanlis turned to a number of unresolved issues of the

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<sup>55</sup> Greece withdrew from NATO's military commands one day after the second invasion of Turkey in Cyprus (14 – 16 August 1974). The Turkish aggression also manifested in the Aegean Sea, where it challenged the established delimitation of the Aegean territorial waters, seabed and airspace. These bilateral issues codified under the concept of the "Aegean dispute" (Rizas 2009), have been ever since then a constant source of conflict between the two neighbouring countries.

<sup>56</sup> Anti-Americanism grew exponentially in the country after the *metapolitefsi* because of the alleged role of the United States in the establishment of the junta and in the invasion of Cyprus.

<sup>57</sup> Similar to the major right-wing party in Portugal (the Social Democratic Party) after the "Carnation Revolution" (April 1975), New Democracy avoided a name which would associate it with any of the party families of the Right in Greece.

<sup>58</sup> The elections of November 1974 took place under a generalised climate of fear over a new military coup from junta sympathisers. In this turbulent political context, the broad public consent of Karamanlis was translated to an overwhelming support towards his newly-founded party of New Democracy. Indeed, ND won with 54,4 per cent of the vote, which guaranteed 216 out of the 300 seats to the right-wing party. The main opposition party was the centrist Centre Union – New Forces (EK-ND) party with 20,4 per cent of the vote, while the socialist PASOK (Panhellenic Socialistic Movement) and the communist United Left party got 13,6 and 9,5 per cent respectively (Nicolacopoulos 2005).

newly-founded Greek democracy. These were: the question over the monarchy; the reform of the constitution; the prosecution of the protagonists in the 1967 coup, in the suppression of the Polytechnic uprising and in torturing prisoners during the junta; and the cleansing of the state apparatus from all the junta-sympathisers. Hence, while the question over the form of the government was settled quite smoothly in favour of the republic<sup>59</sup> (Tridimas 2010), the issue of the constitution was met with strong opposition in the parliament before its final approval<sup>60</sup> (Alivizatos 1993). However, the most sensitive matter of all was that of the transitional justice, or the “dejunification” as it became publicly known, which included the prosecution of those incriminated for their participation in the dictatorship (e.g. conspirators, torturers) and the purge of their supporters. Karamanlis’ decision to keep a rather “gradualist” (Diamandouros 1984) stance over the issue, a deliberately slow-paced and restrained approach<sup>61</sup>, was vehemently criticised by the left-wing opposition that demanded the wide-ranging punishment of junta’s adherents and supporters alike. Nevertheless, it took a whole year, since the fall of the junta, for the prosecution process to start (July 1975); whilst a failed military coup against ND’s government<sup>62</sup> (February 1975) persuaded Karamanlis that he could not stall the matter for any longer (Haralambous 2017). In the meantime, the quite controversial decisions of the government to prosecute only the “main culprits” of the junta (January 1975) (Panourgia 2009) and of the Greek Supreme Court that the crime of high treason was committed “momentarily” rather than continuously over the seven-year reign of the regime (April 1975), had as a result the severe delimitation of the number of those who finally stood trial (Sotiropoulos D. A. 2007). Hence, the prosecution was confined to a relatively

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<sup>59</sup> The referendum on 8 December 1974 resulted in a 69 per cent in support of the republic and 31 per cent for the monarchy, leading to the abolition of the latter. The Crown was not seen favourably among the majority of the Greek people, due to the role it played in delegitimising and manipulating a number of consecutive governments during the post-civil war era.

<sup>60</sup> The 1975 constitution that provided for a strong presidential executive after the French model, was heavily criticised by the opposition parties for curtailing the powers of the Parliament. As a final act of dispute, the parties of the opposition walked away from the Parliament during the final vote over the constitution (June 1975), which was finally approved only by New Democracy deputies (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Karamanlis's gradualism was determined by three factors, namely: the need to ensure civilian control over key state institutions such as the police and the intelligence service; the fear of a possible backlash from the military if the purges were to be extensive; and the reluctance to estrange the military in a period of high tensions with Turkey (Diamandouros 1984).

<sup>62</sup> The conspiracy of February 1975 was the fourth attempted coup from officers loyal to the junta since the return of Karamanlis in July 1974 (Kassimeris G. 1995, p. 90).

small circle of people<sup>63</sup>, leaving at the same time the vast majority of those that sustained the mechanism of the dictatorship (former ministers, top civil servants and senior police officers) unaccountable. Greece's "Nuremberg trials", as they became known, took place in a space of six months and had a rather questionable result (Alivizatos and Diamandouros 1997). Controversial were particularly the verdict in the case of the three leaders of the dictatorship<sup>64</sup> – who although were originally condemned to death their sentence was commuted to life imprisonment – as well as the generally lenient sentences that were handed to those convicted for torture. For the Left especially, the government's transitional justice was characterised by unwarranted restraint; it seemed more as a gesture of good will towards the military and civilian circles still loyal to the previous regime, than a sign of rightful allocation of justice (Sotiropoulos D. A. 2010). Besides, the presence in Karamanlis' cabinet of ministers with strong ideological affinity with the dictatorship's ideology, reinforced those voices pointing out the disturbing similarities of the restored democracy with the previous regime (Xenakis 2012). Consequently, despite the wide-ranging institutional reforms the *metapolitefsi* failed to provide the irreversible break with the country's authoritarian past that a part of the Greek population envisioned. In its place, the new regime was "a curious amalgam of continuity and change" (Kassimeris G. 2013b, p. 134), as democracy operated in parallel with a state apparatus that was mostly controlled by junta appointees (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010).

Along with the country's institutional restructuring, Karamanlis also attempted to provide to the new regime the necessary legitimisation. Central to this endeavour, was the glorification of the 1973 Athens Polytechnic uprising as the major act of resistance of the antidictatorship struggle, as well as a symbol of the unanimous opposition of the Greek society to the junta (Serdedakis 2015). The appropriation of the episode was used to "whitewash the lack of systematic dissent" (Kornetis 2013b p. 327) against the dictatorship and to stimulate support towards the democratic transition. Hence, the Polytechnic uprising became one of the founding myths of the new regime<sup>65</sup>, which

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<sup>63</sup> Those who were charged were: the 24 military officers accountable for the April 1967 coup, the 32 officers responsible for the suppression of the Athens Polytechnic uprising and a number of the regime's torturers. Although estimates suggest that more than 400 people were charged for torturing prisoners during the junta, many of them were not eventually convicted, as the trials frequently resulted in acquittals, commutable sentences or were suspended (Haralambous 2017).

<sup>64</sup> These were Georgios Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Makarezos and Stylianos Pattakos.

<sup>65</sup> The Athens Polytechnic uprising against the dictatorship has been commemorated annually since the restitution of democracy in 1974 and has been a public holiday in Greece since 1981. Part of the

tried to reconcile the post-civil war cleavages with the democratic spirit of the uprising (Lamprinou 2015). One of the effects of this – so-called – “spirit of the *metapolitefsi*” (Kornetis 2010), was the intense politicisation of a significant part of the population that had remained inactive during the dictatorship. Hence after the democratic transition, parties across the political spectrum increased in members exponentially and established local offices all over the country, transforming from parties of notables to mass parties (Diamandouros 1993). That was the case particularly for the parties of the Left, as the rehabilitation after decades of state suppression of the leftist strata, resulted in mass mobilisation and increased expectations (Voulgaris 2001). In the space of the traditional Left, the two dominant political parties were the KKE, an orthodox communist and pro-Moscow party, and the KKE-ES, which was influenced by the ideas of Eurocommunism and was critical to the USSR (Kapetanyiannis 1993). Despite their ideological differences, the two parties entered an alliance under the label of “United Left”<sup>66</sup> for the 1974 national elections; however, without any particular success as the formation failed to capitalise on the spirit of the era<sup>67</sup> (Mavrogordatos 1984). At the same time, in the elections of 1974 a new political party on the left of the spectrum appeared capturing the 13,6 per cent of the vote; that was PASOK. Inspired by dependency theory<sup>68</sup> and tiersmondisme, PASOK saw itself as a liberation movement that would free the country from US imperialism and stop the exploitation of the “under-privileged” from the local and foreign capitalists<sup>69</sup> (Gazi 2015; Kornetis 2015). The party’s radical socialist agenda also included the nationalisation of key industries of the Greek country and the exit from the NATO and the EEC. Through its extreme and anti-Western discourse, PASOK managed to become popular among a wide array of constituents ranging from the radical Left to the Centre<sup>70</sup> and thus to develop into the most important party of the parliamentary Left in the 1970s

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commemoration is a march from the Polytechnic to the American Embassy. The annual commemoration has often coincided with violent protest events, such as clashes between demonstrators and the police and occupations of the Polytechnic or other university building(s).

<sup>66</sup> Part of the United Left alliance was also the remnants of the EDA, which had an influential role in the pre-junta period.

<sup>67</sup> This was the lowest percentage of the communist Left since the civil war (1946 – 1949) (Nicolacopoulos 2005).

<sup>68</sup> Dependency theory divides the world between a dominant imperialist core and a dependent underdeveloped periphery, which the imperialist countries of the core exploit.

<sup>69</sup> The socialist party through its anti-imperialist discourse facilitated the transformation of Greek nationalism from a right-wing anticommunist to a left-wing anti-imperialist ideology (Gazi 2015).

<sup>70</sup> PASOK, assisted by the fact that its leader (Andreas Papandreou) was the son of the historic leader of the Centre Union (EK) (Georgios Papandreou), managed to project itself as heir to the legacy of the centrist party (Kalyvas S. N. 1997).

(Spourdalakis and Tassis 2006). Similarly, the rise of politicisation had as a result the formation of an extra-parliamentary left space, as a vibrant wave of radical left organisations sprung up after the fall of the junta. Stimulated by the radicalism of the Polytechnic uprising and the opening of the political opportunity structure, these organisations emerged as a reaction to the traditional Left's reformism (Kassimeris G. 2005a). Unwilling to accept the post-1974 consensus, these radical groups maintained their revolutionary aspirations against the – recognised as illegitimate – democratic regime. Hence, through a confrontational repertoire of action that included wildcat strikes, occupations and demonstrations, the manifold Maoist<sup>71</sup>, Trotskyist<sup>72</sup> and anarchist groups sought to heighten the social tensions and to recreate the revolutionary atmosphere of November 1973 (Kitis 2015). Despite their relatively small size, these groups exercised important influence among university students, at the same time as the Greek universities became a battleground for the hearts and minds of the students between the various youth organisations of the traditional and radical Left<sup>73</sup> (Papadogiannis 2009; 2015a; 2015b).

Another effect of the democratic transition was the fragmentation of the antidictatorship movement (Kornetis 2013b). At first, a significant part of the antidictatorship movement – especially of the movement's younger cadres – entered into the Greek political scene (Serdedakis 2015). These activists came to be known collectively as the “Polytechnic generation” and constituted a cohort of leftist intellectuals that filled the ranks of the mainstream and radical parties of the Left alike (Lamprinou 2015). The most characteristic example of this process was PASOK, which transformed from a revolutionary group that was openly advocating the use of armed struggle during the junta (PAK) to one of the most important political parties of the Metapolitefsi (Xenakis 2012)<sup>74</sup>. At the same time, the early days of the democratic transition found another part of the antidictatorship movement in disarray. While the

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<sup>71</sup> The most important Maoist groups in Greece during the 1970s were the EKKE (Revolutionary Communist Movement of Greece) and the OMLE (Organisation of Marxist-Leninists of Greece).

<sup>72</sup> The most important Trotskyist groups were the EDE (Workers' Internationalist Union) and the OKDE (Communist Organisation of Greek Internationalists).

<sup>73</sup> The most important student and youth organisations of the Left were: the KNE (Communist Youth of Greece) affiliated with the KKE; the RF (Rigas Feraios) affiliated with the KKE-ES; the Youth of PASOK; the PPSP (Progressive All-Students' Unionist Movement) affiliated with the OMLE; and the AASPE (Anti-fascist Anti-imperialist Student Movement of Greece) affiliated with the EKKE.

<sup>74</sup> Members of PASOK also became several ex-militants of the antidictatorship struggle, such as Costas Simitis from the Democratic Defense (DA) – who served as leader of PASOK and as Prime Minister of Greece from 1996 to 2004 (Kostopoulos 2016a).



fall of the military regime and the return of Karamanlis was met with excitement from the majority of the Greek society, several activists reacted with scepticism. Karamanlis' reinstatement was treated as a return to the semi-authoritarian pre-junta period, whereas the more pessimist recognised it as a defeat of the antidictatorship struggle (Kornetis 2013b). This feeling of growing disaffection led most of those activists to retreat from active politics. Withdrawal was the option for many of those on the radical flank of the antidictatorship movement as well; namely the members of the revolutionary groups. For the most militant cadres of the movement, the transition to a bourgeois democracy shattered their hopes for the radical transformation of the Greek political system – as on the words of one of the militants “the expected revolution had not come and its time had passed” (Liakos 2001, p. 50). However, for some within the revolutionary groups' milieu the failure of the revolution was not a sufficient reason to withdraw. More specifically, with their revolutionary demands for national sovereignty and radical political change remaining ostensibly pending, a few militants organised and participated in clandestine meetings for the establishment of a new strategy. Thus, the summer of 1974 was characterised by a series of realignments within the revolutionary groups' scene (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). As a result, then, of intensive debate and internal disagreements between the cadres of the antidictatorship revolutionary groups (LEA, 20Oct and ARF), a minority of the militants decided to carry on the armed struggle against what they recognised as “a junta by another name” (Kassimeris G. 2005a). Hence, in July – August 1974 the supporters of the armed struggle established a new clandestine organisation, the Revolutionary Popular Struggle (ELA) (Chalazias 1987)<sup>75</sup>. ELA appeared in the Greek political scene in April 1975 with a firebomb attack against eight US-owned cars and constituted the first clandestine left group in the country after the metapolitefsi. With a loose hierarchy and a network structure, ELA acted as an “umbrella organisation” for urban guerrilla in Greece; as the group facilitated the formation and cooperation of autonomous cells within its ranks (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002; Koufontinas 2014).

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<sup>75</sup> ELA was a group of armed propaganda that aimed to educate and lead the proletariat towards revolution through its armed campaign and the regular publication of its underground journal *Antipliroforisi* (Counter-Information). The group supported the parallel use of a nonviolent and violent tactics, as well as the connection of the armed guerrilla with the mass struggles and the labour movement. ELA perpetrated over 300 attacks during the two decades that remained active (1975 – 1995) – the striking majority of those were low-level bomb attacks against symbolically important targets, such the American presence in the country, ministries and industries. ELA, unlike the 17N, was against the attacks towards human targets and tried to avoid casualties, a strategy that changed during the 1990 – 1995 period when the group cooperated with the Organisation 1 May (1MA) (Bossis 1996; 2003).

Such cells were: the notorious 17N, which after it split from ELA performed the execution of the CIA station chief in Athens (December 1975)<sup>76</sup>; the Group June 1978 (J78) that claimed the killing of a torturer of the junta in January 1979<sup>77</sup>; and the Revolutionary Organisation October 1980 (O80), a splinter group of ELA that claimed five arson attacks between 1980 – 1981<sup>78</sup>.

While the demands of the antidictatorship struggle stimulated the rise of a new generation of revolutionary groups, they were also consequential for the emergence of a new cycle of protest. This contentious cycle began in the aftermath of the junta's demise in July 1974 and lasted for seven years up to PASOK's rise to power in October 1981. In the tumultuous political environment of the mid-1970s, which was characterised by the generalised crisis with Turkey, the first protests took place just days after the fall of the military regime regarding the issue of Cyprus (Serdedakis 2015). The massive demonstrations expressed the public anger against the dictatorship for triggering the crisis in the island in the first place, against Turkey for the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and against the NATO and the United States for not preventing the invasion. In particular, the alleged role of the latter in the outbreak of the crisis in Cyprus, coupled with the older grievance against the assumed US implication in the imposition of the junta in 1967, had as a result the protest events to focus on US targets (Serdedakis 2007). Hence, marches were usually organised around the US Embassy or the US military bases in Athens, with most of them resulting in violent clashes between protesters and security forces, in injuries on both sides and arrests of activists (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). After the first anniversary of the Polytechnic uprising in November 1974, protest marches to the US Embassy became part of the commemoration ritual through which demonstrators voiced their disapproval against the US bases in the country and were often the scene of clashes between the police and activists (Kitis 2015; Kornetis 2015). Central role in these protest events had a series of small organisations of the extra-parliamentary Left. Such an occasion was also the massive anti-American march on 21 April 1975, during which the cadres of EKKE broke into the US Embassy and caused damages to the building

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<sup>76</sup> See analytically Section 5.2.1.

<sup>77</sup> J78 appeared only once in January 1979, claiming responsibility for the assassination of Petros Babalis, a police officer liable for torturing prisoners during the junta. The group was one of the cells of ELA, as the latter acknowledged in September 1985 (Chalazias 1987).

<sup>78</sup> O80 went on an arson spree between 1980 – 1981 targeting supermarkets and department stores, in an attempt to show its opposition against the capitalist economy and consumption (Karampelas 1985)

before their violent suppression from the police (Papadogiannis 2015a). Consequently, during the early Metapolitefsi anti-Americanism occupied a dominant role in protest politics, as the demand for the country's independence from the US dominance remained – especially in the eyes of the Greek Left – unsatisfied. Indeed, the return of Karamanlis was recognised by Andreas Papandreou himself as a mere “change of a NATO-ist guard” and his government as an “instrument of imperialist and domestic reaction” (cited in Clogg 1987, pp. 217 – 222). Moreover, the extreme restraint that the ND's government demonstrated in the persecution of the junta's torturers and the reluctance to purge the dictatorship's sympathisers, convinced a big part of the leftists that the democratisation and dejuntification of the state were a façade (Kornetis 2013). Further reasons for doubting the democratic credentials of the new regime were the recurring police brutality against protesters<sup>79</sup>, the adoption of an anti-labour law<sup>80</sup> and the leniency that the state shown towards far-right violence in the aftermath of the dictatorship<sup>81</sup> (Kassimeris G. 2005a; Xenakis 2012). Besides, the increase of expectations that the democratic transition engendered, prompted the mobilisation of working classes in favour of a more equal redistribution of salaries and privileges (Voulgaris 2001). Hence, the protest cycle of the early Metapolitefsi was characterised, apart from the rise of demonstrations and marches, by a large wave of strikes in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy as well. Strikes often occurred against the unions' will (wildcat strikes), while they were regularly followed by the occupation of the working spaces or by violent clashes between strikers and the police (Ioannou 1989; Serdedakis 2015).

At the same time, the combination of expanding political opportunities due to the crisis of the dominant cleavages with the perception of limited opportunities for independent action that characterised the post-junta regime (Lyrintzis, Nicolacopoulos

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<sup>79</sup> Responsible for the brutal crackdown on protesters was also the newly-founded riot police unit, the MAT (Unit for the Restoration of Order) squads, which since their formation in 1976 had been involved in numerous violent clashes with protesters – many of which resulted in injuries or even in casualties among the demonstrators.

<sup>80</sup> The law 330/1976 was recognised as anti-labour as it constrained the workers' right to strike, guaranteed the use of lock out to employers and prohibited what it was identified as “political strikes” – a rather vague term that was used to delegitimise all the strikes that opposed the government's policy (Kostopoulos 2016b).

<sup>81</sup> Between 1975 and 1979, 85 bombs were detonated against cinemas, bookshops, trade union offices and other leftist targets (e.g. party offices) from clandestine groups of the radical Right, resulting in the injury of dozens of citizens (Ios Press Group 2012). The most notorious from these far-right groups was the Organisation of National Restoration (OEA), which from 1976 to 1978 perpetrated 74 four bomb attacks (Xenakis 2012, Kiesling 2014).

and Sotiropoulos D. A. 1996; Loukidou and Sotiropoulos D. A. 2015)<sup>82</sup>, had as a consequence the prevalence of an “antisystem” framing strategy (Diani 1996) and the emergence of a resonant left-democratic master frame (Voulgaris 2001). Main features of this dominant master frame, which was a reverberation of the antidictatorship master frame, were: the call for national independence that entailed the removal of the US bases, the withdrawal of Greece from the political wing of NATO and the country’s exit from the EEC<sup>83</sup>; the demand for the democratisation and dejuntification of the state; the opposition to the capitalist exploitation of the country from local and foreign monopolies; and the advocacy of a socialist transformation of Greece (Karagiannis Y. and Lyrantzis 2015; Papadogiannis 2015a).

Thus, the materialisation of this cycle of contention was significantly facilitated by the emergence of the above “elaborated” master frame, which acted as a common platform for various groups to express their grievances. This antisystem master frame was particularly advocated by the so-called “progressive democratic” political forces of the country; as the diverse organisations ranging from the Centre-Left to the radical Left identified themselves (Diamandouros 1994; Papadogiannis 2009). The convergence of centre and left-wing groups under a common denominator had as a consequence to regain salience the right/anti-right cleavage (Tsatsanis 2009; Karampampas 2018), which had manifested for the first time in the beginning of the 1960s<sup>84</sup>. PASOK became the champion of the anti-right pole against the backdrop of the Right’s parliamentary dominance<sup>85</sup> (Lyrantzis 2005; Kousis 2007). However, Andreas Papandreou steered away progressively PASOK from its more antisystemic characteristics, in an attempt to present the party as a serious candidate for government (Coufoudakis 1993). Hence, the party distanced itself from the goal of the socialist

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<sup>82</sup> As the civil society was profoundly controlled by the political parties of the Left during the early Metapolitefsi.

<sup>83</sup> Significant was also the underlying influence of a left-wing and anti-imperialist nationalism to the “left-democratic” master frame.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>85</sup> The New Democracy prolonged its rule for another legislative session in 1977, as it retained the majority in parliament in the national elections of 20 November 1977 with 41,8 per cent (losing 13 per cent of the vote and 49 seats in the parliament). At the same time, PASOK became the major party of the opposition and almost doubled its electoral strength from 13,6 in 1974 to 25,3 in 1977. The two parties of the traditional Left, namely the KKE and KKE-ES, got merely 9,4 and 2,7 per cent of the vote respectively (Mavrogordatos 1984).

transformation of the society, as well as from the more radical factions both within its ranks and the wider “progressive democratic” space<sup>86</sup> (Moschonas 1999).

One of the protest actors that emerged during the contentious cycle of the early Metapolitefsi and drew heavily on the left-democratic master frame was a revolutionary left movement<sup>87</sup>. This radical social movement<sup>88</sup> (Guzman-Concha 2015) was composed of the small parties of the extra-parliamentary Left, a host of independent leftist organisations that did not participate in the elections and the revolutionary clandestine groups that emerged in the aftermath of the fall of the junta. It was distinguished by a common agenda, an unconventional repertoire of action and a shared collective identity. The diverse factions within the revolutionary left movement concurred with a strategy that involved the exploitation of social tensions to ferment a mood of revolution, destabilise the regime and trigger the radical change of the country (Kitis 2015). However, the movement was not a unified entity, but a heterogeneous assembly of actors characterised by internal differentiations and tensions. The ideological and organisational differences between the various groups manifested in their tactical variation and the plurality of identities (Melucci 1996; Boström 2004). Hence, while the extra-parliamentary left parties made use of confrontational tactics such as strikes and rallies, the revolutionary groups employed the most extreme forms of political violence, such as bombings and attacks against individuals. Between the two poles, were the various independent leftist groups that used a mixed repertoire of action, with both confrontational (e.g. wildcat strikes and occupations) and violent tactics (e.g. arsons and violent street protests)<sup>89</sup>. At the same time, while the movement’s collective identity was characterised by a combination of

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<sup>86</sup> Andreas Papandreou managed to eliminate the most radical factions within PASOK through a series of purges of party cadres (1974 – 1976), while he repeatedly condemned the use of confrontational and violent tactics from protesters as work of agent provocateurs (Ifantis 1995).

<sup>87</sup> The revolutionary left movement can also be recognised as social movement family defined as “a nationally based, historical configuration of movements that – though they have different specific goals, immediate fields of struggle, and strategic preferences – share a common worldview, have organisational overlaps, and occasionally ally for joint campaigns” (Della Porta and Rucht 1995).

<sup>88</sup> Guzman-Concha (2015, p. 671) identified as radical social movements those that: (i) pursue an agenda of drastic changes regarding the political and economic organisation of the society, (ii) employ a repertoire of action characterised by the use of unconventional tactics and (iii) adopt a countercultural identity that justifies their unconventional objectives and methods.

<sup>89</sup> Despite the dominant role of the political parties in the mass mobilisation of the protest cycle of the 1970s, a number of autonomous subjects emerged and challenged their role in the university (e. g. Choros) and in the trade unions (e. g. independent leftist unions); at the same time as the first environmental and feminist groups made their appearance within the ranks of already established organisations (Simiti 2002; Papadogiannis 2015b; Serdedakis 2015).

instrumental, countercultural and subcultural elements (Koopmans 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995), those elements influenced the diverse factions of the movement disproportionately<sup>90</sup>; a fact that resulted in a multiplicity of identities within the movement (Flesher Fominaya 2010a). Thus, the extra-parliamentary left parties had a more instrumental character, as they were externally oriented and pursued their goals through their participation in the national elections. In contrast, the revolutionary groups had a more countercultural nature, as they combined their external orientation with an identity-based logic and they derived their identity through the use of clandestine violence against the state<sup>91</sup>. Then again, the diverse factions maintained a similar conception of the world, mobilised over the same issues and developed a sense of solidarity. Indeed, while the majority of the parties of the extra-parliamentary Left officially condemned the armed campaign of the revolutionary groups (Kassimeris G. 2005a; Papadogiannis 2015a), their violence “retained surprisingly high levels of popularity” (Kornetis 2015, p. 27) among the cadres of the revolutionary left movement during the early *Metapolitefsi* – at the same time as the armed groups identified themselves as the radical wing of the movement (Serdedakis 2006).

Whilst in the beginning of the protest cycle the revolutionary left movement had a predominantly external orientation, a series of developments in the mid-to-late 1970s affected its logic of action with the movement becoming more internally oriented and identity-based. Responsible for this identity shift was the drop of the salience of the extra-parliamentary left parties in the revolutionary left movement. This decline was originally caused by a wave of splits that occurred in the body of the extra-parliamentary Left from 1976 onwards, triggered by the failing results in the elections of 1974 and 1977<sup>92</sup>, the international crisis of Maoism after the death of Mao in 1976

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<sup>90</sup> Kriesi et al. (1995, pp. 84 – 85) classified social movements according to their logic of action (identity/instrumental) and their general orientation (internal/external) between: a) instrumental movements, namely those with instrumental logic of action and external orientation, as they try to influence the political system in order to achieve their goals; b) subcultural movements that are largely identity-based and internally oriented, as the primal aim of action is the reproduction of their collective identity; and c) countercultural movements that combine the goal of reproducing their collective identity with a strong external orientation. However, the authors recognised that this classification was not clear-cut, as “social movements always combine instrumental and identity logics, but the mix between the two varies among movements” (Kriesi et al. 1995, p. 242).

<sup>91</sup> Countercultural movements derive and reproduce their collective identity from conflicting and confrontational interaction with adversaries, most notably with political authorities and security forces (ibid, p. 86, 89).

<sup>92</sup> Characteristic example was that of EKKE, which although was the most popular party among the extra-parliamentary Left, it gathered only 1,539 votes in the 1974 national elections and 11,895 votes (0,2 per cent) in the 1977 national elections.

and the disaffection of activists with the bureaucratism of the left-wing parties (Papadogiannis 2009). Hence, by 1978 both the Maoist and the Trotskyist currents of the extra-parliamentary Left had undergone significant schisms, while the dissatisfaction with left-wing party politics also led to divisions within the ranks of the youth organisations of the traditional and the socialist Left. Particularly significant was the case of the RF – the youth organisation of the KKE-ES – that split when the majority of the cadres decided to leave the organisation and to create the Rigas Feraios – Second Panhellenic Congress (RF – B Panelladiki), as a response to the growing reformism of both the RF and the KKE-ES<sup>93</sup>. RF – B Panelladiki, then, in 1978 – 1979 had a decisive role in the creation of a leftist network of groups that identified itself as Choros<sup>94</sup>. It was a loose affiliation of autonomous leftist organisations and former members of left-wing groups, which had in common a fundamental antipathy to the role of the parties of the Greek Left during the 1970s. Influenced by an autonomist and anti-authoritarian ideology, this radical network was critical towards the centralised hierarchical structure of the left-wing parties (Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011). Choros played also a crucial part in a large wave of university building occupations, which took place between 1979 and 1980<sup>95</sup>. These occupations gave rise to a new militant political culture that challenged both the mainstream and extra-parliamentary left-wing parties<sup>96</sup> and acted as a hotbed for the rise of an anti-authoritarian and anarchist current within the revolutionary left movement (Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011; Kitis 2015; Apoifis 2016). Consequently, these developments resulted in a shift of the movement’s collective identity – recognised as a dynamic and ongoing process that is shaped through the interaction of different actors within a movement (Melucci 1989, 1995, 1996)<sup>97</sup>. More specifically, the gradual weakening of

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<sup>93</sup> The Greek Communist Youth “Rigas Feraios” – Second Panhellenic Congress (EKON RF – B Panelladiki) as it was the whole title of the group, acquired its name from its founding conference (second panhellenic congress), in an attempt to demonstrate continuity with the first convention of RF in 1976 and with the original political positions of the youth group.

<sup>94</sup> Although, “choros” in Greek is translated as “space”, the most accurate interpretation of the term would be “scene” or “milieu” (Kitis 2015).

<sup>95</sup> These occupations were a response to the educational law 815/1978, which promoted – according to the radical left student organisations – the intensification of the university studies and accommodated the integration of the students in the capitalist economy. The volume and intensity of the occupations led to the final withdrawal of the legislation by the government of New Democracy in early 1980.

<sup>96</sup> The university occupations often triggered violent clashes between autonomous leftists and members of the traditional left organisations, when the latter tried to prevent or end the occupations (Kitis 2015).

<sup>97</sup> The conceptualisation of the collective identity as an ongoing and dynamic process allows the researcher to move beyond the group level and explore the relationship between groups, networks of groups and movements during the collective identity formation process (Flesher Fominaya 2010b)

the role of the parties during the 1970s, coupled with the emergence of influential subcultural actors – such as Choros<sup>98</sup> – resulted in the overall reposition of the revolutionary left movement towards a more identitarian orientation as the protest cycle was unfolding<sup>99</sup>; since conflict became more of a goal in itself rather than a mean for change<sup>100</sup> (Kritidis 2014).

The end of this cycle of protest was signified by the win of PASOK in the 1981 national elections. Rallying the anti-right pole with the call for the democratic “change” of the country (Pappas T. S. 2014)<sup>101</sup>, the socialist party’s agenda epitomised the resonant left-democratic master frame with the claims for national independence, democratisation and social/economic equality. Hence, a significant part of Greek leftists envisaged the electoral win of PASOK, as a triumph of the “progressive democratic forces” (Serdedakis 2015). Thus, on 18 October 1981 PASOK managed to acquire a strong mandate with a surprising 48,1 per cent of the popular vote<sup>102</sup> and to form “the most radical government the country [had] seen ... since its independence in 1830” (Mavrogordatos 1983, p. 3). PASOK’s victory also signalled the end of the turbulent period of early *Metapolitefsi*, which was characterised by widespread politicisation, mass mobilisation and violence between police and protesters – with the latter resulting in the death of four and the injury of hundreds of demonstrators. The level of violence also remained high throughout this period as a result of the emergence of a wave of clandestine leftist groups. Indeed, in the first years after the *metapolitefsi*, 95 different revolutionary organisations appeared (Kassimeris G. 2013b) claiming

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<sup>98</sup> “Choros ... represented an incomplete, inconsistent collective self, or a ‘subject in motion,’ which was the outcome of the desire not to resemble the ‘parliamentary Left’ on the one hand and an inability to articulate a different model on the other” (Papadogiannis 2015a, p. 207).

<sup>99</sup> The influence of autonomism and anarchism also manifested in the revolutionary groups scene as well, as during the late 1970s there was a rise of attacks against low-profile capitalist targets as part of an everyday strategy of resistance to capitalism. Characteristic case was that of O80, which through its fire-bombing campaign against supermarkets and department stores, put into effect a strategy that supported the destruction of everything that cannot be appropriated (Karampelas 1980).

<sup>100</sup> During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the violent clashes with the police became a mass phenomenon, while the annual anniversary of the 1973 student uprising became a traditional day of riots. In the violent clashes between protesters and police that followed the commemorative march on 17 November 1980, two activists found death in the hands of the police (Alkis 2010).

<sup>101</sup> According to Andreas Papandreou (Cited in Pappas T. S. 2014), the leader of PASOK, the “change” was directly linked with the socialist transformation of the Greek society and had as a basic goal the change of the country’s political system.

<sup>102</sup> Second came the ND with 35,9 per cent and third was the KKE with 10,9 per cent of the vote. The 1981 national elections were the starting point for the consolidation of an exclusive three-party system, as the three major parties represented the 95 per cent of the vote, which lasted up to the beginning of the 1990s.



responsibility for five murders<sup>103</sup> and hundreds of bomb attacks<sup>104</sup> (Kiesling 2014). Despite the regularity of attacks, revolutionary violence remained low in the security agenda, as it was recognised more as an ephemeral phenomenon than a serious threat to the state (Kassimeris G. 2001a); while the introduction of a new anti-terrorism law in April 1978 was primarily a reaction to political developments abroad than a concern over the manifestation of the phenomenon domestically (Karyotis 2007)<sup>105</sup>. At the same time, the Greek society failed to unanimously condemn the use of armed violence, as for certain segments of the population the armed attacks against US, anti-capitalist and anti-state targets were legitimate (Nomikos 2007). Hence, the public's response to the violence of revolutionary groups was characterised from affinity within the ranks of the revolutionary left milieu (Panourgiá 2009) and great tolerance among the wider society (Calotychos 2004). That was the case especially of 17N, as the group's tactic to perpetrate avenger-type attacks against widely deplored targets<sup>106</sup> was met with an atypical acquiescence – if not support – from a large part of the Greek population (Kassimeris G. 2005a; Karyotis 2007).

#### 4.4 The Intermediate Metapolitefsi (1981 – 1990)

While the early Metapolitefsi saw the integration of the excluded leftist strata in the political system, the intermediate Metapolitefsi witnessed their ascendancy to political power through the electoral win of PASOK in the 1981 national elections. This period was characterised by the strengthening of the role of the political parties and their power over the civil society (Alexandropoulos and Serdedakis 2000; Kousis 2007); whilst PASOK's ideological control over the social movement sector, especially

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<sup>103</sup> Between 1975 and 1980, there were six deaths connected with revolutionary violence: four claimed by 17N (Richard Welch, Evangelos Mallios, Pantelis Petrou and Sotiris Stamoulis), one claimed by J78 (Petros Babalis) and the death of an ELA militant killed in shootout with the police in October 1977 (Christos Kassimis).

<sup>104</sup> According to police statistics, between 1975 and 1980 there were 218 bomb explosions, 28 fire bomb attacks on buildings and 108 arson attacks on cars. However, this total included the 74 bombs detonate by the far-right OEA (cited in Kiesling 2014, p. 71). Serdedakis (2006) also documented 52 armed operations perpetrated, between 1975 and 1981, by the two most important revolutionary groups of the Metapolitefsi, namely by ELA and 17N.

<sup>105</sup> Critical for the adoption of the anti-terrorism law was the rise of political violence in neighbouring Italy and especially the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in May 1978.

<sup>106</sup> During the early Metapolitefsi, 17N executed: Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens; Evangelos Mallios, a junta's torturer; Pantelis Petrou, the deputy director of MAT, and his driver, Sotiris Stamoulis. See analytically Section 5.2.1.

during the party's first term of office (1981 – 1985) – was undisputable (Cram 1995). PASOK's hegemony was challenged only during its second term of office (1985 – 1989), when the party's grave mismanagement of the economy led to the debt crisis of 1985 and the ensuing adoption of an austerity programme. The dissatisfaction with PASOK grew exponentially especially after 1988 when a series of political scandals erupted at the heart of the government, resulting in the emergence of a popular demand of “catharsis” – namely of exposing and purging those implicated in the misdeeds (Featherstone 1990). In this climate of instability, the allegations of fraud in the high echelons of power brought not only the downfall of PASOK in the June 1989 national elections, but also the destabilisation of the Greek political system, as it took three elections in less than a year for the formation of a firmly established government (Verney 1990; Pridham and Verney 1991). This period that came to an end with the return of New Democracy in the government in April 1990, had a heavy toll on Greek politics – as the prevalence of populism, corruption and patronage led to the depoliticisation of large segments of the society and the delegitimisation of party politics as a whole (Kafetzis 1994).

#### 4.4.1 The Era of PASOK's Dominance (1981 – 1985)<sup>107</sup>

PASOK's first term of office was facilitated by a populist strategy that opened the party's ranks to all those marginalised by the post-civil war political system (Spourdalakis 1988; Spourdalakis and Tassis 2006). However, once it rose to power the party was confronted with its own political opportunism, which capitalised on the people's desire for political, social and economic change. With a pre-electoral campaign that was promising the satisfaction of the corporate interests of the party's heterogeneous social base at large, it was nothing but predictable that PASOK would be unable to fulfill its numerous pledges. Instead, the party followed a rather moderate policy that refrained from radical measures and did not fluctuate substantially from the record of the previous government of ND (Kalyvas S. N. 1997). Characteristic

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<sup>107</sup> Intermediate Metapolitefsi can be divided into two sub-periods: one that coincides with the PASOK's first governance (October 1981 – June 1985); and one that covers the party's second governance (June 1985 – June 1989) as well as the turbulent period that followed it – characterised by three consecutive national elections (June 1989 – April 1990).

example of this approach was the party's foreign policy, as PASOK contrary to its pre-electoral hyperbole kept a rather pragmatic stance, since: it chose to remain in the European Community, to not withdraw from NATO, to renew the US bases agreement for five more years in 1983 and to pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence with Turkey (Couloumbis 1993; Moschonas 2001). What differentiated PASOK, though, from its predecessor were the style of the government's administration, the control that it exerted in the state mechanism and the aspiration to further democratise the regime (Diamandouros 1993). The party adopted a confrontational attitude and made use of a polarising rhetoric that reproduced a Manichean view of the Greek political scene between "progress", embodied by PASOK and the anti-right front, and "reaction", namely the ND and the Greek Right in general (Kalyvas S. 1997; Pappas T. S. 1999). PASOK's focus on the rhetorical and symbolic level became evident from a series of initiatives that had as a goal to highlight the party's progressive character, such as: the recognition of the anti-Axis resistance<sup>108</sup>, the promotion of national reconciliation between Left and Right<sup>109</sup> and the acknowledgement of the role of the antidictatorship struggle and the Polytechnic uprising in the restitution of democracy<sup>110</sup> (Kapetanyannis 1993; Panourgiá 2009; Lialiouti 2015b). At the same time, PASOK sought to increase its control over the state mechanism in an attempt to advantage the interests of its constituents, to reproduce its electoral base and to consolidate its position in power (Lyrintzis 1993; Triantidis 2013). Hence, in the aftermath of its election PASOK instituted a major redistribution of resources towards the lower and middle strata – the backbone of the socialist party. This was executed through the immense expansion of the public sector, the systematic appointment of people loyal to the party in state-controlled agencies and the substantial raise of wages and pensions (Diamandouros 1993; Spanou 1996). Through this policy, PASOK brought a "quantum leap in party clientelism" (Mavrogordatos 1997, p. 17), as despite the fact that political patronage was a long-established feature of Greek political system, during the 1980s it became the "principal mediating mechanism between the state and the civil society" (Arampatzi and Nicholls 2012, p. 2597). Indeed, the sheer dominance

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<sup>108</sup> PASOK legislated the repatriation of the exiled communist partisans in the countries of the Eastern Bloc and the provision of pensions to all the WWII resistance fighters.

<sup>109</sup> The party decided the discontinuation of the use of security files on citizens by the Greek Central Intelligence Service (KYP).

<sup>110</sup> PASOK's first cabinet was constituted by several members of the antidictatorship struggle, while only a month after its election the party established the day of the Polytechnic uprising as public holiday in Greece.

of the spoils system in Greece, led a number of authors to identify it as a new phenomenon, diverse from the traditional interpersonal clientelism between notables and individuals. “Bureaucratic clientelism” (Lyrintzis 1984) or “machine politics” (Mavrogordatos 1997) was an impersonal version of clientelism, as patrons were replaced by the party machine, which consisted of the systematic infiltration of the state by party devotees, and therefore the party domination of the state (Lyrintzis 1993). Nonetheless, the expansion of the public sector was also followed by an attempt to democratise the state apparatus, as PASOK adopted some of the popular demands for social equality of the early Metapolitefsi’s protest cycle (Vamvakas and Panagiotopoulos 2010; Papadogiannis 2015b). Such were the cases of the reforms that the party introduced in the areas of health (with the establishment of the National Health Service), education (with a new law for the reorganisation of the universities) and family law (with safeguarding the equality of the sexes) (Simiti 2002; Guillen 2002).

This period also witnessed the rise of polarisation between PASOK and ND. Fueled by PASOK’s confrontational stance and ND’s adoption of an ultra-conservative discourse after 1981 (Pappas T. S. 2001; Pappas T. S. and Dinas 2006), the antagonism between the two dominant poles of the political system had as result the interpenetration between party politics, the civil society and the state (Cram 1994). Hence, while the early Metapolitefsi witnessed the emergence of autonomous actors (e.g. the rise of Choros in the universities) that challenged – within reason – the dominance of the parties (Papadogiannis 2015b; Serdedakis 2015), that was not the case for the intermediate Metapolitefsi. During the 1980s, the parties exploited the chronic weakness of the Greek civil society<sup>111</sup> and colonised the public space, which was transformed to an arena for party competition (Mavrogordatos 1993; Close 1999; Huliaras 2015). In this extremely polarised context, parties battled each other for the control of the mass movements (e. g. the labour movement, the student movement and

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<sup>111</sup> There is a wide-ranging agreement that Greek civil society is weak, especially in comparison to other European countries. Authors have commonly argued that this weakness is a result of a combination of historical (e.g. late modernisation), structural (e. g. partitocracy) and cultural (“non-participatory” political culture) factors. Nonetheless, some researchers have asserted that contrary to the weakness of the formal civil society, there is a vibrant unofficial civil society that is informal, loosely-organised and mobilises in a local or regional level (Sotiropoulos D. A. 2004; Sotiropoulos D. A. and Karamagioli 2006). Besides, the last two decades a gradual strengthening of Greek civil society has been observed, documented by the rise in the number of organisations and their participants; without, though, altering the overall picture of weakness that still endures (Huliaras 2015).

cultural or local associations), which more often than not ended up incorporated within the party machines (Papadopoulos 1989; Cram 1994).

The joint effect of PASOK's dominance over the state machine and the "party-ness" of the society, as social demands could not enter the political sphere unless they were intermediated by political parties (Alexandropoulos and Serdedakis 2000), caused the severe constraint of political opportunities for the emergence of social movements. The low opportunities for autonomous action, combined with the stability of the dominant cleavages – due to the continuous salience of the right/antiright dichotomy –, had as a result the predominance of a revitalisation framing strategy<sup>112</sup> (Diani 1996), as well as the rise of "change" as a master frame. While the concept of "change" emerged originally during PASOK's campaign for the 1981 elections, it was during the party's first term of office that the frame became dominant in the country's discursive opportunity structure<sup>113</sup> (Koopmans 1999; McCammon et al. 2007). Main features of this populist master frame that was widely propagated by PASOK and the various party-controlled organisations, was the oversimplifying division of the political world in two opposing camps: the people and the elite (Lyrintzis 1987; Pappas T. S. 2008). According to this discourse, PASOK embodied the will and safeguarded the interests of the people<sup>114</sup>, against the right-wing ND that was recognised as a mere relic of the Greek Right's authoritarian past (Kalyvas S. N. 1997; Pappas T. S. and Aslanidis 2015). At the same time, this master frame retained the anti-imperialist nationalism of the left-democratic master frame of the previous era, which promoted an anti-American stance and opposed the participation of the country in NATO and the EEC (Gazi 2015; Lialiouti 2015a); despite the fact that the government of PASOK kept a rather pragmatic stance in the foreign policy level (Couloumbis 1993; Veremis 1993).

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<sup>112</sup> Diani (1996) argued that the combination of low opportunities for autonomous action with low opportunities stemming from the stability of the traditional political cleavages is the most difficult situation for the emergence of challengers. In this hostile political environment, revitalisation frames are likely to be the most successful for new political actors, who through their admission in already established political organisations could redirect their agenda from within to attain their goals.

<sup>113</sup> Ferree (2003) defined the cultural or discursive opportunity structure of a society as the "institutionally anchored ways of thinking that provide a gradient of relative political acceptability to specific packages of ideas" (p. 309).

<sup>114</sup> This populist master frame can be epitomised by PASOK's pre-electoral slogan that proclaimed "PASOK in Government – the People in power" (Lyrintzis 1993).

The resonance of the master frame of “change” facilitated the primacy of the socialist party in the ideological sphere as well; after its dominance, through the *de facto* control of the state apparatus, in the political sphere. PASOK’s ideological supremacy had significant effects on the revolutionary left movement, as it contributed to the fragmentation and marginalisation of the parties of the extra-parliamentary Left (Kousis 2007; Serdedakis 2015). Besides, the reluctance of the socialist party to fulfill the radical goals of its pre-electoral agenda, namely the nationalisation of key industries, the abolition of the US military bases and the withdrawal of the country from NATO and the EEC, led to the almost unequivocal rejection of PASOK as reformist from the radical left movement; even from parts of the movement that had previously been sympathetic towards it<sup>115</sup>. Hence, this period saw the deepening of a process that had been underway since the previous era; namely the insitutionalisation of the extra-parliamentary left parties and the decrease of their influence on the revolutionary left movement (Alexandropoulos and Serdedakis 2000; Simiti 2002). As a result of the insitutionalisation of one part of the movement, a new radical generation was formed in the beginning of the 1980s, characterised by an anti-authoritarian fervor, a resentment towards PASOK’s hegemony and a determination to challenge the democratic regime (Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011). This generation of activists was comprised by: disaffected members of the traditional left parties, who were disappointed with the approving stance of the KKE and KKE-ES towards the government of PASOK; ex-members of the extra-parliamentary left parties, who were dissatisfied with the routinasation of the parties’ repertoire of action; anti-authoritarians; and anarchists (Giovanopoulos and Skalidakis 2009). Since the beginning of the 1980s, this new radical generation – influenced by the squatting and autonomous movements of Western Europe – gradually identified itself with anarchism (Kritidis 2014). A formative moment for this new generation of anarchist activists, was the march towards a central Athens hotel that hosted a neo-fascist conference, with main speaker Jean-Marie Le Pen of Front National, in December 1984<sup>116</sup>. The demonstration quickly became violent as activists attacked the hotel with

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<sup>115</sup> Interestingly enough, one of the groups that had kept a sympathetic stance towards the prospect of PASOK’s win the 1981 national elections was 17N (*17N 1981 I*)

<sup>116</sup> This protest event was a culmination of a number of other conflicts, such as those that erupted in October 1984 after the PASOK’s government attempted to gentrify through the notorious “Operation Virtue” the district of Exarcheia – the centre of radical left and anarchist activity in downtown Athens since the metapolitefsi (Makrygianni and Tsavdaroglou 2011; Vradis 2012).

petrol bombs and rocks, clashed with the riot police<sup>117</sup>, and eventually caused the cancellation of the convention (Kostopoulos 2017a). This protest event had a special significance for the movement<sup>118</sup> (Kalamaras 2010), as it was the first time since the metapolitefsi that protesters were prepared to and eventually fought back the police through the use of confrontational tactics that resembled what later became known as “black bloc” tactics<sup>119</sup> (Kitis 2015; Apoifis 2016). It was also the first autonomous appearance of the anarchist faction – with the contentious event solidifying the subcultural element in the collective identity of the revolutionary left movement during the early-to-mid 1980s (Kritidis 2014). Since then the use of street fighting and rioting, as well as the spontaneous skirmishes with the police, became a hallmark of the anarchist movement and a rite of passage for younger radicals (Kritidis 2014; Kitis 2015). At the same time, the countercultural faction of the movement, namely the various revolutionary groups, continued the perpetration of low-level attacks throughout this period. Then again, the first two years of PASOK’s governance (1981 – 1983) were characterised by the absence of high-level attacks, as well as by a series of realignments within the revolutionary groups’ milieu (Koufontinas 2014). For 17N, which remained inactive from 1980 to 1983, this was a grace period to the socialist party to put into practice its radical socialist agenda (*17N 1983 I*). The temporary suspension of activities, though, did not change 17N’s faith in revolutionary violence. Indeed, the armed group managed in only two years (1983 – 1985) to surpass its own violent record of the early Metapolitefsi<sup>120</sup>, by executing five victims; while it diversified its targets to include representatives of what it called the “lumpen grand bourgeois class” (LMAT)<sup>121</sup>. During the same period, a generalised tendency towards the intensification of the level of violence was observed, as the victims of revolutionary groups in comparison to the 1974 – 1981 era doubled<sup>122</sup>. Nevertheless, the seriousness

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<sup>117</sup> This was the first time since the rise of PASOK to power that MAT intervened to suppress a protest event.

<sup>118</sup> According to an anarchist activist, the demonstration against Le Pen and the neo-fascist meeting in Athens constituted the birth of the modern anarchist movement in Greece (Kalamaras 2010).

<sup>119</sup> The “black bloc” tactics refer to a set of confrontational practices that are used during street protests by activists, including rioting and vandalism of “capitalist targets” like banks and state buildings; as well as to the activists’ clothing as participants wear black and conceal their faces with scarves, gas masks, or motorcycle helmets (Juris 2005; Dupuis-Déri 2010).

<sup>120</sup> 17N performed during the 1974 – 1981 period three armed attacks that resulted in four deaths.

<sup>121</sup> The group identified the LMAT with that part of the Greek capitalists that had enriched themselves at the expense of the working class by abusing the state resources (*17N 1985 I*).

<sup>122</sup> From six victims during the 1974 – 1981 period, to 12 only within two years (1983 – 1985) – as 1981 – 1983 era coincided with PASOK’s grace period. The 12 victims included: five executed by 17N, six executed by Anti-State Struggle (AS) – a revolutionary group that performed three armed operations

of the revolutionary violence was once again downplayed, as PASOK's government recognised its escalation as isolated episodes of violence, rather than an organised armed campaign<sup>123</sup> (Karyotis 2007) and abolished the 774/1978 anti-terrorism law in 1983 (Kassimeris G. 1995).

#### 4.4.2 The Era of PASOK's Decline (1985 – 1990)

PASOK's second term in office signified the end of its dominance and the beginning of a period of steady decline for the party that culminated in the triple electoral defeat of 1989. However, the national elections of June 1985 found PASOK victorious. Recognised as the most polarised since the *metapolitefsi* (Seferiades 1986), the 1985 elections were once more fought along the cleavage of right/antiright. By rallying the antiright pole, PASOK managed to secure a second term in office with 45,8 per cent of the popular vote, against ND's 40,8 per cent (Limberes 1986)<sup>124</sup>. However, while the party won the elections by the promise of "better days", the state of the national economy was far from optimistic. During PASOK's first term, the combination of the soaring state expenses that funded the party's social reforms and the formation of its clientele with the low rates of economic growth, had as result the party to turn to foreign loans for supporting the economy<sup>125</sup> (Lyrintzis 1987). The borrowed money, though, were mainly used to finance consumption and to further the enlargement of the state apparatus (Fouskas 1998). The situation reached a dramatic climax in October 1985, when PASOK in a desperate attempt to avoid bankruptcy announced a stabilisation programme that entailed a general wage freeze, rising taxes and currency devaluation; and was later followed by an application to the EEC for a loan<sup>126</sup> (Petras 1987; Verney 1993). The implementation of the austerity measures during the 1985 –

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during the 1980s – and the death of the AS's main figure, Christos Tsoutsouvis, in a shootout with the police in May 1985.

<sup>123</sup> Particularly characteristic of the prevalent attitude towards revolutionary groups, was the fact that the Greek Central Intelligence Service maintained in 1982 that 17N was a "phantom organisation", a loosely structured group of anarchists that had in all probability disbanded, instead of an organised clandestine group capable of the most extreme forms of violence (Papachelas and Telloğlu 2002, p. 122)

<sup>124</sup> The national elections of 1985 consolidated the three-party division of the electorate that had observed in the 1981 elections, as well as the system's bipolar form; described due to intense political competition as "polarised bipartism" (Papadopoulos 1989; Nicolacopoulos 2005).

<sup>125</sup> During the 1982 – 1988 period, public spending increased because of PASOK's policies by 40 per cent and public debt by 433 per cent; compared to 28 per cent and 106 per cent respectively during the 1975 – 1981 period of the New Democracy government (Lyrintzis 1993).

<sup>126</sup> Greece got a loan of \$1.8 billion from EEC to support its economy in 1986.



1987 period triggered the dynamic reaction of trade unions (manifested through a large wave of strikes), which expected PASOK to meet its pre-electoral pledges for a lenient wage policy (Kapetanyannis 1993)<sup>127</sup>. Moreover, the change in PASOK's socioeconomic policy, as the party was gradually transforming itself into a social-democratic party (Pappas T. S. 2003), catalysed the disintegration of the antiright pole; as KKE condemned PASOK's neoliberal turn<sup>128</sup> (Panayotakis 2015).

During the mid-to-late 1980s, PASOK encountered not only the vigorous reaction of the civil society to the austerity policy, but also the consolidation of the revolutionary left movement. Indeed, this era witnessed the intensification of violence from both anarchist and revolutionary groups. Hence, while the 1981 – 1985 period saw the birth of the anarchist movement in Greece, this period witnessed its maturation, as the movement acquired a more or less characteristic logic and repertoire of action (Kitis 2015). Dominant features of the movement were: a tactical repertoire that emphasised the practice of direct actions and the use of low intensity violence against the police and capitalist targets (e.g. banks, state institutes)<sup>129</sup>; as well as a network structure that facilitated the cooperation of different activists<sup>130</sup>. The turning point for the expansion of the anarchist faction was definitely the violent protests that erupted after the murder of a fifteen-year-old student by a riot police officer in November 1985. The tragic event triggered a series of protest actions, such as the occupations of university buildings and riots all over Greece (Alkis 2010; Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011). This episode also led to the rise of police repression and counter-violence as key mobilising issues in the movement's agenda, and the onset of a period of tension as the clashes between anarchists and the police became an everyday phenomenon (Kritidis 2014). Alongside the reinforcement of the anarchist faction, the second half of the 1980s also witnessed the escalation of the

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<sup>127</sup> Due to tensions among its electoral base and the general dissatisfaction that the austerity measures generated, PM Andreas Papandreou decided to end the stabilisation programme earlier than scheduled and to return to the policies of the first term during the 1987 – 1989 period.

<sup>128</sup> Characteristic example of the centrifugal tendencies within the anti-right front, was the tactic of KKE in the 1986 municipal elections, as the party refused to support the PASOK candidates in the second electoral round (Nicolacopoulos 2005); a common practice of both KKE and KKE-ES in the post-dictatorship era (Papadogiannis 2015a).

<sup>129</sup> According to Borum and Tilby (2005), direct action "is the general term used for acts of protest and resistance against existing societal structures and persons, institutions, or positions of power" (p. 203), and includes every method of immediate warfare, such as strike, boycott, sabotage, occupation and even armed resistance in the case of self-defense.

<sup>130</sup> While these can be recognised as the main characteristics, the anarchist movement – and the revolutionary left movement of which the former is an integral part – has been a rather heterogeneous political space; characterised by ideological and tactical differences.

revolutionary groups' violence, as the multiplication of the attacks resulted in the injury of dozens and the death of seven people<sup>131</sup>; while the whole period of the intermediate Metapolitefsi can be seen as the most lethal era, with 19 fatalities, of revolutionary violence in Greece. Throughout this period, 17N cultivated meticulously a "Robin Hood image" (Smith H. 1999) by targeting the wicked (e.g. US imperialists and junta's torturers) and the wealthy (e.g. capitalists) that abused the working classes and denigrated their interests (Nomikos 2007). Hence by the late 1980s, the group had managed to become a permanent and almost accepted feature in the Greek political life (Kassimeris G. 2006). Towards the end of the decade, 17N directed its armed campaign against anti-corruption targets, as the expose of an entrenched web of corruption within PASOK was recognised from the group as an opportunity to intervene in the country's central political scene. The alleged involvement of prominent figures of the government – including PM Andreas Papandreou himself – in cases of fraud and embezzlement and the political turmoil they generated, prompted 17N to escalate its violence in an attempt to create the conditions for a generalised insurrection. Part of this strategy was also the group's assault in the heart of the political system through high-level attacks against politicians. The assassination of a popular MP<sup>132</sup>, however, provoked the end of an attitude of tolerance towards 17N – and towards armed groups in general – as well as the politicisation<sup>133</sup> of the revolutionary violence within the Greek polity<sup>134</sup> (Karyotis 2007).

At the same time, the country's political system was undergoing a crisis of legitimation that triggered significant developments in the institutional and the non-institutional arenas alike. The political crisis erupted in late 1988 when a series of scandals came to light (Pridham and Verney 1991). The most damaging of those was the "Bank of Crete" scandal, one of the biggest financial scandals in Greek history,

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<sup>131</sup> Between 1985 and 1989, there were seven deaths connected with revolutionary violence in the country: five claimed by the 17N; one claimed by IMA, a clandestine organisation that performed four attacks before it joined forces with ELA; and one claimed by Revolutionary Solidarity, a group that appeared only once and vanished afterwards.

<sup>132</sup> Pavlos Bakoyannis was the parliamentary spokesman of the ND and son-in-law of its leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis.

<sup>133</sup> Politicisation represents the move of an issue from a non-politicised or peripheral status to the core of the political discourse (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998). This was also the effect of Bakoyannis' death, as after the assassination revolutionary violence became from a peripheral to a central issue in the country's political agenda (Kassimeris G. 2001a).

<sup>134</sup> Another effect of Bakoyannis' assassination was the adoption by the ND government of a new counter-terrorism legislation, Law 1916/1990. This controversial bill was denounced by the opposition as undemocratic, as it banned the publication of "terrorist" communiqués by the press (Kassimeris G. 1993).

which connected the PM Andreas Papandreou with an embezzlement amounting to \$200 million (Pesmazoglou 1993; Koutsoukis 2006)<sup>135</sup>. The allegations for fraud caused the collapse of PASOK's public reputation, as the party became synonymous with corruption, especially among the – previously sympathetic – leftist strata. The hostile stance of the Left towards PASOK, caused the final dissolution of the antiright pole and the decline of the salience of the right/antiright cleavage (Lyrintzis and Nicolacopoulos 1990). In this context of shifting alignments, the split within the traditional Left, namely between the pro-Moscow KKE and the Eurocommunist Greek Left (EAR)<sup>136</sup>, was bridged, giving rise to a new political formation named the Coalition of the Left and Progress (SYN) in December 1988 (Kapetanyannakis 1993; Panayotakis 2015). Similarly, ND adopted a more moderate approach by promoting an agenda of “national reconciliation”, in an attempt to nullify PASOK's polarising discourse (Nicolacopoulos 2005). In the non-institutional arena, the widespread frustration with PASOK had as a consequence the rise of a popular demand for the “catharsis” of the government and the public administration – namely for cleansing the corruption nexus between the two institutions. “Catharsis” quickly took the characteristics of a master frame, as it became the dominant mode of interpretation of the political context during the crisis (1988 – 1990). This realignment master frame<sup>137</sup> (Diani 1996) that was generated by the destabilisation of the traditional alignments and a perception of abundant opportunities for autonomous action, advocated the thorough cleansing of the political system from corruption and was used to stigmatise PASOK's practices of populism and patronage (Kapetanyannakis 1993; Featherstone 1994a). The master frame of “catharsis,” coupled with the decay of the right/antiright cleavage, facilitated the rise of a temporary governing coalition<sup>138</sup> between the right-wing ND and the left-wing SYN in June 1989 elections<sup>139</sup>, in order to embark on the persecution of PASOK (Verney 1990). As soon as the necessary procedures for the investigation

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<sup>135</sup> Accused for corruption and embezzlement were apart from the PM Papandreou other four members of his cabinet. The final verdict in January 1992 acquitted Papandreou but convicted two of his former ministers.

<sup>136</sup> In 1986, the KKE-ES split in the EAR and the KKE Interior – Renewing Left (KKE-ES-AA).

<sup>137</sup> A realignment master frame emphasises the need to re-structure political systems without the utter delegitimation of the established members and procedures of the polity (Diani 1996).

<sup>138</sup> PASOK had introduced prior to the elections a system of proportional representation that cut down the number of extra seats allocated to the first party, thus creating the institutional preconditions for the formation of coalition governments.

<sup>139</sup> In the national elections of June 1989, ND won the majority of the vote with 44,3 per cent, but it was five seats short from forming a single-party government (145 seats). The right-wing party was followed by PASOK with 39.1 per cent (125 seats) and SYN with 13, 1 per cent (28 seats).

of PASOK's culpability were made, new elections were held in November 1989 that resulted in a national unity government comprised from the three main parties<sup>140</sup> (Pridham and Verney 1991). The second coalition government lasted only months as well, leading to the third elections in less than a year. It was the April 1990 elections that finally gave a way out of the political impasse, as ND managed to form a government of marginal majority (Clogg 1993)<sup>141</sup>; putting this way an end to PASOK's dominance. The rise of ND to power also signalled the end of intermediate Metapolitefsi, as it coincided with a wider transitional period in the international and domestic levels characterised by: the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of neoliberalism; the first participation of the Greek Left in a government<sup>142</sup>; and the increase of public disillusionment with party politics that the combined effect of populism, corruption and patronage generated.

## 4.5 The Late Metapolitefsi (1990 – 2002)<sup>143</sup>

Late Metapolitefsi covers the period from the beginning of the 1990s up to the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the outbreak of the debt crisis and the adoption of the first economic adjustment programme in May 2010 triggered the end of the two-party system that marked the post-junta era (Panagiotopoulos 2015). The years that followed the transitory period of 1988 – 1990 were characterised by both continuity and change, as old and new features coexisted within the political system of the late Metapolitefsi (Featherstone 2005). Enduring elements from the previous populist decade were: the predominance of the bipartism, the prevalence of statism, the preservation of a wide

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<sup>140</sup> In the November 1989 elections, the share of the vote was 46, 2 per cent for ND (148 seats), 40,7 per cent for PASOK (128 seats) and 11,0 per cent for SYN (21 seats).

<sup>141</sup> ND managed to win the national elections of April 1990 with 46, 9 per cent, though once more was unable to form a government on its own as it concentrated 150 seats. A government of marginal majority was finally formed when the only MP of Democratic Renewal (DIANA), a ND breakaway party, joined forces with ND. PASOK came second with 38.6 per cent (123), while SYN concentrated 10, 3 per cent (19 seats).

<sup>142</sup> While SYN saw its participation in the November 1989 government as a great opportunity to marginalise PASOK, a large part of its constituents recognised it as a betrayal of the past struggles of the Greek Left. It also triggered the split of KNE – the youth organisation of the party – and the formation of the New Left Current (NAR) in 1989.

<sup>143</sup> Although the late Metapolitefsi extends between April 1990 and May 2010 (the beginning of the crisis' era), this section covers only the 1990 – 2002 period, which coincides with 17N's third militant phase (1992 – 2002).

patronage network and the dominant role of the political parties (Paraskevopoulos 2005; Pappas T. S. and Asimakopoulou 2012).

On the other hand, this period witnessed a number of new features such as: the regular alternation in power of the two main parties, the decline of populism, the rise of a technocratic approach of governance, the improvement of inter-party relations and the gradual normalisation of the political scene. The 1990s also saw the gradual lessening of the ideological differences between ND and PASOK, as a result of the growing consensus on a number of national issues – such as the country’s entrance to the European Monetary Union (EMU) (Vasilopoulos and Vernardakis 2011). The adoption of economic policies that were adjusted to the Maastricht Treaty from ND’s (1991 – 1993) and PASOK’s (1993 – 1996) governments alike, blurred the ideological boundaries between the two main parties (Kazakos 2004; Gemenis and Nezi 2015). The turning point for the convergence of the two ruling parties was the emergence of Costas Simitis as the new leader of PASOK in January 1996 (Featherstone and Kazamias 1997), which had as a result the party’s shift from moderate social democracy to functional conservatism (Puhle 2001). The win of PASOK in the elections of September 1996 signaled the rise of a “modernisation” project<sup>144</sup>: a set of neo-liberal economic, political and social reforms that would allow Greece to meet the criteria for entering the Eurozone (Lyrintzis 2005). “Modernisation” developed rapidly into a hegemonic master frame, as it dominated the country’s political and public sphere during PASOK’s two consecutive terms of office (1996 — 2004) (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2011). This revitalisation master frame<sup>145</sup> was used by PM Simitis to expand the party’s electoral base, as PASOK appeared as the only guarantor of the path towards the EMU admission; a major national goal that represented the Europeanisation and the rationalisation of the Greek society and economy (Moschonas 2001; Tassis 2015).

At the same time, the non-institutional arena witnessed drastic changes, as in comparison to the intense politicisation and mobilisation of two previous decades, the

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<sup>144</sup> Although “modernisation” became a master frame during PASOK’s eight-year governance (1996 – 2004), the narrative had its roots in the beginning of the 1990s and the neoliberal reforms that ND adopted.

<sup>145</sup> Revitalisation master frames facilitate the admission of new political actors into already established political organisations in order to redirect their goals and revitalise their structures from within (Diani 1996).

beginning of the 1990s signified the emergence of depoliticisation and de-ideologisation in Greek civil society (Kafetzis 1994; Kousis 2007). In the aftermath of the 1988 – 1990 political crisis, a widespread climate of cynicism and disaffection with party politics surfaced in response to the revelations of corruption (Diamandouros 1994). For a large segment of the population, politics became identified with embezzlement and theft, while politicians were collectively seen as corrupt (Koutsoukis 1995). The widespread contempt for the political system had as a result the rise of frustration with politics and distrust towards political parties (Kafetzis 1997) – trends that increased further towards the end of twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century (Lyrintzis 2011; Diakoumakos 2009). Finally, the combination of frustration and distrust resulted in the upsurge of political alienation and apathy within the Greek society, which manifested in the decline in party and trade union membership (Pappas T. S. 1998; Panayotakis 2015).

One of the few exceptions to the pre-eminence of depoliticisation during the 1990s, was the mass protests against to the neoliberal economic policy of ND during the 1990 – 1993 period (Featherstone 1994b). The reforms promoted the reduction of the size of the state, extensive privatisations of public services and cuts in wages and pensions (Pelagidis 1997; Trantidis 2014). The opposition against the austerity measures – composed mainly from trade unions and workers – quickly took the shape of a cycle of protest that included a series of general strikes and demonstrations (Karyotis and Rüdig 2014; Kritidis 2014). Part of this contentious cycle was also a massive wave of university and school buildings' occupations, as students opposed the adoption of a new educational bill. Hence, during the winter of 1990 – 1991 hundreds of thousands of university and secondary school students cancelled the formal educational activity, as for three months (November 1990 – January 1991) most universities and around 90 per cent of schools nationwide were occupied (Boukalas 2009). The cycle culminated with three days of violent protests and riots across the country in response to the murder of a left-wing activist from right-wing vigilantes, who were trying to break the occupation of a school in Patras (January 1991) (Giovanopoulos and Skalidakis 2009). The shock from the activist's death, as well as the fact that the killer was a party member of the ruling ND, led to the resignation of the Minister of Education and the withdrawal of the controversial bill (Apoifis 2016).

The win of the student movement acted as a beacon for future movements<sup>146</sup>, as well as a vehicle for the radicalisation of a new generation of activists – who condemned both the backdrop of apathy and the political system as a whole (Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011). The end of the protest cycle found a part of this radicalised generation increasingly embracing libertarian ideas and joining the ranks of a vibrant anarchist space (Kritidis 2014), which had traditionally acted as a haven for youth with “anomic” or “delinquent” behaviour (Boukalas 2011).

Fueled by the influx of the new activists and the popular disenchantment with party politics, anarchism reached a peak of activity in the early-to-mid 1990s (Vradis and Dalakoglou 2009). During this period, the movement grew exponentially, encompassing in its ranks a multitude of different groupings that were stimulated by an amalgam of radical theories: from the various instances of anarchist thought, to Autonomy and revolutionary Marxism (Anagnostou and Skleparis 2015; Siapera and Theodosiadis 2017)<sup>147</sup>. This ideological multiplicity gave gradually way to the formation of two diverse anarchist collectivities<sup>148</sup> that differed in terms of their organisation and tactics (Boukalas 2011; Apoifis 2016). Hence, on the one hand a *mainstream collectivity* was shaped, which advocated the creation of permanent organisational networks and condoned violence only as self-defense against police repression. This largely non-violent collectivity, which had its roots in the proliferation of self-managed social spaces (squats and autonomous centres) in the beginning of the 1990s (Souzas 2014), sparked the establishment of autonomous organisations such the Indymedia Athens (2001) (Miloni 2009), a grass-roots information platform, and the Anti-Authoritarian Current (AK) (2002), the first nationwide anarchist organisation in the country (Kritidis 2014). On the other hand, in response to the “conformism” of the mainstream current an *insurgent collectivity* emerged, which supported the creation of informal networks of small affinity groups and a strategy of constant attack against capitalist and state targets (Apoifis 2016). Influenced by the anarchist trends of

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<sup>146</sup> Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou (2011) argued that 1990 – 1991 student movement was “one of the most significant moments in the history of social antagonism and political contestation in the post-dictatorship era” (p. 99), as it became the model for future university and school occupation movements (1998 – 1999 and 2006 – 2007 movements).

<sup>147</sup> According to Boukalas (2011, p. 303), Greek anarchism was based on a broad theoretical framework that was never purely anarchist, but significantly influenced by radical Marxist thought as well.

<sup>148</sup> A collectivity is identified as a very loose, fluid and dynamic association of groups (Boukalas 2011).

individualism and insurrectionism<sup>149</sup>, the groups of this collectivity emphasised the importance of the individual over the society, as well as the necessity of insurrection regardless of the external constraints (Kitis 2015). Thus, this period witnessed the division of the anarchist movement over the legitimacy of violence as a tactic<sup>150</sup>, as the mainstream current and especially the AK were against the indiscriminate use of violence (e.g. rioting, arson); while the insurgent current advocated the use of spontaneous violent actions and approved armed clandestine violence (Xenakis 2012; Kitis 2015)<sup>151</sup>. Accordingly, by the beginning of the 2000s these trends would lead to the relative insitutionalisation of one part of the anarchist scene (mainstream collectivity), as well as to the further radicalisation of another part of the movement (insurgent collectivity).

At the same time, the late Metapolitefsi was an era of great realignments in the revolutionary groups' scene as well. Hence, while the onset of the period saw the maintenance of revolutionary violence in high levels, a series of critical developments led to the decline of armed struggle by the end of the 1990s. For 17N, the beginning of late Metapolitefsi coincided with a period of violent escalation that the political crisis of 1989 had put in motion. Indeed, the 1989 – 1992 era saw the quantitative and qualitative elevation of 17N's violence, as the group intensified its operation against high-value targets<sup>152</sup>. However, the collateral death of a bystander in 1992 and the public uproar it generated has as a result the strategic reorientation of the group towards fewer and less demanding operations (Koufontinas 2014). Hence, the period between 1992 and 2002 saw the decline of 17N's level of violence<sup>153</sup>, as the group

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<sup>149</sup> Insurrectionism is a relatively recent current of anarchism that emphasises the practice of revolutionary “insurrection” through the use of illegal and violent actions. It is a revolutionary theory that – along the classic anarchist ideas of “propaganda of the deed” and direct action – espouses: the promotion of attack as a strategy, the self-organisation through informal affinity groups and an attitude of permanent conflictuality (Marone 2015; Loadenthal 2017; Kuukkaanen 2018).

<sup>150</sup> While anarchism recognises violence as a potential tool of resistance, “the questions of whether, when, and to what extent violence is a legitimate tactic... [have been] a matter for substantial debate within the anarchist community” (Borum and Tilby 2005, p. 204).

<sup>151</sup> The distinction between the two anarchist collectivities is far from clear-cut, as there is a significant degree of overlap in terms of their ideology and their practice (Apoifis 2016). The difference between mainstream and insurgent anarchist collectivities brings in mind Bookchin's (1995) famous discrimination between “social” and “lifestyle” anarchism; the former referring to the anarchist perspective that remains within the socialist tradition and seeks to transform the society towards a more egalitarian order, while the latter recognises anarchy as a state of being that should be seized by the individual through his/her everyday practice (White S. 2011, p. 116).

<sup>152</sup> Between 1990 and 1992, 17N attacked one MP of ND, the Minister of Finance of ND's government (1990 – 1993) and two Turkish diplomats – fatally wounding one of them.

<sup>153</sup> During the late Metapolitefsi there was a decrease in the group's lethal attacks, which resulted in the reduction of fatalities from 11 during the 1981 – 1990 to eight during the 1990 – 2002 period.



turned towards the perpetration of low-level attacks; before the failed bomb attack of June 2002 caused its dismantling. ELA – the second most important revolutionary group in the country – also followed a similar violent pattern, characterised by intensification of violence during the beginning of the period, followed by a decline of armed activity and the final disbandment of the group by the mid-1990s<sup>154</sup>. Thus, a general drop in revolutionary violence was observed by the end of this decade, as groups had to pull resources together, disband or reduce their operation<sup>155</sup>. The decline of revolutionary violence was also a result of the progressive securitisation of the phenomenon during the course of the late *Metapolitefsi*<sup>156</sup>; and especially at the dawn of the new century, when the prospect of hosting the first Olympic Games after the 9/11 (2004 Athens Summer Olympics) caused the adoption of unprecedented security measures and of a stricter anti-terrorism law (Samatas 2007; Floros C. and Newsome 2008). More importantly, the decrease in the operation of revolutionary groups, along with the rise of a radical insurgent anarchist collectivity, had as a result the consolidation of the anarchist movement, and especially of its insurgent current – which came to dominate the radical flank of the revolutionary left movement by the beginning of the 2000s.

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<sup>154</sup> ELA, unlike the 17N, was generally against the attacks towards human targets; a strategy that the group followed throughout the 1975 – 1990 period with one – though critical – exception, as in January 1979 J78 (a cell of ELA) executed Petros Babalis. The group's tactics changed drastically, however, after the cooperation with IMA, as the 1990 – 1995 period witnessed the escalation of tactics (use of remote detonated bombs) and level of violence (one dead and dozens of injured) (Kassimeris G. 1995; Bossis 1996).

<sup>155</sup> The decrease in the level, if not also in the volume, of revolutionary violence also manifested in the decline of the deaths connected with the operation of armed groups, as from 19 deaths during the 1981 – 1990 period they fell to 10 deaths in the 1990 – 2002 period.

<sup>156</sup> Securitisation is defined as the move of an issue beyond the realm of politics and within the security realm, as the issue is framed as an existential threat that necessitates the adoption of special measures in order to be tackled (Buzan et al. 1998).

## *Chapter 5: The Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA) and the Antidictatorship Movement (1965 – 1974)*

This chapter focuses on the contentious episode of LEA, as it originated in the contentious Greek 1960s and materialised in the context of the military dictatorship. Hence, it delineates the political context, the frames and the mechanisms that triggered the radicalisation process of the group and led later on to the disengagement from violence. Particular attention is paid to the period between 1965 and 1974, which corresponds with LEA's contentious episode, as it begins with the regime crisis of 1965 and includes critical political junctures such as: the imposition of the military dictatorship and the onset of the antidictatorship resistance (1967), the appearance of LEA in the Greek militant scene (1971) and the demise of the junta (1974). Then, the chapter proceeds as follows: the first section presents LEA's violent campaign from the group's emergence to its disbandment (1969-1974); the second section sheds light to the group's collective action frames (diagnostic and prognostic) and the frame alignment mechanisms it used; and finally, the third section describes the activation, operation and interaction of the most significant mechanisms and sub-mechanisms that constituted LEA's radicalisation process.

### 5.1 The Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA)

The Popular Revolutionary Resistance (LEA) came to life in the summer of 1969 after the dissolution of the 29 May Movement (29M). The latter was a radical left organisation founded by a group of Greek university students in Paris in 1967 and named after the date of its formation, following the model of Fidel Castro's 26 July Movement (Kornetis 2013b). The 29M brought together activists of a broad range of beliefs, such as Guevarists, Trotskyites and Maoists, with common purpose the development of armed resistance against the Greek junta (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). It was the first clandestine group with genuinely revolutionary aspirations that was established in the aftermath of the coup (April 1967) either in Greece or abroad, as its declared goals included the deposition of the military junta, the armed struggle

against the pre-dictatorial regime, the monarchy, and the US imperialism as well as the establishment of people's rule in Greece. On the contrary, the clandestine groups that originated from the traditional Left, such as the PAM from members of the EDA, defined their fight as anti-dictatorial and focused on overthrowing the junta (Floros G. 1987). The 29M grew rapidly from a handful of militants to more than 30 members in the first couple of years of activity, building cells in Germany, Italy and Thessaloniki and distributing the clandestine journal *To Kinima* [The Movement]. Faithful to the idea of the revolution, the group even received training in city and mountain guerrilla in Cuba<sup>157</sup>. However, the group's inner disagreements over the nature and the role of the armed guerrilla as well as the arrest of the Thessaloniki cell from the junta (1968) led to the premature disbanding of the group before the perpetration of any contentious action. The split resulted in the partition of the Maoist Berlin cell – that later developed to EKKE – from the organisation and the renaming of the Paris-based cell to LEA in 1969.

The departure of the Maoist faction and the critical period of military training in Cuba had as a consequence the formation of a much more homogeneous organisation that was centred on the Guevarist doctrine of “foco” and was stimulated by the armed guerrillas in Latin America – especially of the campaign of Tupamaros in Uruguay (*LEA 1972 IV*). Despite the blow that the group suffered with the uncovering of the Thessaloniki cell, LEA managed to reorganise and form new cells in Athens between 1969 – 1971; a period that can be seen as the first dormant phase of the group. Indeed, the group made its public appearance in July 1971 with the detonation of three bombs during one week in Athens. The first bomb exploded on 6 July in the Ministry of the Presidency of the Government, the second one went off on 8 July in a fuel tank of ESSO-Pappas Oil Company and the third bomb damaged the building of the Hellenic-American Union on 14 July. The three attacks encapsulated the revolutionary ideology of the group, as they targeted the military regime and its US allies (*LEA 1971 I*). Particularly, since the ministry was headed at the time by Constantinos Papadopoulos – the brother of the Dictator Papadopoulos, ESSO-Pappas was the economic venture of Tom Pappas – a Greek- US businessman who acted as middleman between the military junta and the US government (Karasarinis 2012) – and the Hellenic-American

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<sup>157</sup> Allegedly the group also received military support from the Palestinian Fatah (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002).

Union was a non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of US-Greek cultural ties. The successful bombings of July 1971, though, was followed by an operational setback, as just a month later (August 1971) the French police found the group's safehouse in Paris and arrested two members of LEA's cell in the city. The dissolution of the group was avoided only due to a sympathetic French prosecutor that let the two militants to walk free and the apparent reluctance of the French secret services to disclose the information to the military regime in Athens (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). The narrow escape had as a result the strengthening of the rules of clandestinity within the group, as well as the decision to find new cadres to substitute for their exposed Parisian comrades. In that occasion, LEA decided to join forces with a smaller clandestine organisation named Fighting Group Makrygiannis (FGM), which had already perpetrated three bomb attacks in April 1971 in central Athens<sup>158</sup>. Hence, the next bomb attack of LEA on 16 October 1971 against two US-owned cars in Glyfada, a southern suburb of Athens, was claimed by a joined communique with FGM (*LEA 1971 II*). The two bombs went off the same day with the arrival of Spiro Agnew, the Greek-US Vice President of the United States, who ended the boycott of US high-level visits in the country; thus, validating that Nixon administration had a favourable view towards the Greek dictatorship (Klarevas 2006). The next attack of LEA included once more the placing of a bomb in a symbolically important target, as was the bust of General Ioannis Metaxas, Greece's dictator from 1936 – 1941 and a figure with significant ideological effect on the leaders of the military junta (Meletopoulos 1987). The bomb exploded on 19 April 1972 in Nikaia, western Athens, two days before the fifth anniversary of the coup, destroying the statue (*LEA 1972 I*). The last operation of the group, which signified the end of LEA's second – operationally active – period, meant to be also the most spectacular, as they managed to put a bomb in the US Embassy in central Athens on 29 August 1972. The explosion, which caused only material damage to the ground floor of the building, was designated as a great success from the group as it managed to “struck [a blow in] the den of American imperialism in Greece” (*LEA 1972 II*)

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<sup>158</sup> One bomb exploded outside the US military commissary, the second beside the offices of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the third failed to go off at the entrance of the headquarters of the suburban police force. Kiesling (2014) associates these attacks with LEA, postulating that FGM was nothing more than an offshoot of the organisation.

After that attack, LEA laid low up to the demise of the military junta in July 1974 (politically active phase). Even though the group remained operationally inactive after 1972 that did not also mean its disbandment. On the contrary, LEA intervened in the political scene when it deemed necessary with the dissemination of communiqués during critical political junctures, such as the student occupations of February 1973 (*LEA 1973 I*), the referendum of June 1973 (*LEA 1973 II*) and the coup in Cyprus in July 1974 (*LEA 1974 I*). In the aftermath of the Polytechnic uprising (November 1973), LEA also published a common leaflet with the ARF and the 20Oct that supported the student movement and argued that their massive struggle forced the junta to show its brutal face and to shutter any illusions for the democratisation of the regime (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). A potential reason for the group's operational standstill could also have been the destruction after a fire of the house that was used for the construction and storage of bombs in Athens in August 1973. In this workshop the police found notes for a planned bomb attack on the offices of the Joint US Military Aid Group (JUSMAGG) in Athens, as well as documents that led to raids in suspects' houses, but not to arrests (Kiesling 2014). The repressive measures against LEA came at a period (1972 – 1973) when the whole clandestine milieu was going through significant changes due to the liberalisation of the regime and the rise of the mass student movement. One of the consequences of this new political context, was the advancement of cooperation between the different revolutionary groups. Hence, LEA came into discussion with other revolutionary organisations, such as the 20Oct, the ARF and the Independent Left, in order to coordinate their action and build a larger organisation that could promote better the struggle against the regime. This tendency escalated further after the Polytechnic uprising and the Ioannidis' coup, without though generating any substantive effects as the repression of the new regime took the form of a crackdown on all forms of resistance. The fall of the junta found LEA on the margins of the political scene, along with the other clandestine organisations, reconsidering the role of urban guerrilla under a democratic rule. The last communiqué of the group in December 1974 (*LEA 1974 II*) – a critique to the 1974 elections and their result – was the last sign of LEA, which in all likelihood disbanded shortly afterwards.

## 5.2 The Meaning Formation of Radicalisation

### 5.2.1 Collective Action Frames

#### Diagnostic frames

Through the use of diagnostic frames, a group interprets a specific situation or an aspect of social life as problematic, identifies the source of causality and then attributes blame to the responsible actor(s) (Mooney and Hunt 1996; Snow and Byrd 2007). In the case of LEA, the number one enemy was the military dictatorship. Indeed, the group shared with the rest of the antidictatorship movement an animosity towards the junta, which the group described time and again as fascist (*LEA 1971 I*). It was a regime that did not hesitate to use crude violence against the Greek people, in order to suppress their political, social and economic grievances and to safeguard its power (ibid). According to their group, the junta managed to keep the society under control only through brutal repression and draconian measures, including the intimidation, arrest, deportation, beating and torture of civilians (*LEA 1972 IV*). Besides, the regime regularly exercised disproportional violence against any form of dissent, in order to stop the diffusion of protest and to reaffirm its iron rule (ibid). At the same time, the dictators tried through the use of propaganda and the new constitution of 1968 to deceive the national and international public opinion and to create a pseudo-democratic façade for the legitimation of their reign (ibid). In fact, even the referendum for the abolition of monarchy in 1973, was nothing more than an attempt to mislead the population over the alleged “liberalisation” of the regime and to expand the powers of the Dictator Papadopoulos (*LEA 1973 II*). the persistent efforts of the military junta, the group argued that the regime largely failed to find any substantial support among the ranks of the Greek people (ibid). Hence, according to LEA’s perspective the regime managed to stay in power, against the popular will, only due to the force of arms and the US assistance (ibid).

The group was also zealously anti-American, as the United States was considered responsible for the imposition and patronage of the junta (*LEA 1972 II*); an opinion that characterised to a greater or lesser extent the entirety of the antidictatorship movement and a substantial share of the Greek public opinion

(Maragkou 2014). Furthermore, the military regime was utterly dependent for its survival to the United States (*LEA 1972 I*). Thus, LEA saw Greece as a victim of US imperialism (*LEA 1971 II*). According to its anti-imperialist perspective then, the group recognised the fight against the Greek junta as part of a wider global struggle against the US imperialism next to the cases of Vietnam or Latin America (*LEA 1972 IV*). Indeed, the United States was “accountable for crimes against humanity and for supporting dictatorships all over the world” (*LEA 1972 II*). In the case of Greece, the junta’s role was to serve the US interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and to facilitate the easy access to Israel – whose security was of primary importance to the United States (*LEA 1972 III*). For the better promotion of the US interests then, the dictatorship had as an objective the maintenance of a “law and order” regime in Greece that would allow the United States to use their military and naval bases in the country smoothly (*LEA 1971 I; LEA 1972 III*). However, US dominance in Greece was not an effect of the junta, but rather a cause of the putsch in the first place. Indeed, the military regime was not a break with the country’s past, but a natural consequence of the country’s imperialistic dependency. According to this perspective, all the governments of the post-civil war era systematically facilitated the interests of first the British and then the US imperialism in the country (*LEA 1973 I*). As a matter of fact, the government and the parliament in Greece “had been deprived from any real authority since the civil war and maintained a rather administrative and technical role” (*LEA 1971 I*). In their place, the country was ruled by a power nexus comprised by the US embassy, the NATO and the CIA, in collusion with the KYP and the Crown (*ibid*). This became obvious during the contentious Greek 1960s, when the “royal coup” of 1965 and the military putsch of 1967 intervened in order to protect the status quo and the interests of imperialism. Hence, when the post-civil war regime endangered the US interests in Greece, the country’s foreign patrons did not hesitate to show the real face of imperialism and to facilitate the rise of the military dictatorship (*ibid*).

LEA was fervently anti-capitalist as well. Indeed, the group identified the whole post-civil war era as a period of exploitation of the Greek working class from the local and international bourgeois classes (*LEA 1972 IV*). Capitalist monopolies had already permeated the country’s economy since the end of the WWII with the approval of the Greek governments (*LEA 1973 I*). Actually, monopolies’ encroachment on the economy was so pervasive that international capitalist interests were, along with US

imperialism, the” true centres of power in the country” (*LEA 1971 I*). Furthermore, LEA believed that the imposition of the junta itself was a result of capitalism’s deep infringement in the country, since the local and international capitalist elites favoured the diversion of the pre-coup democracy in an attempt to safeguard the *status quo*. As a result, the regime had as a central role to serve capitalist interests, often at the expense of the Greek people – as even the dictatorship’s policy of attracting foreign investments was meant for the maximisation of the capitalist revenues and not for the improvement of the Greek economy (*ibid*).

Accordingly, LEA was not in favour of the simple return to the pre-junta political system. The group was hostile towards the sum of the pre-junta political institutions, such as: the monarchy, which was despised because of its role in the July events of 1965 and in facilitating the imperialist agenda in the country (*LEA 1973 II*); the political elites that let the diversion of the regime to occur; and the traditional Left that was unable to respond to the imposition of the junta. Indeed, while the majority of clandestine groups was fighting for the reconstitution of democracy, LEA was fighting to change radically what it recognised as a regime of “pseudo-democracy” (*LEA 1971 I*). It was merely a democratic façade of a repressive state, which based on the support of the army, the police and the “parastate” had institutionalised violence towards a part of the society (*LEA 1972 IV*). Violence and persecution had been constant features of the post-civil war state, as the recurrent use of exile or the certificates of social conviction towards dissidents, the rigged elections of 1961 and the killing of Lambrakis in 1963 had demonstrated (*ibid*). Thus, the imposition of the junta was not a disruption of a fully functioning democratic system, but the culmination of state repression and violence (*LEA 1973 I*). At the same time, LEA – similarly to the other revolutionary clandestine groups – was critical of parliamentary democracy as a whole, since it was considered “a petit bourgeois political system” (Kornetis 2013b, p. 134). Democracy was a regime that enabled the artificial division and the political disorientation of the society, rendering people easy to be manipulated according to the interests of the capitalist class (*LEA 1971 I*). At the same time, it remained in operation only as long as it was beneficial for the ruling elite; otherwise it was replaced by an authoritarian regime, as in the case of Greece (*LEA 1972 IV*). Moreover, the experience of Western Europe, as in the cases of France and Italy, clearly demonstrated that



“liberal democracy can function only on condition of extensive state oppression” (*LEA 1971 I*).

Regardless of LEA’s allegations against the junta, the United States and the capitalist classes, the group also identified as problematic the situation in the resistance camp. Thus, when LEA made its appearance with a triple bomb attack in September 1971, the state of resistance was, according to the group, rather paradoxical – as the overwhelming disapproval of Greek people towards the dictatorship it had not materialised in a corresponding level of struggle, namely in the mass support of the resistance organisations (*ibid*). The reason for that was that none of the clandestine organisations had a truly revolutionary orientation (*ibid*). Indeed, LEA criticised those groups that adopted a non-contentious repertoire of action as a way to advance the resistance against the military regime (*LEA 1972 II*). The group also distinguished itself from this faction of the antidictatorship movement that made attacks in an attempt to capture the international public opinion and to urge the United States and Europe to press for the democratisation of the regime (*LEA 1971 II*). In 1972, LEA did not hesitate to denounce the stance of the largest resistant organisations – possibly referring to PAM and RF<sup>159</sup> – as revisionist, as they stopped their attacks and kept a rather ambiguous attitude towards armed resistance (*LEA 1972 I*). Likewise, LEA castigated three popular attitudes among the activists of the antidictatorship movement: one that focused on the theoretical while neglected the practical side of the fight, one that asserted the regime’s eventual normalisation and one that maintained that the regime would sooner or later collapse on its own (*ibid*). Consequences of these tendencies were the rise of inertia and the low level of dynamic resistance that facilitated further the rule of the authoritarian regime (*ibid*).

After the autumn of 1972, the group kept a more passive stance, as it chose to intervene only through the dissemination of leaflets in the cataclysmic developments of the era. Nevertheless, LEA was quick to discredit the plebiscite of June 1973, as well as the whole liberalisation process, as “an attempt of Colonel Papadopoulos to provide a democratic façade to the regime and to perpetuate his rule” (*LEA 1973 II*). In November 1973, the group – in a communiqué that was co-signed by a number of other leftist groups – lambasted the regime for the brutal repression of the students’

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<sup>159</sup> Both groups had reduced considerably their action already by the end of 1970, as they suffered the arrest of numerous of their militants.

occupation of the Athens Polytechnic, comparing its reaction to Pinochet's coup against Allende in Chile (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). The group's anti-imperialism was also manifested in the leaflet about Ioannidis' coup in Cyprus (July 1974), which was seen as a plot organised by the US secret services in order to expand the US military bases in the eastern Mediterranean (*LEA 1974 I*). LEA's final communiqué was a libel against the elections of 1974 and their result. The return of Karamanlis to power, which for many leftists was seen as a return to the semi-authoritarian pre-coup era, was also interpreted from the group as the “*de facto* imposition to the country of a regime of controlled parliamentarism” (*LEA 1974 II*).

### Prognostic frames

Prognostic frames include the proposal of remedies for the perceived as problematic social and political circumstances. Hence, they specify suitable solutions to the posed problems, as well as the strategy, tactics and targets that should be pursued, in order to reverse their consequences (Benford and Snow 2000). LEA's prognosis involved the use of violent resistance as a means to fight the regime. In the same way as the rest of the armed organisations of the antidictatorship movement, the group adopted a violent repertoire of action as a response to the extensive state violence (*LEA 1972 I*). At the same time, violence was recognised as a legitimate reaction to the systematised “fascist terror” that the dictatorship exercised against the Greek population (*LEA 1973 I*). However, while the traditional clandestine groups justified their violence to the exhaustion of non-contentious tactics against the dictatorship, the revolutionary group recognised its armed campaign “as part of an organised counter-violence to the long-standing exploitation that the lower classes had faced” (*LEA 1972 IV*).

More specifically, LEA advocated not only the struggle against the junta, but also a strategy of “revolutionary resistance.” Revolutionary resistance entailed the “violent overthrow of the entire political establishment that facilitated the imposition of the dictatorship and the imperialistic dependency of the country” (*LEA 1971 I*). Ultimate objectives of this approach were the seizure of power by the armed people and the creation of a socialist democracy for the working classes (*ibid*). Central pillars were also the nationalisation of the modes of production, the abolition of all the reactionary institutions (e.g. the monarchy), the eradication of all the repressive mechanisms (e.g. the police) and the country's withdrawal from the NATO (*ibid*).

According to this logic, the group recognised armed violence as the only way to bring the junta to an end, to achieve true national sovereignty for the country and to trigger radical change in Greek society (*LEA 1972 III*). Hence, LEA had an ambitious revolutionary agenda that envisioned the transformation of the country to a socialist democracy, in which the previously exploited masses would become dominant and independent (*LEA 1971 I*). In this long fight for socialism, the group acknowledged the detonation of small capacity bombs as merely the first phase of the armed struggle (*LEA 1972 IV*). Indeed, bombs were meant to play a dual role: on the first hand to accelerate the conditions for the violent overthrow of the regime and on the other to act as “propaganda by the deed” for the creation of a revolutionary mass movement against the dictatorship (*ibid*). The use of small IEDs was also conditioned by the general level of the resistance, which was not yet widely embraced by Greek people, and therefore still relatively low. At this first stage, the group argued that the elevation of the threshold of violence would endanger the resistance itself, as it could alienate a part of the society and generate the escalation of state repression (*ibid*). Hence, LEA supported the use of small attacks that would drag the state into a “war of attrition” and would give the necessary time to the revolutionary movement to grow in volume and resources (*ibid*). This way the groups would be able to not only sustain the state’s repression, but also to bond with the masses and gain their support. Only then, the intensification of revolutionary violence would have been worthwhile, as it would have “reflected the high level of the movement’s preparedness and the maturity of the political conditions for a generalised popular uprising” (*LEA 1971 I*). At that point of the struggle, the use of people’s revolutionary violence – as the group characterised its armed campaign – was also useful as it gave courage to the people, “elevated their fighting spirit and demonstrated that the junta was not immune to the resistance” (*LEA 1971 III*). Moreover, LEA’ strategy was inspired by the fight of liberation movements against overt or covert dictatorships all over the world and especially by the revolutionary mobilisation of Tupamaros in Uruguay; as the group strived to connect its struggle against the junta with the global anti-imperialist fight (*LEA 1972 III; LEA 1972 IV*).

At the same time, the group differentiated itself from the diverse blocs inside the antidictatorship movement in terms of tactics as well. LEA emphasised straight away the importance of the armed violence while criticised those that still had “legalistic

illusions” (*LEA 1972 IV*); namely all those that believed that the gradual normalisation of the regime would allow them to pursue the fight through the reactivation of the pre-coup political parties and organisations. The group also defended passionately its strategy against that faction of the left-wing antidictatorship struggle that depreciated the use of armed tactics and considered violence as harmful for the resistance, condemning them for inaction (*ibid*). Besides, LEA drew a line between the traditional and the revolutionary armed groups. Hence, whereas the traditional organisations – as those that emerged in the first phase of the anti-junta struggle – used bombs as a way to express their opposition to the dictatorship and in support of the reconstitution of democracy; the bombs of the revolutionary groups were part of a revolutionary political agenda that advocated the demise of both the junta and the pre-coup democratic regime (*LEA 1971 III*). Bombs were for revolutionary groups a means of propaganda for the creation of a mass movement that would challenge the whole political establishment and not just “fireworks” – as LEA characterised the bombs of the traditional groups<sup>160</sup> – that merely supported the reconstitution of the pre-coup democracy (*LEA 1972 IV*). The group, though, had to vindicate its strategy of low-level armed violence against different trends of the revolutionary milieu as well. Such trends were those that over-estimated the importance of the military action asking for the escalation of violence, and those that advocated that armed methods should be part of a future stage of the struggle. To these opinions, LEA responded by highlighting the role that bombs were playing in the dissemination of the revolutionary ideas and the consolidation of the movement, while espousing them as the most appropriate reaction to a highly repressive environment (*ibid*).

Despite the fact that the group remained operationally inactive during the last two years of the dictatorship, its public interventions followed the revolutionary rationale of the previous period. A characteristic example was the communiqué for the student mobilisations of February 1973 (*LEA 1973 I*). This leaflet was a praise to the student mobilisations, as the group recognised them as the first sign of diffusion of revolutionary resistance in the universities. Besides, LEA acknowledged the mobilisation of the students as a consequence and approbation of the armed groups’ action, which played the role of an early example and kept the people’s fighting morale

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<sup>160</sup> LEA possibly also mocked the bombs of the first period as they had low explosive capacity and often they did not cause any physical damage.

high (ibid). The group also saw the student struggle as part of the wider revolutionary fight against the regime, which ought to intensify further during this period of alleged normalisation. Indeed, the escalation of resistance was the most fitting comeback to the regime's "liberalisation experiment," as it could prevent the "hispanisation" of the regime (ibid) – referring to the dictatorship with a human face that existed at the same period in Franco's Spain (Townson 2007) – and could expose dictatorship's repressive nature. Finally, the elevation of the struggle's level "would deepen the clashes among the different factions of the ruling elite and make clear the position of the old political classes towards this process of liberalisation" (*LEA 1973 I*). The fact remains, though, that whilst LEA recognised the liberalisation of the regime as an opportunity for the intensification of resistance, the group failed to exploit it and gradually found itself on the margins of the anti-junta fight.

### 5.2.2 Framing Process

Framing as a cognitive process of interpretation, attribution and social construction is central to the understanding of political processes of contention (Alimi 2007a), and in this case in studying the radicalisation process of the revolutionary groups in Greece. Particularly, its role is critical in providing original insight into the manner that groups frame and reframe – in the presence of perceived political opportunities and threats – their political environment, their ideology and tactics. In order to examine this process of constant framing and reframing, we should study the frame alignment mechanisms that movements strategically employ to connect their discourse with the interests of their targeted audience (Snow et al. 2014). However, aligning their message with that of their constituents affects, by either enhancing or diminishing, the capacity of their frames to resonate with a period's dominant master frames. Hence, frame alignment leads to either master frame alignment, when a group's frames are broad enough to resonate, or to master frame dealignment, when they are more "movement-centric" and therefore dissent from the institutionalised master frames. Master frame dealignment is common among radical groups as they struggle to distinguish themselves from other groups in the intra-movement level and to challenge the established hegemonic discourses and the power relations of a society (Ferree et al.

2002). Nevertheless, the two processes are in a regular interaction, as groups align their frames towards some components of a master frame and dealign them towards other components. Along these lines, master frame alignment and master frame dealignment are two co-occurring but in contention processes, as one process grows in consequentiality over the other in accordance with a movement's strategic goals in different political phases. The case of LEA constitutes a great example of this competing relationship between master frame alignment and master frame dealignment, as the group's reaction to the resonant antidictatorship master frame of the junta era can demonstrate. Characterised by hostility towards the dictatorship and the ruling military circle, an anti-American zeal and an anti-imperialistic overtone this antisystem master frame remained dominant up to the reconstitution of the democratic regime in July 1974. During this period, LEA followed a different approach in each of its political phases, as master frame dealignment was more consequential during the group's operationally active phase (1971 – 1972) and master frame alignment became more important in the politically active phase of the group (1972 – 1974).

### LEA's operationally active phase (1971 – 1972)

In the beginning of the 1970s, LEA attempted to establish itself as a new armed group among the ranks of the growing revolutionary faction of the resistance, as well as inside the wider antidictatorship movement. Hence, the group focused on highlighting through its communiqués those features that constituted its identity and made it distinctive from other clandestine organisations. Thus, LEA's determination to distinguish itself resulted in a process of distancing its message from the resonant antidictatorship master frame, or in other words in master frame dealignment. At the same time, master frame alignment process was also in operation, as the group aligned its discourse with those components of the dominant master frame that were closer to its ideology. Hence, while both master frame dealignment and master frame alignment processes were active, the group showed greater attention to the former.

Master frame dealignment was achieved through the activation of three cognitive mechanisms, namely *boundary framing*, *adversarial framing* and *counterframing*. LEA used *boundary framing*, namely in-group/out-group distinctions in order to consolidate its identity and increase its cohesiveness towards both movement

antagonists and outsiders (Guenther and Mulligan 2013). Indeed, the group differentiated itself in the strategic, ideological and tactical level against the backdrop of the antidictatorship resistance. In the strategic level, LEA identified itself as part of a new wave of resistance that saw the use of violence as a means to overthrow the dictatorship and not merely as a way to put pressure for the “democratisation” of the regime (*LEA 1971 II; LEA 1972 I*) – as the older groups pursued. In the ideological level, the group promoted the concept of “revolutionary resistance” against the moderate orientation that resistance had up to then followed. Hence, LEA advocated not only the overturn of the junta and the reconstitution of the pre-coup democratic regime as the majority of the antidictatorship movement supported, but the overall collapse of the political establishment that facilitated the military coup in the first place; namely the monarchy, the parliament, the army and the system of imperialistic dependency (*LEA 1971 I; LEA 1972 IV*). In the tactical level, LEA discriminated between the use of a contentious and non-contentious repertoire of action against the regime, condemning the employ of the latter as rather assisting than hindering the junta to repress the resistance (*LEA 1972 I; LEA 1972 II*). The group also utilised *adversarial framing* (Knight and Greenberg 2011) to vilify those actors that saw as responsible for the predicament in Greece, namely the military ruling elite and the United States. Thus, LEA recognised the junta as “a foreign-imposed fascist regime that had enslaved the country and governed through the wide use of state terror” (*LEA 1972 I*). This tyrannical rule had remained in power only thanks to the blind allegiance of the ruling circle to its masters, namely the NATO and the United States (*ibid*). The group did not hesitate to compare the latter with the Nazi Germany, as “they had expanded their dominance through the barrel of a gun around the globe” (*LEA 1972 II*), and Vice President Agnew with a “common criminal” (*LEA 1971 II*). Moreover, LEA opposed those in the ranks of the antidictatorship struggle that condemned the use of revolutionary violence and supported non-contentious tactics as apostates of the fight that try to hijack the resistance (*ibid; LEA 1972 IV*). Lastly, the group employed *counter-framing* in order to dispute the arguments of their opponents (Gallo-Cruz 2012). LEA countered the claims of both those that were in favour of the intensification of violence, as well as those that were against dynamic actions – either because they were detrimental to the cause of the anti-junta resistance in general or they were unfavorable at that early phase of the fight (*LEA 1972 I; LEA 1972 IV*). In particular, the group justified the use of low capacity bombs as the best tactic available

to the revolutionary groups, given the scarcity of resources, the relatively low level of the resistance and the need to organise the “resistance against the regime with any means necessary” (*LEA 1972 IV*).

At the same time, LEA made also use of frame alignment mechanisms in order to connect its discourse with some of the elements of the resonant antidictatorship master frame. More specifically, the group’s master frame alignment was activated through the operation of *frame amplification* and *frame bridging*. Thus, LEA invigorated and clarified its anti-imperialist frame through the use of *frame amplification* (Snow et al. 1986), capitalising on the prevalence of anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism in the resistance. Hence, the group acknowledged the country not only as a victim of US interventionism, but as “a nation under occupation” (*LEA 1971 I*). The fight in Greece, then, was part of an international struggle that was taking place globally against US hegemony. As a consequence, the only way for the country to regain its independence was – according to the group – through the destruction of the system of imperialistic dependency that was established in Greece after WWII (*LEA 1972 II*). Besides, the group used *frame bridging* to link the antidictatorship master frame with its anti-capitalist stance. Influenced by the revolutionary ideas of the 1960s – 1970s, LEA recognised capitalist dominance in Greece as “integral part of the country’s subjugation and as a great obstacle to the radical change of Greek society” (*LEA 1971 I*). Consequently, the group advocated the broadening of the antidictatorship struggle’s scope, in order to terminate the capitalist exploitation of the working class and trigger the social revolution; two goals that were encapsulated rather eloquently in the group’s “revolutionary resistance” strategy.

### LEA’s politically active phase (1972 – 1974)

Faced with the momentous effects of the dictatorship’s “liberalisation experiment”, LEA acquired with time a more passive role and ceased its operations during the last years of the junta. Nonetheless, the group remained politically active, as it continued the publication of polemical leaflets against the junta and the role of the United States in the country. This period witnessed also the intensification of legal non-contentious resistance and especially the formation of a mass student movement in the Greek universities. The rapid increase of the non-violent movement and the perpetuation of



state repression towards armed groups despite the liberalisation of the regime, generated a phase of introspection among the ranks of the revolutionary milieu. In this phase, LEA attempted to connect further its discourse with the dominant antidictatorship master frame of the era. Thus, the group's master frame alignment was put in motion through the use of *frame extension*, *frame transformation* and *frame amplification* mechanisms. By means of *frame extension*, which entails the outreaching of a frame to encompass issues that were not considered important previously but are significant for a group's constituents (Coley 2015), LEA tried to address the rise of the student movement. Indeed, while the group encouraged the diffusion of revolutionary resistance to other political spaces such as that of the university in its previous phase, it devoted a whole leaflet on the student issue after the success of the student occupations in February 1973 (*LEA 1973 I*). Hence, this communiqué was a praise to the student mobilisations, which the group recognised as part of the wider revolutionary fight against the regime. Moreover, LEA saw the student movement as a continuation with other means of the armed resistance, as clandestine groups paved the way for the rise of contention in the universities in the first place. However, the group instead of segregating the resistance in revolutionary and moderate factions as it used to, argued in favour of armed groups as a catalyst for the rise of student protests in general. Thus, LEA through the use of *frame transformation* reconstituted its old dichotomous scheme of the antidictatorship movement by substituting it with a "unified" picture of clandestine armed groups as forerunners of the student movement. At the same time, the leaflet on the student issue was a call for the qualitative and quantitative intensification of the fight. Particularly, LEA advocated along with the escalation of student protest, the elevation of the level of violence through the perpetration of dynamic acts of resistance. Hence, LEA through the use of *frame amplification* reaffirmed its belief in clandestine armed violence, as although non-violent contention was useful for the fight of the students it was not sufficient for overthrowing the regime.

### 5.3 The Mechanisms of Radicalisation

Based on the historical analysis of the anti-junta period and the frame analysis of the LEA's communiqués, this section delineates the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms that drove the group's radicalisation process. Particularly important in this endeavour was the detection of the different frame alignment mechanisms that the group used in order to associate or distance its message from the resonant antidictatorship master frame of the period. Indeed, master frame alignment (frame bridging, frame extension, frame amplification and frame transformation) and master frame dealignment mechanisms (boundary framing, adversarial framing and counter-framing) played the role of mechanisms-as-indicators of the true mechanisms-as-causes of radicalisation. These mechanisms were the cognitive, environmental and relational sub-mechanisms that constituted the central relational mechanisms in the four consequential arenas of interaction for this contentious episode. In particular, the central mechanisms per arena of interaction were: upward spirals of political opportunities in the arena between the movement and its political environment; outbidding in the arena between the movement and the security forces; competition for power in the intra-movement arena; and dissociation in the arena between the movement and the public (Alimi et al. 2015). The fifth arena of interaction, namely the arena between a movement and a counter-movement was not that important for the activation of LEA's radicalisation, therefore it was excluded from this analysis. Finally, this section addresses both the group's radicalisation period (operationally active phase, 1971 – 1972), through the analysis of the causal mechanisms that triggered the adoption of violence, and the period of decreased radicalisation (politically active phase, 1972 – 1974), through the study of the interaction between mechanisms, reverse mechanisms, as well as the slowdown in the operation of some mechanisms.

#### 5.3.1 Movement – Political Environment Arena

The interactive arena between LEA and its political environment was particularly influential not only during the group's radicalisation phase, but also in the latter politically active period of the group. Central to the arena between LEA and its political environment was the relational mechanism of upward spirals of political

opportunities, defined as the changes in a movement's political environment that inhibit its collective action as a result of constraints and/or threats (Alimi et. al 2015; Del Vecchio 2017). The mechanism was constituted from three sub-mechanisms, namely from *attribution of threat*, *diffusion* and *retaliation*. The measurement of those sub-mechanisms was facilitated by tracing LEA's framing alignment mechanisms, which played the role of mechanisms-as-indicators of the *attribution of threat* and the *diffusion* mechanisms during the group's violent phase. More specifically, the identification of *adversarial framing* regarding the military regime and the role of the United States in Greece was recognised as mechanism-as-indicator of *attribution of threat* (mechanism-as-cause); and the detection of *frame amplification* and *frame bridging* regarding the anti-imperialist/anti-American and the anti-capitalist frames respectively, were identified as indicators of *diffusion* mechanism (mechanism-as-cause).

To begin with, upward spirals of opportunities played substantial role during this contentious episode, as the rise of political threats towards the civil society as a result of the abrupt imposition of the junta sparked the radicalisation of a part of the democratisation movement of the 1960s. Indeed, it was the military coup and the massive wave of repression that followed it that initially triggered the activation of *attribution of threat*, a cognitive sub-mechanism that entails the construction of a shared definition regarding the possible negative consequences that an action, or the failure to act, would have to a political actor (McAdam et al. 2001). The implementation of a martial law and the indiscriminate arrest of thousands of people in the first only hours after the putsch were only some of the repressive measures that the regime installed in reaction to an alleged communist takeover of the country. Specifically affected from the purge was also a great number of left-leaning citizens that participated to the massive democratisation movement during the 1960s and had been subjected to persecution during the pre-junta era. For those, the junta was the violent attempt of the post-civil war political establishment to stop the democratisation process that was taking place in Greece since the middle of the 1960s. The perception of the threat increased exponentially, as soon as the dictatorship imposed to the country a state of terror, typified by the regular intimidation, beating and torture of all those that were considered dangerous for the regime. In this extremely oppressive environment, a minority of those that avoided the arrest founded small clandestine

organisations. Some of these groups soon escalated their tactics to include apart from unobtrusive forms of contention, the detonation of small bombs mostly against public buildings. These symbolic attacks were almost exclusively connected with either the junta or the United States, which was regularly denounced as responsible for the military coup of April 1967.

At the same time, in West Europe a militant Greek diaspora formed small clandestine groups comprised mostly from students and emigres as a reaction to the dictatorship. The establishment of these new groups was decidedly influenced by the widespread revolutionary spirit that dominated in Europe after the May 1968 events in France. This political environment triggered the mechanism of *diffusion*, a relational sub-mechanism that refers to the “spread of a contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another” (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, p. 215; Tarrow 2010b). Hence, the close contact of those groups with the ideas of anti-imperialism, tiersmondisme and anti-colonialism had as a consequence the adoption of a rather revolutionary standpoint (Kornetis 2015). Indeed, these groups stimulated from the example of the Cuban revolution and the Vietnamese struggle against the United States they supported the use of armed violence as a means of fighting US interventionism and effecting a socialist revolution in Greece. One of those groups was also the 29M the progenitor of LEA, which was founded in 1967 in Paris and in 1969 split in a Guevarist (LEA) and a Maoist (EKKE) faction. In the next two years, LEA, then relocated itself in Greece, in order to organise its violent campaign against the dictatorship and its US patrons. Critical for the group’s inception of armed violence was the activation of the mechanism of *retaliation*; that is the relational sub-mechanism that involves the reprisal by an actor of the wrongs experienced by the actor or its constituency (Tilly 2003). Thus, LEA embarked on a crusade against the United States and its interests in the country, which the group saw as the power pulling the strings of the Greek dictatorship. Driven by an anti-American fanaticism, the group perpetrated five bomb attacks in one year against US targets (1971 – 1972), with most important the bomb attack against the US Embassy of Athens in September 1972; which was also the last attack of LEA before its disbandment in 1974.

The slowdown in LEA’s radicalisation process as it was manifested in the passivity of the 1972 – 1974 period, can be attributed to the activation of two sub-mechanisms in the movement-political environment arena that decreased the effect of

the upward spirals of opportunities, namely of *attribution of opportunity* and *delegitimisation*. The instigation of *attribution of opportunity*, the cognitive sub-mechanism that includes the construction of a shared definition regarding the possible positive consequences that an action, or the failure to act, would have to a political actor (McAdam et al. 2008a), was triggered by the gradual liberalisation of the dictatorship. In particular, the decrease of state repression that characterised the regime from 1969 onwards had as a result the rise of legal non-contentious forms of mobilisation (e.g. cultural groups). Concurrently, *attribution of threat* continued to be salient, as repression towards the more contentious forms of resistance, such as towards revolutionary groups like LEA, remained unaltered. The combination of these two sub-mechanisms had as an effect a constant flow of militants from clandestine armed groups to open non-violent contention. Moreover, the rise of the massive student movement also triggered *delegitimisation*, namely a cognitive sub-mechanism that entails the decrease in positive representations of actors and their actions (Demetriou 2007), as for at least one part of the students the more dynamic actions put into danger their mobilisations. Thus, they saw the detonation of bombs as a relic of the past that rather inhibited than facilitated their fight for student rights, as violent tactics ran the risk of interrupting the regime's liberalisation experiment (Kornetis 2013b).

### 5.3.2 Movement – Security Forces Arena

The arena between the movement and the security forces was specifically consequential before LEA's adoption of violence, as outbidding – defined as the action-counteraction dynamics between a movement and the security forces of a state (Bosi et al. 2014b) – was particularly influential for the radicalisation of the democratisation movement of the 1960s. The mechanism was comprised by two sub-mechanisms, namely by *repression by proxy* and *threat attribution*. Gradually, this arena saw also the activation of two other sub-mechanisms that mitigated the effect of outbidding and led to the decrease of the group's radicalisation, as it was manifested in LEA's operationally inactivity the last couple of years of the authoritarian regime; these were the sub-mechanisms of *resource depletion* and *disillusionment*.

As we saw already, LEA, along with the rest of the revolutionary groups, was organically connected with the democratisation movement that rose and fell during the 1960s and provided the base for the emergence of the anti-junta struggle as a whole (Serdedakis 2006). Subsequently, in order to describe the effect of outbidding on the group's radicalisation process, we have to turn back to the pre-coup era and the protracted suppression that a significant part of the Greek populace experienced in the post-civil war period. The end of the civil war in Greece gave rise to the creation of a firmly anti-communist state and of a wide-ranging repressive apparatus. As a result, leftist citizens were regularly subjected to arbitrary arrests, physical harm and exile. One of the actors that was responsible for the systematised persecution of the Greek Left, was a deep state machinery that consisted of a number of loosely-organised paramilitary far-right groups. While these organisations enjoyed some degree of autonomy they were still dependent on resources to the state, which repeatedly used them to harass and intimidate non-conformists. Para-state's disruptive activity peaked in the years preceding the coup, when paramilitary groups played an active role in rigging the national elections of 1961 and in the killing of the leftist MP, Grigoris Lambrakis, in 1963. Hence, despite its long-established operation, *repression by proxy*, the relational sub-mechanism that involves the informal outsourcing by state actors to non-state actors of law-and-order activities (Alimi et al. 2015), gained significant salience during the 1960s. Actually, it was the intensification of state repression combined with the deep-rooted grievances against an unjust political system that catalysed the emergence of a protest cycle in 1961 and the rise of a mass democratisation movement that meant to challenge the whole post-civil war power structure.

Nevertheless, the main agent of oppression during the pre-coup period was the state security forces, which carried out the systematic harassment of the Greek Left. City police, gendarmerie<sup>161</sup> and military police (EAT-ESA) had repetitively used brutal methods during the arrest and interrogation of left-leaning citizens throughout the post-civil war era. In addition, police forces played significant role in the violent repression of the democratisation movement of the 1960s. Excessive violence was particularly used to put down the mass volume of protesters in the aftermath of

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<sup>161</sup> The branch of the Greek police that was responsible for rural and suburban areas, in comparison to city police which was in charge of the urban areas of the country.

Lambrakis murder in 1963 and during the political crisis of 1965. The “July events” – as the two months of violent contention was later named – were characterised by the regular diversion of peaceful protests to fierce clashes between police and demonstrators and led to a spiral of “interactive violence” (Tarrow 1998) that culminated in the death of a student protester. The increasing police repression, then, prompted the activation of *attribution of threat*, the cognitive sub-mechanism that signifies the construction of shared understandings about the possible negative effects of an action, or the failure to act, to a political actor (McAdam and Tarrow 2010). The significance of this sub-mechanism aggravated further after the implementation of the military rule and the wave of repressive measures that the latter provoked. Particularly notorious, was the systematic use of torture by EAT-ESA against dissenters, a unit that developed to the main security and intelligence institution of the regime after the coup.

While the role of the attribution of threat remained substantial throughout the seven-year reign of the dictatorship, the significance of repression by proxy sub-mechanism faded out, as the insitutionalisation of state violence made the use of paramilitary groups progressively defunct. At the same time, during LEA’s passive phase the operation of outbidding was also constituted by two other sub-mechanisms that contributed to the group’s inactivity; these were *resource depletion* and *disillusionment*. Defined as the environmental sub-mechanism that indicates the capacity of a state to erode the ability of a group to engage in contentious politics (Boykoff 2007), resource depletion had a great impact on LEA, as well as on the antidictatorship movement as a whole. The fact was that the junta managed only on the first couple years of its institution to capture the majority of the armed groups, while the arrests of militants were still regular even after the introduction of the measures of political relaxation (1969 onwards). Conversely, the relative opening of the political system caused the rise of legal non-contentious resistance. Thus, as repression towards violent organisations remained high, armed groups were faced with a critical dilemma: to continue operating in a constantly shrinking political space and therefore endanger to get arrested, or to restrain from violent attacks and refocus to non-violent forms of resistance. Resource depletion worked also together with *disillusionment*, the cognitive sub-mechanism that refers to the decline in the commitment of individuals or political actors to previously held beliefs (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Disillusionment grew from the armed groups’ failure to seriously

challenge the authoritarian regime. Conclusively, the parallel unravelling of the two sub-mechanisms had as a result the majority of anti-junta militants to either turn to non-violent tactics or to abandon active resistance, as in the case of LEA; while only a minority of groups continued to make use of bombs during the last two years of the dictatorship.

### 5.3.3 Intra–Movement Arena

The interactive arena that concerns itself with the developments within the antidictatorship movement, was of great significance both for LEA's decision to adopt violence, as well as for the abandonment of the armed tactics during the group's passive phase. The overriding relational mechanism in this arena is *competition for power*, identified as the struggle between two or more political actors within a movement concerning issues of strategy, tactics and goals (De Fazio 2014). This mechanism was constituted from three sub-mechanisms during the operationally active phase of the group (1971 – 1972), namely from *boundary formation*, *decertification* and *identity shift*. Conversely, in the group's phase of deradicalisation (1972 – 1974) two other sub-mechanisms became prominent in the operation of the competition for power; these were the sub-mechanisms of *boundary deactivation* and *depolarisation*. The measurement of the above sub-mechanisms was enabled by the detection of LEA's framing alignment mechanisms. Initially, the identification of decertification (mechanism-as-cause) was facilitated by tracing the group's use of adversarial framing (mechanism-as-indicator) against the traditional Left. In a similar way, the operation of boundary formation and identity shift sub-mechanisms (mechanisms-as-causes) was signposted by the presence of counter-framing and boundary framing mechanisms (mechanisms-as-indicators), which LEA used to distinguish itself from the other armed groups of the antidictatorship movement. Then again, the sub-mechanisms of boundary deactivation and depolarisation (mechanisms-as-causes) were located with the help of frame extension and frame transformation mechanisms (mechanisms-as-indicators), which the group employed in order to align its discourse to the resonant antisystem master frame of the anti-junta era.

One of the main sub-mechanisms that characterised the competition for power mechanism in LEA's contentious episode was that of *boundary formation*, a relational



sub-mechanism that is responsible for the creation of “us versus them” distinctions between two political actors (Alimi et al. 2012). Early signs of boundary formation can be already traced in the pre-junta period and especially during the protest events of July 1965, as the pro-longed period of contention brought to the surface a dispute that was brewing among the ranks of the Greek Left. More specifically, the rise of a new generation of activists that was mobilised for the first time during the protest cycle of the 1960s, signified also the emergence of an approach that supported the intensification of tactics. Dissatisfied with the attitude of defeatism and victimisation that characterised the older generations, as a result of the loss in the Greek civil war and the chronic persecution, this new generation wanted the elevation of the Left’s role in the Greek political scene. The last straw was the moderate line of the official Left during the summer of 1965, as EDA failed to capitalise on the “objective conditions” for a generalised uprising against the post-civil war regime. Hence, the “July events” precipitated the formation of a boundary between the official Left and the radical flanks of the democratisation movement; a political milieu that would later function as source of recruitment for clandestine armed groups during the junta, such as LEA.

The boundary between moderate and radical Left got further fortified in the aftermath of the military coup. Particularly important for this development, was the failure of the official Left to react to the putsch. In fact, the complete weakness of both EDA and KKE to make use of their clandestine network and to organise even a basic level of resistance against the junta, further enflamed the disaffection of the radical leftist element with the traditional Left. The critical step, however, for deepening the chasm between moderates and radicals was the resolve of the exiled KKE to condemn the use of armed resistance against the dictatorship, promoting instead the creation of a mass grassroots movement. As part of this policy, the KKE also expelled from its ranks all those party members that espoused the armed struggle, depreciating them as merely *gauchistes*<sup>162</sup> (Kornetis 2015). The party’s intransigence, a stance that KKE upheld throughout the junta, triggered the activation of *decertification*, the relational sub-mechanism that entails the lack or withdrawal of validation and recognition of an actor, its actions and its claims by an external authority (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Decertification solidified the boundary between moderate and radical Left, raising

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<sup>162</sup> A common criticism that orthodox Communist Parties use to attribute to extreme left factions and their positions.

simultaneously the overall salience of the competition for power mechanism. This situation changed to some extent, only after the split of the Greek Communist Party and the creation of the Eurocommunist KKE-ES in 1968. While the pro-Moscow KKE was against violence, the KKE-ES kept from 1969 onwards a positive stance towards armed struggle; following the example of PAK the group of Andreas Papandreou, who even though had its political roots in the Centre had great influence on the Greek Left as well (Pantazopoulos 2010). These developments caused, then, the rise of *certification*, the relational sub-mechanism that denotes the readiness of an external authority to support the claims of a political actor (Alimi and Johnston 2014). Consequently, while the two antagonistic sub-mechanisms of decertification and certification took place at the same time, they had as a consequence the intensification of the radicalisation process.

At the same time, the combined effect of boundary formation and decertification/certification strengthened the determination of some groups to use armed tactics. In this polarised environment, violence became a way for groups to express their dissatisfaction with the Greek Communist party and to distinguish themselves from the rest of the antidictatorship movement (Voglis 2011). Hence, the adoption of violence occurred in the context of an *identity shift*. Defined as the relational sub-mechanism that refers to the construction of new identities within challenging groups whose coordinated action brings them together (McAdam et al. 2001), this relational sub-mechanism facilitated the rise of a new wave of militant groups during the junta. These organisations differentiated themselves from the old Left, namely from the KKE and all those who advocated a “reformist” agenda, as they supported the use of a violent repertoire of action within a revolutionary framework; a process that often provoked the split of existing organisations to moderate and radical factions, as in the case of LEA out of the ranks of 29M. More specifically, this wave of groups identified itself as part of a new Left that fought for radical change and socialist revolution in Greece, and advocated the demise of the dictatorship, the pre-coup political establishment and the system of imperialistic dependency in the country. An example *par excellence* of these revolutionary groups was LEA, which during the 1971 – 1972 tried to put into operation this radical agenda in Greece.

Nonetheless, the group withdrew from military action during the 1972 – 1974 period. This development came into effect, as we saw, due to a combination of causes

such as the depletion of resources and the militants' disillusionment with the dynamic resistance. One of the most important reasons, though, was the relative opening of the political opportunity structure that gave rise to legal non-violent contention. That was also the case of the mass student movement that managed to successfully challenge the dictatorship during the regime's liberalisation phase. The interaction of the above factors triggered the activation of two other sub-mechanisms that alleviated the operation of the competition for power in the intra-movement arena; these were *depolarisation* and *boundary deactivation*. Identified as the cognitive sub-mechanism that involves the decrease of ideological distance between political actors (Bosi and Della Porta 2015), *depolarisation* led to growing cooperation between armed groups, as well as to a decline of the saliency of the partisan lines between traditional and revolutionary organisations; as it was witnessed in LEA's discourse as well (See section 4.3.2). Besides, the success of the students and their non-violent tactics against the regime, had as a result the instigation of *boundary deactivation*. This cognitive sub-mechanism, which includes the weakening of a previously sharp boundary between political actors (Falleti and Lynch 2008), prompted LEA to soften its radical perspective over tactics and to recognise the importance of non-violent contention next to the use of armed struggle. Hence, the reciprocal action of depolarisation and boundary deactivation decreased the importance of competition for power mechanism and, therefore, eased the slowdown of LEA's radicalisation process during the last years of the dictatorship.

### 5.3.4 Movement – Public arena

The study of the interactive arena between LEA and the public is consequential for the analysis of the group's radicalisation process, as it provides important insights into both the rise and the decrease of the group's violence. The central mechanism operating in this arena was that of *dissociation*, which indicates the growing political distance between a movement, on the one hand, and its potential supporters and the wider society, on the other (Alimi et al. 2015). In LEA's contentious episode, this relational mechanism was constituted by two sub-mechanisms, namely by *encapsulation* and *withdrawal*, with the former igniting the emergence and the latter triggering the decline of the group's violent campaign.

Founded by university students in Paris, 29M – LEA’s forefather – was just one of the dozens of clandestine groups that the imposition of the Greek junta engendered around West Europe. However, the French capital was not just any other European city, but “the laboratory par excellence of revolutionary aspirations” (Kornetis 2013b, p. 60) at the end of the 1960s. In this political context, a significant number of Greek students came into regular contact with international revolutionary ideas and got radicalised. Characteristic example of this process was the decision of the 1st Congress of Greek Students Abroad, which took place in Paris only one month after the military coup (May 1967) and stated that “the junta came to power by the force of arms, and will only go by force of arms” (Cited in Voglis 2011, p. 553). Hence, the majority of left-wing students abroad embraced a revolutionary standpoint that recognised the anti-junta struggle as part of a generalised uprising against the pre-coup political establishment and the US imperialism and supported the use of violent means against the dictatorship. This radical rhetoric was facilitated not only by the students’ proximity to the rebellious environment of Paris, but also by their physical distance from the events in Greece (Tsiridis 2017). The remoteness of the student community from everyday Greek politics, then, triggered the operation of *encapsulation*, the relational sub-mechanism that denotes the isolation of a group from its social and political environment (Della Porta 2013). This was the case of LEA as well, as the group’s revolutionary discourse received low level of reception among Greek leftists, who still traumatised from the civil war and the post-civil war era were rather reluctant to consent to the use of “revolutionary resistance”; namely, to the multifaceted fight of the armed groups so as to provoke a socialist revolution in Greece.

Despite the fact that encapsulation was critical for the group’s radicalisation in the first place, the sub-mechanism’s effect changed progressively throughout the duration of the junta, and particularly during the group’s latter phase (1972 – 1974). This phase largely coincided with the regime’s period of liberalisation, which witnessed the opening of the political system and the rise of a mass student movement. In fact, it was the students’ mobilisation that led to the rise of public’s disaffection with dynamic resistance (Kornetis 2013b). Hence, the success of the students in challenging the regime through the use of a legal and non-violent repertoire of action triggered the emergence of *withdrawal*, the relational sub-mechanism that refers to the decrease in support of individuals or groups toward a movement’s goals and activities

(Alimi et al. 2015). Indeed, while we cannot know what was the percentage of Greek people that approved the use of armed tactics originally, we can say with relative assurance that this support was shrinking in front of the strengthening of the student movement. Similar trajectory had also, the acceptance of violence within the ranks of the student community, as the majority of the student increasingly came to see the use of armed tactics as threatening towards their fight. Besides, the fact that armed groups had largely failed to establish links within the Greek civil society and to provide a convincing alternative way of action, was responsible for their disposition on the margins of the political scene (Dafermos 1999). Consequently, the interaction of encapsulation and withdrawal, deprived the revolutionary groups of the popular consent to continue their armed struggle and caused the slowdown and eventual cessation of LEA's radicalisation process.

Table 8 below outlines the sub-mechanisms that stimulated (*sub-mechanisms of intensification*) and deterred (*sub-mechanisms of slowdown*) LEA's use of violence per interactive arena. Through the detailed analysis of the historical context and the frames that the group used to conceptualise its political environment, we identified the sub-mechanisms that constituted the main relational mechanisms in each arena of interaction. Hence, this chapter demonstrated how the threats and opportunities of the antidictatorship movement, the competition between security forces and the movement, the intra-movement antagonism and the relationship between the movement and the general public facilitated and inhibited LEA's radicalisation process.

Table 8: Sub-Mechanisms per arena of interaction in LEA's episode (1965 – 1974)

Interactive Arenas and Mechanisms	Sub-mechanisms	
	<i>Sub-mechanisms of intensification</i>	<i>Sub-mechanisms of slowdown</i>
<i>Between movement and political environment / Upward spirals of political opportunities</i>	Attribution of Threat Diffusion Retaliation	Attribution of Opportunity Delegitimisation
<i>Between movement and security forces / Outbidding</i>	Repression by Proxy Threat Attribution.	Resource Depletion Disillusionment
<i>Between movement actors / Competition for power</i>	Boundary Formation, Decertification/Certification Identity Shift	Boundary Deactivation Depolarisation
<i>Between movement and public / Dissociation</i>	Encapsulation	Withdrawal

## *Chapter 6: The Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) and the Revolutionary Left Movement (1975 – 2002)*

This chapter delves into the contentious episode of the Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N) (1975 – 2002), describing the factors that facilitated the group's emergence and resilience in the Greek political scene. 17N took its name from the Athens Polytechnic uprising in November 1973 and made its appearance in December 1975, when the group performed the execution of Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens - the first high-ranking officer of the US agency ever to be assassinated and the first successful attack towards human target in Greece<sup>163</sup> (Kiesling 2014). Stimulated by a combination of Marxism-Leninism, anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism and left-wing nationalism, the clandestine group maintained its violent campaign for 27 years by carrying out 111 armed operations and assassinating 23 people, ranging from US diplomats and military personnel to Greek politicians and policemen (Bossis 2003). During this period, the Greek security services were unable to infiltrate or capture any member of the group. Indeed, the long-lasting lack of arrests and of credible security intelligence bestowed a mythical status to the group, which came to be known by Greek media as the “phantom organisation” (Kassimeris G. 2001a). Hence, in an attempt to trace the grounds for the 17N's intransigent armed activity this chapter designates the causal mechanisms that triggered the group's radicalisation process after the end of the military junta, as well as those mechanisms responsible for the endurance of its violent campaign for almost three decades. Successively, the chapter proceeds as follows: the first section outlines 17N's armed campaign from the group's first attack (December 1975) to its dismantling (June 2002); the second section analyses the organisation's collective action frames and the frame mechanisms through which 17N aligned and/or dealigned its message from the hegemonic master frames of Metapolitefsi; and, finally, the third section identifies the environmental, cognitive and relational mechanisms that drove the group's radicalisation process.

## 6.1 The Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (17N)

This section outlines 17N's armed campaign from its inception in the aftermath of the metapolitefsi in 1974 to the arrests of the summer of 2002 that led to the group's dismantling. Shaped as an autonomous cell of ELA already by the summer of 1974, 17N actively participated in the intense discussions over the shape of the newly-founded armed organisation (Koufontinas 2014). Common point of agreement between the different cells, was the endorsement of a strategy that would avenge for the imposition of the junta and the partitioning of Cyprus by choosing targets associated with the dictatorship or the United States (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). However, there was considerable disagreement over the tactics that should be pursued. Hence, while the majority of ELA's cells supported the adoption of nonviolent and violent repertoire of action, the participation in mass struggles (e.g. labour protests and strikes) and the perpetration of low-level attacks, the 17N differed. Instead, the group advocated the elevation of the level of violence by the perpetration of attacks against human targets, which would bring to justice those accountable for the repression during the dictatorship and propagandise widely the aims of the armed struggle (Koufontinas 2014). Besides, 17N endorsed the creation of a closed organisation with centralised command that would act as a vanguard and would prioritise the use of armed violence, instead of an open organisation without hierarchy that ELA practiced through its network structure (Kassimeris G. 2013a). Those disagreements led, finally, to the departure of the 17N from ELA in the spring of 1975 (Kiesling 2014); the two groups, however, continued to cooperate by sharing resources and intelligence at least up to the assassination of Richard Welch (December 1975). This attack was the beginning of 17N's violent campaign as an independent urban guerrilla group – a campaign that endured for three decades, consisted of 111 armed operations<sup>164</sup> and claimed the lives of 23 people. Following the classification of Koufontinas (2014), the

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<sup>164</sup> The group also perpetrated a number of low-level attacks (e.g. bombing of buildings) that either were not claimed as they were part of 17N's recruitment process (e.g. testing militants' skills), or were claimed with one of the group's several aliases (e.g. Popular Rage, Social Resistance) (Koufontinas 2014).



group's leader of operations<sup>165</sup>, the armed struggle of 17N can be divided in three distinct phases: i) a first, politically formative, phase from 1975 to 1983; ii) a second, operationally dense phase from 1983 to 1992; and iii) a third phase of sporadic attacks from 1992 to 2002.

### 6.1.1 17N's First Phase (1975 – 1983)

The group's first phase coincides with the period between December 1975, when 17N performed its first ever armed attack, and November 1983, when the group put an end to its two-year abstention from violence. During this period, 17N aspired to play a "protest role" through the perpetration of avenger-type attacks that were in tune with the popular demands for the democratisation of the political system, the dejuntification of the state and the country's disengagement from the US imperialism (Kassimeris G. 2001b). These early years were a politically formative time for the group, as 17N attempted to gain credibility as a revolutionary organisation and mobilise sympathy towards its violent campaign, by carrying out three armed operations against widely unpopular targets.

The exit of 17N from ELA's sphere of influence, had as a result the creation of a closed and hierarchical armed organisation, which was based on the premises of Marxism-Leninism and was fiercely anti-American, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. Loyal to an agenda that promoted the intensification of violence, the group oriented right from the beginning towards attacks against human targets; a tactical choice that ELA was not yet ready to make<sup>166</sup>. Hence, 17N in an attempt to gain retribution for the brutal repression of the dictatorship, located its targets within the ranks of the junta's personnel and the US diplomatic/military officers. More specifically, the group set its sights on two sub-groups: namely, on those security

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<sup>165</sup> Dimitris Koufontinas, 17N's operational leader, turned himself in two months after the arrest of Savvas Xiros on 29 June 2002, which led to the group's dismantling – assuming the political responsibility of all 17N actions (Kassimeris G. 2013a).

<sup>166</sup> ELA was generally against the perpetration of high-level attacks. The group followed this strategy throughout the 1975 – 1990 period with one – though critical – exception, as in January 1979 J78 (a cell of ELA) executed Petros Babalis. ELA's tactics changed after the group's cooperation with IMA during the 1990 – 1995 period, which signified the intensification of violence and culminated with the death of a policeman in September 1994.

officers that during the seven-year reign of the junta were responsible for torturing antidictatorship activists, most of whom were acquitted or given light sentences in the trials that followed the reconstitution of democracy; as well as, on officials of the CIA in Greece, due to the agency's collaboration with the dictators and the alleged implication of the United States in the case of Cyprus. According to that reasoning, 17N executed the assassination of Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens on 23 December 1975. Welch was ambushed outside his house by three gunmen and shot dead at close range. 17N the same night claimed responsibility for the attack with a communiqué that justified the murder as a response to the role of US imperialism in Greece since the end of the WWII (*17N 1975 I*). Despite the fact that the group informed all the major newspapers about the attack, the communiqué did not make it on the news. The striking efficiency of the operation against such a high-profile target<sup>167</sup>, made the security services and the papers to dismiss the responsibility claim of this previously unknown leftist organisation as a hoax (Kassimeris G. 2001a). Instead, the most prevalent scenario among the dozens that flooded the Greek media was that the assassination was part of a “score-settling” operation between rival intelligence services (Karyotis 2007). The attack was also denounced by PASOK and KKE as an act of provocation against the Left from the radical Right (Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). In this tensed environment generated by the first political assassination in the country since the metapolitefsi, the Greek media also ignored the group's second communiqué through which 17N claimed again the attack and condemned the stance of the papers (*17N 1975 II*).

The failure to publicise its goals to a wider audience due to the intransigence of the Greek newspapers, prompted the group to modify its communication strategy. The next operation was meant to be a self-evident act, an attack against a target that could not be misinterpreted. That was the case of Evangelos Mallios, an infamous police officer, who was dishonourably discharged after the fall of the authoritarian regime due to accusations of torturing political prisoners. Mallios was a characteristic example of the asymmetrically low sentences that the bulk of the torturers received in the trials that followed the fall of the dictatorship, as he was sentenced to ten months in jail – convertible to a fine – and was released in November 1975. 17N's executed Mallios

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<sup>167</sup> The execution of Richard Welch, the first ever assassination of a US intelligence agent abroad, was one of the reasons for the enactment of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in the United States, which criminalised the disclosure of the names of covert agents (Panourgíá 2009).

on 13 December 1976 with the same gun that was used in Welch's attack. The group's ensuing communiqué defended the attack as a reaction to the failure of Karamanlis' government to punish the junta's torturers. It was also in response to the state violence that according to 17N was responsible for the deaths of MP Alexandros Panagoulis<sup>168</sup> and two other activists in 1976 (*17N 1977 I*). In contrast with the two previous proclamations, this communiqué appeared in print, first in the French leftist daily *Libération*<sup>169</sup> and afterwards in two Greek newspapers. The execution of Mallios – a widely unpopular figure across the political spectrum for his role during the junta – endowed the group with national recognition and sympathy, especially within the ranks of revolutionary left movement (Bossis 1996; Papahelas and Telloglou 2002). The establishment of 17N at the end of 1976 in the Greek political scene, prompted the group to disseminate its revolutionary manifesto to the media (*17N 1977 I*). Published in five installments (April – May 1977) in one of the most highly circulated Greek newspapers at the time (*Eleftherotypia*), the communiqué recounted the group's political analysis of the early Metapolitefsi. Labelled as “*An Answer to the Parties and Organisations*,” the proclamation was also a fierce critique to the parties of the parliamentary Left (KKE and KKE-ES) and to the organisations of the extra-parliamentary Left, which 17N identified as reformist and pseudo-revolutionary. Moreover, the group defended the use of armed violence as the first stage of the process that would eventually lead to people's power; since the historical conditions in Greece had demonstrated that the peaceful transition to socialism was not possible (*ibid*).

For the next two and a half years, 17N remained inactive, as the group influenced by the drastic changes in the wider revolutionary left movement underwent a period of transition (Koufontinas 2014). Between 1977 and 1980, the parties of the extra-parliamentary Left saw their numbers shrinking, as a result of the extensive fragmentation, the meteoric rise of PASOK and the student occupations of 1979 that

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<sup>168</sup> Alexandros Panagoulis – the antidictatorship militant that tried to assassinate Dictator Papadopoulos in 1968 – died in May 1975 in a car accident before he managed to make public the allegedly incriminating evidence against those responsible for the military fiasco in Cyprus. According to the majority of the Greek leftists, the fatal accident was orchestrated by the deep state machine that was against the expose of the possible damaging evidence.

<sup>169</sup> *Libération* had received a copy of the group's Welch communiqué (*17N 1975 I*), along with a detailed description of the attack against the CIA agent (*17N 1976 I*), since March 1976. However, the newspaper did not publish it, as it was not sure of its originality. The ballistic results of Mallios' attack that confirmed the use of the same weapon made the French daily to publish the group's third communiqué (*17N 1977II*), as well as the account of the operation against Welch.

led to the creation of the autonomous leftist Choros (Papadogiannis 2015a; Kitis 2015). At the same time, the revolutionary groups' milieu was also under crisis since the death of ELA's Christos Kassimis<sup>170</sup> (October 1977) and the enactment of the new anti-terrorist law (April 1978), which prompted a more coercive approach in protest policing. Central role in the state's repression policy had the newly-founded riot police unit, the MAT (Unit for the Restoration of Order) squads. At this point, 17N decided to make an example by killing one of the heads of the riot police. Hence on 16 January 1980, the group shot Pantelis Petrou, the deputy director of MAT, and his driver, the police officer Sotiris Stamoulis in Athens. In the leaflet that the organisation circulated afterwards (*17N 1980 I*), the choice of Petrou was backed up in view of the widespread state repression during the first years of the Metapolitefsi – recognising the MAT as merely a tool for the terrorisation and subjugation of the masses.

The last action during 17N's politically formative phase was the circulation of an influential, for the whole revolutionary left scene, communiqué in July 1981 (*17N 1981 D*). The proclamation was a criticism towards the rise of militarism and autonomist-inspired attacks<sup>171</sup> from armed groups in the beginning of the 1980s. Particularly, the firebombing of Minion and Katrantzos Sports, the two largest department stores in central Athens, in December 1980 from the Revolutionary Team October 80 (O80), a previously unknown revolutionary group, caused public disquiet and disarray within the revolutionary groups' milieu. 17N characterised the attacks as politically counterproductive, as they disregarded the economic impact on the working classes (e.g. loss of working places) and alienated the people from the revolutionary groups. Instead, the group argued in favour of the mindful selection of targets, which should exemplify rather than obscure the goals of the revolutionary struggle, and against the excessive use of armed violence. This communiqué was also a clear demonstration of the irrevocable rift within the ranks of the revolutionary groups' milieu, in terms of organisation, operational planning, tactics and strategy (Kiesling 2014). A rift that stayed salient despite the attempt of different groups – of the 17N included – during the autumn of 1981, to find a common platform and unify into a

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<sup>170</sup> Christos Kassimis – an antidictatorship activist and member of 20Oct during the junta – was one of the founders of ELA and a leading figure in the revolutionary groups' milieu. He died in a shootout with the police in October 1977.

<sup>171</sup> These attacks were against low-profile targets associated with the consumer society and the capitalist way of life (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies and department stores) as part of an everyday strategy of resistance to capitalism.

larger organisation (Koufontinas 2014). Another reason for the failure of inter-group cooperation, was also the decision of the group to suspend its violent campaign in view of the win of PASOK in the 1981 elections; a choice that was heavily criticised by ELA and other revolutionary groups of the time (Chalazias 1987). Hence, the group adopted after the 1981 elections a “wait and see” approach in order not to impede the government’s socialist agenda, which overlapped significantly with 17N’s aims<sup>172</sup> (Kassimeris G. 1993).

The end of this first phase found 17N established as the most important armed group in Greece and with a fair following within the ranks of revolutionary left movement. With a campaign that was designed from the beginning to identify with the popular grievances of the time, such as the purge of the junta’s collaborators and the role of the United States in the country, the group managed to portray itself as a defender of the oppressed and the abused (Kassimeris G. 2001a). In particular, through the careful selection of their victims, the group seemed – at least to a part of the Greek society – as satisfying the people’s sense of justice (Calotychos 2004). At the same time, Greek security services repeatedly downplayed throughout the period of early Metapolitefsi the severity of 17N’s violence, which was recognised as a rather minor security threat for the Greek state (Karyotis 2007; Nomikos 2007).

### 6.1.2 17N’s Second Phase (1983 – 1992)

The second phase of 17N extends from the group’s reappearance in November 1983, with the execution of US Navy Captain, George Tsantes, and his driver, Nikos Veloutsos, up to the organisation’s internal crisis as it was manifested by the circulation of the “Manifesto 1992” in November of the same year (*17N 1992 VI*). This was the most active period of 17N, as it featured the escalation of operations against a broad range of targets (e.g. anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist) and the introduction of new methods, such as the use of remote-detonated bombs and rockets. During this phase, the group distributed 61 leaflets and assumed responsibility for 66 attacks, which led

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<sup>172</sup> PASOK’s pre-electoral agenda included such radical measures as: the nationalisation of key industries, the country’s withdrawal from the NATO and the European Community, the dejuntification of the state apparatus, the redistribution of wealth and the expulsion of the US bases from Greece.

to the death of 15 and the injury of 55 people. 17N's dynamic comeback in 1983, was greatly facilitated by the two years of operational break, during which the group had managed to upgrade its human resources and to crystallise its revolutionary approach<sup>173</sup>. From then on, 17N became a resolutely closed and strictly hierarchical group of armed propaganda (*17N 1984 I*), which aspired to raise the revolutionary consciousness of the Greek lower classes. Inspired by the ideas and experiences of Guevara and the Tupamaros, the group advocated a Greek version of "focismo"<sup>174</sup> (Koufontinas 2014) and recognised urban guerrilla as the means for the creation of insurrectionary conditions in the country.

Central goal of the group was also to mobilise the masses against the capitalist state, and in the beginning of the 1980s against the "reformist" government of PASOK (*17N 1983 I*). According to 17N, Andreas Papandreou betrayed the hopes people had placed in him for a radical change in Greek politics and utterly abandoned PASOK's pre-electoral programme for economic redistribution and national independence – a development that reinforced the group's belief that there is no peaceful way for the transition to socialism. The ultimate demonstration of this betrayal was the renunciation of PASOK's promise to abrogate the US bases, as it was exemplified by the renewal in September 1983 for another five years of the agreement<sup>175</sup>. As a protest against this decision, 17N decided to execute Tsantes, who was the head of JUSMAGG's (Joint US Military Advisory Group) naval division in Greece, on 15 November 1983 with the group's .45-calibre signature weapon<sup>176</sup>. For the group, the presence of the US bases in the country was a constant reminder of the country's perceived limited sovereignty and of the persistent US interventionism in Greece – an

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<sup>173</sup> In the beginning of this phase, 17N recruited a number of new members from extra-parliamentary Left, which formed part of the group's second generation of militants (Calotychos 2004). Those were: Dimitris Koufontinas – the group's operational leader, Christodoulos Xiros, Patroklos Tselentis and Sotiris Kondylis.

<sup>174</sup> "Focismo" is the revolutionary doctrine that developed during the 1959 Cuban revolution. As exemplified by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, the approach highlights the importance of a vanguard that through its protracted armed violence accelerates the mobilisation of the masses and steers to a general revolutionary uprising.

<sup>175</sup> The Agreement on Defence and Economic Co-operation (DECA) that was signed in 1983 between Greece and the United States stipulated the maintenance and continued operation of the American military bases in Greece (Nea Makri, Hellinikon, Gournes and Souda) for five more years. It was also agreed that by the end of 1989 the US bases in the greater Athens area would be closed. Since 1990, the only American base in operation in Greece has been the one at Souda Bay in Crete (Balfousias and Stavrinis 1996).

<sup>176</sup> The attack took place at a central Athens' highway while Tsantes was going to his office in JUSMAGG with his personal driver, Nikos Veloutsos (Kiesling 2014).

intervention that could only be deterred through dynamic mass struggle and revolutionary violence (*17N 1984 II*). Particularly characteristic of the 17N's hostility towards the US bases in the country, was that the guerrilla group pursued six more operations against US targets during this phase in response to their ongoing presence in Greece<sup>177</sup>.

This period of high activity also saw the intensification of 17N's violence towards the Greek economic plutocracy, or towards the "lumpen grand bourgeois" class (LMAT) as the group labelled it (*17N 1985 I*). LMAT, defined as the part of the Greek capitalist class that had enriched itself through the abuse of the state and at the expense of the working class, became one of the most common targets of the group's violence during this phase (Koufontinas 2014). Constructed by 17N to highlight the exploitation of the Greek proletariat from the local capitalists, the term was used to assign greater salience to the ongoing class conflict and to mobilise the support of the working classes towards the group. 17N introduced the concept of LMAT in February 1985 when it murdered Nikos Momferatos (21 February)<sup>178</sup>, the publisher of *Apogevmatini* – the most popular conservative newspaper at the time in Greece. Momferatos, the acting president of the Association of Athens Newspapers Publishers, was targeted because of the role of the media in the systematic disinformation of the public and for facilitating the political interests of the LMAT (*17N 1985 I*). The group continued its anti-capitalist violence throughout this phase by attacking leading businessmen<sup>179</sup>, shipowners<sup>180</sup>, as well as the offices of multinational corporations in Athens<sup>181</sup>. Part of this campaign against the LMAT, was also the detonation of several bombs against tax revenue offices<sup>182</sup> – as 17N blamed the taxation system for

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<sup>177</sup> These were in chronological order: i) the failed assassination attempt against the US Army Sergeant Robert Judd (3 April 1984); ii) the car bomb attack against a Greek military bus that transported Greek and US army personnel – the explosion injured 16 US servicemen and the Greek driver (24 April 1987); iii) a remote-controlled car bomb against a US military bus that injured 11 passengers (10 August 1987); iv) the failed assassination attempt against the head of DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) agency in Athens, George Carros (22 January 1988); v) the murder by a car bomb of the US Navy Captain, William Nordeen (28 June 1988); and vi) the assassination by remote-controlled bomb the US Air Force Sergeant, Ronald Stewart (12 March 1991).

<sup>178</sup> Momferatos was shot dead close to his office in *Apogevmatini* in downtown Athens. The group also killed his driver Panagiotis Roussetis during the operation.

<sup>179</sup> 17N executed the industrialists Dimitris Aggelopoulos on 8 April 1986 and Alexandros Athanassiadis-Mpodossakis on 1 March 1988.

<sup>180</sup> Failed rocket attack against the shipowner Vardis Vardinoyannis on 20 November 1990.

<sup>181</sup> The group performed its first rocket attack against the offices of Procter & Gamble on 10 June 1990, while other attacks targeted the offices of Siemens (7 May 1991) and Halyps (16 May 1991).

<sup>182</sup> On 5 October 1985, bombs exploded in four different tax-revenue services around Athens, inflicting only material damage to their buildings.

tolerating the tax evasion and, thus, for facilitating the capitalist exploitation of the Greek working class (*17N 1986 III*).

17N also seized every opportunity to exhibit its contempt towards the Greek security forces. One such case, was the killing of a 15-year-old demonstrator by a policeman after the Polytechnic commemoration march in 17 November 1985. The student's death and the brutal repression of the protesters by the riot police caused widespread anger within the Greek society – allowing once more to the group to present itself as popular avengers and its violence as counter-violence to the state's cruelty. At the same time, 17N decided to demonstrate its enhanced military capabilities by using for the first time a remote-control car bomb. The attack against a MAT bus in central Athens – on 26 November 1985 – caused the death of one officer and wounded 14 more, generating a shockwave in the country, as it was the first time that 17N made use of a method that could result in multiple casualties (Kassimeris 2001a). The use of the car bomb meant not only the elevation of the group's tactical sophistication, but also an inclination to raise the threshold of violence<sup>183</sup>; as it was made clear some years later with instances of categorical violence<sup>184</sup> against US soldiers<sup>185</sup>. On another occasion, the death of a left-wing activist by a group of right-wingers in Patras on 8 January 1991, stimulated once more the 17N's reaction. In revenge for the activist's death, 17N decided to direct its violence once more towards the Greek security forces. The rocket attack on 1 November 1991 against a riot police bus in Athens, resulted in the death of one and the wound of seven other police officers, and was once again portrayed by the group as a just retribution to the state's mounting violence (*17N 1991 VII*).

The group's second phase also coincided with a period of high tensions between Greece and Turkey over oil-drilling rights and territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea. The crisis of 1987<sup>186</sup> that brought the two countries at the brink of war, aroused the

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<sup>183</sup> The attack was criticised by contemporary Greek media as “blind,” since the use of a large explosive device in a residential area could have resulted in numerous casualties. Some days after the attack, 17N sent a communiqué (*17N 1985 IV*) to *Eleftherotipia* to argue that the group had taken all the necessary measures to avoid the possibility of collateral victims.

<sup>184</sup> Categorical violence is defined as the violence that harms or (targets to harm) civilians or their properties because of their membership in a rival grouping (Alimi et al. 2015).

<sup>185</sup> 17N made two attacks of categorical violence against US soldiers by targeting army buses with car bombs. The operations on 24 April 1987 and 10 August 1987 caused the injury of 27 US servicemen and of the Greek driver in the first case.

<sup>186</sup> The crisis started in March 1987 when a Turkish research vessel was sent to conduct research over oil reservoirs in the disputed Aegean waters. Greece responded to the Turkish initiative by putting its



17N's nationalist sentiment against "Turkish militarist expansionism" (*17N 1988 V*). According to the group, the rapprochement that followed in 1988 was only orchestrated by US imperialism, in order to safeguard the interests of the NATO and the United States in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, the group chose to attack both Turkish and US targets in Greece<sup>187</sup>, in response to what it recognised as a clear violation of the Greek national interests in the Aegean and in Cyprus. Starting from April 1988 when the group placed bombs under four cars of the Turkish diplomatic mission in Athens, 17N perpetrated two more attacks against Turkish targets during this phase; with the execution of the Turkish embassy press attaché standing out<sup>188</sup>. The group's nationalist justification for the assassination of a low-ranking Turkish diplomat generated major upheaval within the ranks of the revolutionary Left and dissociated even sympathetic to the armed struggle segments of the movement (Panourgiá 2009; Kiesling 2014).

The next issue that entered the group's agenda during this phase was that of corruption. The eruption of the "Bank of Crete" scandal in November 1988, which led to the persecution of PM Andreas Papandreou for embezzlement and to the fall of PASOK's government, was recognised from 17N as an opportunity to gain political influence in the country<sup>189</sup> (Papahelas and Telloğlu 2002). From the beginning of the political crisis, the group tried to make its presence felt by distributing leaflets to people (*17N 1988 IX*), writing graffiti on the walls and circulating a series of communiqués regarding the scandal (Koufontinas 2014). In one of them, 17N argued that the solution to the stalemate would only come out from extra-parliamentary revolutionary forces and called the working class to join in the fight (*17N 1988 VIII*). Part of this process was also the group's attempt to create an aboveground network

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armed forces on alert. The conflict was only averted after the intervention of the United States and NATO, which led to the Greek-Turkish meeting of Davos, Switzerland in 1988; the first important step towards the rapprochement of the two countries after the Cyprus crisis in 1974 (Veremis 1993; Athanasopoulos 2001).

<sup>187</sup> Part of this violent spree were also the attacks against the two military buses (24 April 1987 and 10 August 1987), the head of DEA in Athens, George Carros (22 January 1988), and the US Navy Captain, William Nordeen (28 June 1988), as 17N justified them as a response both to the presence of the American military bases in Greece and the role of the United States in the Greek-Turkish crisis of 1987.

<sup>188</sup> 17N executed Cettin Gorgu, the Turkish embassy press attaché, on 7 October 1990. Before the assassination of Gorgu, the group had unsuccessfully tried to kill two senior Turkish diplomats on 16 July 1991.

<sup>189</sup> At the same period, 17N seemed to have already an important following, as in a poll before the elections of June 1989 an almost 6 per cent of the respondents said that it would vote for the group if it ran in the elections (Kiesling 2014, p. 177). It is also worth mentioning that even after the group's arrest, 13,1 per cent continued to view its members as revolutionaries (Karyotis 2007, p. 290).

that would act as its legal front; without though much success (Koufontinas 2014). 17N's strategy of swaying the Greek public opinion also involved the perpetration of a number of armed operations against those allegedly implicated in the corruption scandal. Complying with the popular demand of "catharsis" (Bossis 2003), the group then attacked first the judicial body, which was seen responsible for exonerating the political and economic oligarchy (*17N 1989 I*), by kneecapping<sup>190</sup> two magistrates<sup>191</sup>. As a next step, the group attempted to intervene in the national elections of June 1989 by encouraging Greek people to protest the ballot by either abstaining, voting blank or invalidating their vote with the 17N's symbol (*17N 1989 IV*)<sup>192</sup>. The final stage of the group's strategy entailed the escalation of armed violence by performing a strike in the heart of the political system. Particularly, by targeting two politicians – one from PASOK and one from ND – that were ostensibly enmeshed in the political turmoil. Hence, 17N made a failed bomb attack on 8 May 1989 against Giorgos Petsos, the former Minister of Public Order and one of the four senior ministers of PASOK's government indicted for corruption. The next operation targeted Pavlos Bakoyannis, the parliamentary spokesman of the ND and son-in-law of its leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis. Bakoyannis was a liberal politician, part of the anti-junta resistance and mastermind of the ND – SYN agreement that led to governmental coalition in 1989. 17N shot him dead on 26 September 1989 in Athens city centre, because of his alleged participation in the embezzlement scandal (*17N 1989 X*); most likely, though, due also to his role in the "historic compromise" between the right-wing ND and the left-wing SYN<sup>193</sup>. The assassination of Bakoyannis, the first politician ever to be killed by a revolutionary group in Greece, had cataclysmic effects, as the murder marked the beginning of "the end of an attitude of tolerance [towards political violence] in both the political establishment and the public" (Karyotis 2007, p. 279). A direct effect of

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<sup>190</sup> A tactic that the group had used for the first time on 4 February 1987 to attack the neurosurgeon Zacharias Kapsalakis, in response to the degradation of the country's national health system (*17N 1987 J*).

<sup>191</sup> 17N kneecapped Costas Androuridakis and Panayotis Tarasouleas on 10 and 18 of January 1989 respectively. Androuridakis died a month later from complications resulting from his injuries (February 1989). The attacks had significant impact on the Greek judiciary, as shortly after the two shootings two Supreme Court judges resigned.

<sup>192</sup> The fact that the number of blank or invalid votes was more than doubled (from 0,9 per cent to 2,2 per cent) on the elections of June 1989, was later used by the group as a proof that at least a two per cent of the Greek population approved their revolutionary agenda (*17N 1989 XI*).

<sup>193</sup> The group argued in length against this view that acknowledged the strike against Bakoyannis as a reaction to the ND – SYN agreement. In its place, 17N repeated the allegation that the liberal MP was implicated in the "Bank of Crete" scandal (*17N 1989 XI*)

the MP's death was also the adoption in December 1990 of a new counter-terrorism policy that resulted in a set of stricter legislation and a make-over of police leadership (Nomikos 2007).

Devoted to its strategy of tension, the group intensified further its violence the next two years, performing 21 attacks against a multitude of different targets. At the same time, 17N was upgrading its artillery with two impressive operations: stealing anti-tank rockets from a military warehouse close to Larissa (December 1989) and two bazookas from the National War Museum in downtown Athens (February 1990) (*17N 1990 I*)<sup>194</sup>. This period of high escalation of the group's armed action (1989 – 1992) coincided with the right-wing governance of New Democracy, which introduced a series of neo-liberal economic reforms. This agenda entailed the adoption of a programme of harsh austerity measures and privatisations of state-owned companies that which fueled popular disaffection and protest in the country<sup>195</sup>. Main recipients of the public's anger were the PM Konstantinos Mitsotakis and the Minister of Finance, Ioannis Palaiokrassas, who was considered the architect of the austere economic policy. In an attempt to protest against the unjust tax system that "perpetuated the exploitation of the working masses and facilitated the tax evasion of the LMAT" (*17N 1992 II*), 17N decided to strike Palaiokrassas. However, the rocket attack on 14 July 1992 against the politician's car was a complete fiasco. The rocket glanced off the armoured car and exploded on the street, killing Thanos Axarlian – a 20-year-old student – and wounding five passers-by. The attack that was denounced by Greek media as blind and indiscriminate terrorism, generated a widespread outrage and shattered any remaining sympathy for 17N (Kassimeris 2007). Indeed, the decision to go through with the attack despite the risk of inflicting random civilian casualties<sup>196</sup>, destroyed the image of the well-organised revolutionary group that 17N had cultivated

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<sup>194</sup> Since then rocket attacks became one of the most common tactics of the group (23 attacks during the 1990 – 2002 period) (Theodorakis 2002). 17N had also performed a similar operation in search for ammunition and weapons some years before, when six members of the group raided a police station in Vyronas, Athens (15 August 1988).

<sup>195</sup> During the same period, the group also tried to intervene with its operations in different mass struggles against the austerity: by targeting five tourist buses that were requisitioned by state authorities, during a strike of the Athens public transport personnel (11 March 1991); or by bombing a tug boat in Perama port that was breaking the strike of Greek nautical workers (25 April 1991).

<sup>196</sup> The attack took place in the afternoon of a working day, in one of the busiest streets of Athens city centre and while inside the car were also the minister's wife and daughter.

for years<sup>197</sup>; while the failure of the operation reinforced those voices condemning the group for militarism and nihilism. The death of the innocent bystander, the only collateral casualty during the 27 years of the group's activity, was a turning point for the clandestine organisation as well. The failed attack led to the exit of a number of disheartened members and their replacement by new militants; as well as to the strategic reorientation of the group towards the performance of fewer and less demanding operations (Koufontinas 2014).

### 6.1.3 17N's Third Phase (1992 – 2002)

The group's third phase covers the last ten years of 17N's armed campaign (1992 – 2002). This phase begun in the aftermath of the failed attack against Palaiokrassas (July 1992) and ended with the group's unsuccessful operation in Piraeus port (June 2002) – the latter resulted in the injury of one militant, the arrests of 19 people and the final demise of 17N. This decade saw the decline of the group's political influence, as 17N turned from impressive attacks against well-protected and politically significant targets to safe and without political symbolism operations. Then again, 17N during this phase carried out 42 operations, which killed four and injured other four people.

The death of Axarlian was the catalyst for the manifestation of a crisis that was lurking within the ranks of 17N for longer. On the one hand, 17N failed to forge a broader schema that would link the organisation with the masses, in order to take advantage of the popular discontent of the 1989 – 1992 period. On the other hand, the intensification of armed violence did not manage to create revolutionary conditions and to mobilise the Greek working class. In front of this predicament, 17N faced the dilemma of either escalating the attacks or withdrawing from the armed struggle. However, neither the Greek political environment of the beginning of the 1990s facilitated the intensification of the fight, nor the bulk of 17N's militants was ready to renounce its revolutionary aspirations (Koufontinas 2016). Hence, the group opted for a third road that entailed the continuity, though with decreased frequency, of its armed

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<sup>197</sup> The group attempted to argue its way out of the responsibility for Axarlian's death, through a series of communiqués that presented his death as a result of police's refusal to let him receive first aid; in an attempt to use his death against the group (*17N 1992 III, 17N 1992 IV, 17N 1992 V*)

operations. This decision was crystallised in the “Manifesto 1992” (17N 1992 IV), through which the group displayed its determination to carry on the revolutionary fight (Kiesling 2014) and reaffirmed its ideological status – not only within the revolutionary movement, but also inside the organisation itself.

However, the summer of 1992 intra-group crisis took a heavy toll on 17N, as the clandestine organisation was not the same anymore. Tactical reorientation manifested quickly in the group’s military action, as shooting attacks declined and low-level bombings increased. Performed against easy and safe targets, such as tax services, vehicles of tax officials and offices of foreign firms, bomb attacks seemed mechanical and lacking symbolical force (Kassimeris 2001a). Operations became more dispersed, with one-year breaks from one action to another<sup>198</sup>. At the same time, the group showed significant signs of fatigue<sup>199</sup>, as operations were aborted<sup>200</sup>, were postponed at times for months (17N 1994 I)<sup>201</sup> or showed gaps in their planning. In one occasion, after a rocket attack police forces were also able to recover DNA evidence from the location of the rocket launching and the get-away car – the first strong lead for the group’s membership in two decades<sup>202</sup>. Moreover, the group’s strategy became erratic, as attacks seemed to be dictated more from what dominated the national public life rather than a calculated revolutionary plan. In addition, the meticulous Marxist analyses of the first communiqués were gradually replaced by poor repetition and conspiracy-theorising (Kiesling 2014).

Particularly important during this phase, was also the controversial turn of 17N to nationalism. Indeed, while left-wing nationalism had always been part of the group’s ideological toolbox<sup>203</sup>, in this phase it came to dominate its agenda; dissociating further 17N from the Greek radical left milieu (Panourgiá 2009). Thus, influenced by the rise

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<sup>198</sup> By 1995, the annual number of 17N attacks had fallen from a peak of 22 in 1991 to just one (Kassimeris 2001a).

<sup>199</sup> First signs of 17N’s fatigue had appeared already since 1991 – 1992 period, when in between five months the group avoided detection in two occasions: in Sepolia, Athens (November 1991) when three members of the group involved in a shoot-out with a police patrol; and in Louisa Riancourt Street, Athens (March 1992) when the group escaped a police dragnet during practicing a planned attack.

<sup>200</sup> Planned rocket attack against the British aircraft carrier *Ark Royal*, which was docked in Piraeus port (April 1994).

<sup>201</sup> The execution of the former governor of the National Bank of Greece, Michalis Vranopoulos, on 24 January 1994, was postponed on three different occasions (June, July and September 1993).

<sup>202</sup> Rocket attack against the German ambassador’s residence in Chalandri, Athens (17 May 1999).

<sup>203</sup> 17N’s underlying nationalism can be traced back to the group’s first communiqué for the attack against Richard Welch and the centrality that the issue of Cyprus occupied in its discourse.

of nationalism in Greece during the 1990s, the revolutionary group attempted to justify its armed campaign with reference to the country's deep-rooted grievances against Turkey and the United States. One such occasion was the alleged assassination of a Greek-Cypriot activist by the Turkish intelligence services<sup>204</sup>, which prompted the group's execution of the Turkish counsellor in Athens on 4 July 1994<sup>205</sup>. Couple of years later, the Greek-Turkish confrontation in the Aegean over Imia islets<sup>206</sup>, acted as a pretext for a barrage of attacks against US targets (*17N 1998 I*)<sup>207</sup>. Part of this was also, the rocket attack against the US Embassy in Athens on 15 February 1996, as response to the US role in the crisis and to – what the group recognised as – the long-established and one-sided support of the United States to Turkey (*17N 1997 I*). By the end of the 1990s, NATO's air strikes in Serbia became a prominent issue in Greek daily agenda, especially since PASOK's government allowed NATO's troops to pass through the country on their way to Kosovo. Infuriated with the foreign policy of the Greek socialist party, which enabled the "imperialist intervention" of NATO in Serbia (a fellow Eastern Orthodox country and Greek ally) (*17N 1999 I*), 17N perpetrated a series of attacks against PASOK<sup>208</sup>, Western companies<sup>209</sup> and embassies<sup>210</sup> in the country. Last act in the group's anti-imperialist campaign was the murder of the Brigadier Stephen Saunders on 8 June 2000, who 17N blamed as having a crucial role in NATO's air raids against Serbia (*17N 2000 I*).

The attack against the British embassy military attaché, which took place symbolically on the anniversary of NATO's operations in Kosovo, was meant to be the last big operation of the group before its arrest two years afterwards. In the

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<sup>204</sup> Theofilos Georgiadis was allegedly killed by MIT (Turkish intelligence service) because of his pro-Kurdish political activity in Nicosia, Cyprus (March 1994).

<sup>205</sup> Omer Haluk Sipahioglu was shot dead outside his house in Athens.

<sup>206</sup> In January 1996, the dispute over the sovereignty over Imia islets led to a military standoff between Greece and Turkey. The crisis was only diffused after the US intervention, preventing the escalation of the conflict between the two NATO allies. During the crisis, a Greek helicopter crashed over the islands, killing three officers. Although, the crash was officially attributed to technical faults and crew fatigue, it was often speculated in Greece that it was caused by enemy fire. The end of the crisis was reached, after an intra-state agreement to return to the *status quo ante* at Imia; while the dispute has remained unresolved up to this day. After the de-escalation agreement, PM Costas Simitis in a statement inside the Greek parliament thanked personally the United States for mediating the crisis, infuriating the always vibrant anti-American sentiment of ordinary Greeks (Dimitrakis 2008).

<sup>207</sup> The group performed one rocket attack (8 April 1998) and five bombing attacks (4 October 1998) against a US bank and the offices of five American companies respectively.

<sup>208</sup> Rocket attack against PASOK's headquarters in central Athens (1 April 1999).

<sup>209</sup> Rocket attacks against three banks in Piraeus (5 May 1999).

<sup>210</sup> Bomb attack against the Dutch embassy in Athens (8 May 1999) and rocket attack against the German ambassador's residence (17 May 1999).

meantime, the international pressure on Greece stemming from the global anti-terrorism hysteria after 9/11 and the security concerns over the upcoming Athens 2004 Olympics, prompted the introduction of a new anti-terrorism law (January 2001) and the intensification of counterterrorism efforts (Rigakos and Papanicolaou 2003). Nevertheless, the final capture of 17N was triggered by a massive blunder on behalf of the group in 29 June 2002. It was the premature detonation of an explosive device that caused the injury of a 17N member and his successive apprehension. Savvas Xiros' critical revelations led to the discovery of the group's main arsenal in three flats in central Athens, as well as to the arrest of other 18 suspects; resulting in the dismantling of 17N – one of Europe's most elusive urban guerrilla groups – in less than a month (Kassimeris G. 2016)<sup>211</sup>.

## 6.2 The Meaning Formation of Radicalisation

This section introduces 17N's collective action frames, through which the group legitimised its violent tactics and delegitimised its political adversaries. More specifically, this section outlines the diagnosis (what is the problem?) and prognosis (what must be done?) (Walgrave and Manssens 2005) of the group about its historical and political context – namely, the period of Metapolitefsi in Greece. The delineation of the diagnostic and prognostic frames facilitates the identification of the frame mechanisms that 17N used in order to align and/or dealign its discourse from the dominant master frame of each era (early, intermediate and late Metapolitefsi). One of the main arguments of the thesis, is that the study of frames and frame mechanisms provides a unique insight into the dynamics of meaning formation that are consequential for a group's radicalisation process. Hence, in order to uncover the mechanisms that trigger a group's shift towards political violence it is necessary to look into the way the former understands its external reality, and therefore to examine its frames and frame mechanisms.

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<sup>211</sup> In December 2003, after a nine-month trial a three-member tribunal convicted 15 members of the group and acquitted – due to the lack of sufficient evidence – four defendants.

## 6.2.1 Collective Action Frames

### Diagnostic frames

Diagnostic frames are the interpretative tools through which a group classifies a specific situation or an aspect of the social life as problematic, identifies the source of causality and assigns responsibility to the accountable actors (Snow et al. 1986). Central to 17N's diagnosis was the failure of the democratic transition itself. More specifically, 17N, along with the majority of the radical flank of the antidictatorship struggle, saw the transition from authoritarianism to democracy as the frustration of their expectations for radical political change; a lost opportunity to reorient the country towards some kind of socialism. Moreover, PM Constantinos Karamanlis failed, in their eyes, to satisfy the popular demands for democratisation, dejuntification and national sovereignty. Hence, the post-dictatorship democracy was seen as merely a continuation of the junta; "a fascist regime with a democratic façade" (*17N 1976 I*). The similarities between the parliamentary democracy and the military rule were – according to the group – vast, as Karamanlis: kept intact the repressive mechanism of the junta, allowed the use of crude violence by the police forces and founded the MAT (riot police) in order to "terrorise the people" (*17N 1980 I*). Besides, the right-wing politician did not carry out the long-awaited purge of the state apparatus, as he largely failed to punish all those responsible for the imposition and operation of the junta (*17N 1976 I*). Furthermore, 17N argued that Karamanlis failed to disentangle the country from the US dependency. Thus, Greece remained, despite the change of the political system, under the tight control of the United States. The latter was perceived by the group as the overriding enemy of the Greek people, as it was responsible for supporting the colonels' junta and facilitating the Turkish invasion in Cyprus (*17N 1975 I*). Additionally, 17N condemned the two Greek Communist parties, the traditional KKE and the "Eurocommunist" KKE-ES, for their powerlessness to mobilise the labour movement against the antipopular governmental policies; a "reformist" stance that made the parties accomplices to Karamanlis' governance (*17N 1977 I*). As a combination of the above factors, namely of the cruelty of the state repression, the pervasiveness of the US influence and the ineptitude of the traditional Left, 17N deduced that metapolitefsi was a "laundering operation" (Kassimeris G. 2001, p. 203)



for the perpetuation of the status quo, which shattered any prospect for the country's transition to socialism (17N 1977 I).

Nevertheless, for 17N the United States was the insurmountable obstacle to the country's pathway towards socialism and national independence (17N 1983 I). Indeed, based on the – dominant among the leftist intelligentsia of the 1970s – dependency theory, the group saw the country's political, social and economic underdevelopment as a result of US imperialism and its role in the country since the WWII (17N 1984 II). Constant reminder of the country's political dependency was the US military bases in Greece. The group regarded the presence of the US military mission, namely the US army and the intelligence services stationed in Greece, as an occupying force that controlled the state mechanism and deprived the country of its national sovereignty (17N 1987 II). Apart from the US bases, equally important for fueling 17N's fanatical anti-Americanism was the issue of Cyprus. The group considered the USA guilty for the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and for the occupation of the northern part of the island ever since (ibid). In particular, the United States allegedly engineered both the Greek coup against President Makarios and the ensuing Turkish intervention in Cyprus (July 1974), in order to promote their cold war strategy (17N 1986 III). The division of the island between Greece and Turkey was part of a broader US agenda that empowered the role of Turkey – an important US ally – in the region and facilitated the US dominance over Cyprus; a strategically important gateway to the vital area of the Middle East (17N 1988 V). Consequently, US imperialism was considered responsible for the subjugation of both Greece and Cyprus, as well as for favouring Turkish interests in the area (ibid).

Inextricably linked with the 17N's anti-Americanism was the group's underlying Greek nationalism, or patriotism as the group distinguished it (17N 1998 I). Activated by the invasion of Cyprus in the 1970s, nationalism remained a constant influence in the group's diagnosis throughout the years of its activity; as “the issue of national independence was a matter of principle for 17N” (17N 1987 III). Hence, the group was hostile towards all those that endangered the country's freedom. Apart from the United States that constituted the enemy *par excellence*, the group opposed the NATO as well. 17N supported that the membership of Greece in the Alliance compromised the independence of the Greek armed forces and the national defense of the country (17N 1988 III). This became apparent in the Greek-Turkish affairs, as consecutive

governments were impelled to conform to the NATO-ist demands, often at the expense of the country's national interests (*17N 1991 V*). Characteristic examples of the Greek compliance were the two Greek-Turkish crises of 1987 and 1996 in the Aegean Sea. Especially the Imia incident (1996), was recognised by 17N as a disgraceful political and military defeat; a "Greek Waterloo" as the group put it (*17N 1998 I*). Moreover, the observed weakness of the Greek governments to resist the aggressiveness of Turkey, had as a result the rise of Turkish provocations in all the bilateral disputes (*17N 1991 IV*). Another issue that triggered the 17N's hostility towards Turkey was the country's stance towards Cyprus. The group saw the Turkish occupation of the northern part of Cyprus as a crime against the Greek-Cypriot community of the island and a violation of its right to self-determination (*17N 1991 VI*). In addition, 17N condemned Turkey for human rights' violations and ethnic cleansing against the Greek minority in the occupied Northern Cyprus (*17N 1992 II*). This policy of "militaristic expansionism" (*17N 1988 VI*), as the group characterised Turkey's approach in the Aegean Sea and in Cyprus, was the main reason for 17N's firm anti-Turkish position.

17N also took a fervent stance against imperialism. Based on a genuinely Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the international political environment, the group challenged the military and economic interventionism of the imperialist core towards Greece or the countries of the underdeveloped periphery. First and foremost, the group castigated the role of US imperialists, who were blamed for bringing chaos and carnage around the globe (*17N 2000 I*). In fact, it was US imperialism that "instigated the Turkish militarist expansionism in the region and authorised Turkey to act as the executor of US policy in the Eastern Mediterranean" (*17N 1988 V*). It was also the US army that as a true "genocide machine" (*17N 1991 II*) bombarded, maimed and killed in Korea, Vietnam and Libya (*17N 1987 II*). 17N was critical as well towards the air raids of NATO against Iraq (1990 – 1991), Yugoslavia (1995) and Serbia (1999), which confirmed in their mind the West's lack of respect towards the international law and the human rights (*17N 1991 I; 17N 1994 II; 17N 2000 I*). Additionally, the group was also eager to denounce – what it recognised – as economic imperialism, in the face of the Western European banks, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (*17N 1986 I; 17N 1987 I*). Particularly, 17N condemned the Western financial institutes for exploiting Greece's high external debt

as a political leverage for implementing their own agendas in the country, and therefore for limiting its national sovereignty (*17N 1988 I; 17N 1989 IV*).

Responsible, however, for the capitalist exploitation of the Greek working masses, was not only the international capitalist institutions, but also the local capitalist class. Acting as a comprador for the imperialist and capitalist interests in Greece (*17N 1990 VIII*), this class was one of the root causes of the country's underdevelopment and class inequality. Encapsulated in the concept of the LMAT, namely the "lumpen grand bourgeois class", 17N attacked this part of the Greek capitalists that indulged in rent-seeking and racketeering on their way to enrichment (*17N 1985 I*). It was regarded by the group as "a parasitic oligarchy that abused the state funds with the cooperation of the political class and managed to multiply its gains through fraud and tax evasion" (*17N 1985 IV*). 17N also considered them responsible for the country's deindustrialisation, as in the shake of profiteering they moved their funds abroad leading to a great amount of job losses (*17N 1986 I*); as well as for the appalling conditions in many working sites that often resulted in work accidents or even deaths (*17N 1988 III*). The group's resentment towards the LMAT was further increased after the expose of the great scandals in Greece during the 1980s. The political scandals confirmed, according to the group, that high levels of corruption were endemic in the Greek political establishment and embedded in the country's main institutions: the parliament, the judiciary and the media (*17N 1988 IV; 17N 1989 I; 17N 1990 II*). However, for 17N the LMAT occupied a central place in this nexus of corruption, as through its corporate greediness "eroded the political system and deepened the capitalist exploitation of the Greek working class" (*17N 1989 IV*).

17N was also highly critical towards the two main political parties of the Greek Left during the Metapolitefsi: the orthodox communist KKE and the "Eurocommunist" KKE-ES. 17N attacked the two left-wing parties for reformism, as they had followed a policy of compromise with the ruling class already since the junta (*17N 1980 I*). Both parties were guilty for surrendering without resistance to the conspirators during the military coup of 1967, as well as for failing to effectively contribute to the armed struggle against the dictatorship (*17N 1975 II*). Afterwards, by participating to the elections of 1974 they legitimised the regime of controlled democracy that Constantinos Karamanlis established. Hence, 17N argued that the two parties apart from a revolutionary discourse, they had in reality abandoned the goal for

the country's radical political change towards socialism (*17N 1977 I*). Acting as a backup of the political establishment, the parties also attempted to control and subjugate the rise of the autonomous labour movement since the first years of the Metapolitefsi (*ibid*). This revisionist agenda had as result the Greek Left, and especially the powerful KKE, to transform from a protagonist into “a stooge of the Greek political scene” (*17N 1986 I*). Especially fierce was also the criticism of 17N towards the stance of SYN<sup>212</sup> during the political crisis of 1989 – 1990. In particular, the decision of the left-wing party to enter to a coalition government with the ND in 1989 (July 1989 – October 1989), was recognised by the group as a betrayal by the party of the country's working class and the history of the Greek labour movement (*17N 1989 X; 17N 1989 XII*). The consecutive participation of SYN in the national unity government (November 1989 – April 1990) with both ND and PASOK, shattered – according to 17N – any remaining illusions for the role of the parliamentary Left in Greece; that of a crutch for the crooked political system (*17N 1989 X*).

Common recipients of the group's wrath were also the two dominant parties of the Metapolitefsi; namely, the social-democratic PASOK and the right-wing New Democracy. Hence, 17N was a vociferous opponent of PASOK, as the group blamed the party for “the erosion of the Greek working classes and the demobilisation of the labour movement” (*17N 1985 III*). In the beginning of the 1980s, the party through a largely anti-establishment pre-electoral agenda, tricked the Greek leftists into supporting it (*17N 1983 I*). PASOK, however, deceived not only the voters, but also the clandestine organisation itself – as 17N expected that the party would implement some, if not, all of its radical promises (*17N 1981 I*). Indeed, in front of PASOK's impressive win in the 1981 national elections, the group decided to postpone its activities temporarily, in order to not obstruct the enforcement of its agenda (*17N 1983 I*). However, PASOK not only failed to implement its programme, but instead it followed a policy that it was in all but identical – despite its populist rhetoric – with that of ND's (*17N 1985 IV*). A fact that resulted in the 17N's operational reactivation in 1983, as well as to the ratification of the group's opinion that “the transition to socialism cannot be achieved through legal and peaceful means” (*17N 1983 I*). PASOK's case also proved, according to 17N, the complete bankruptcy of reformism, as well as the deceitful nature of the elections in a bourgeois parliamentary

democracy (*ibid*). Later on, the death of 15-year-old student in 1985, along with the adoption of harsh austerity measures during the party's second term of office (1985 – 1987), were used by 17N to attack PASOK for “Thatcherism” (*17N 1985 III*) and for introducing a process of “social fascistisation” (*17N 1985 II*). The “Bank of Crete” scandal in 1988, then, deepened the group's resentment towards PASOK, which sold out its socialist principles and became synonymous with hypocrisy and corruption (*17N 1988 VIII*). However, the turmoil of 1989 – 1990 was regarded by 17N as a symptom of a generalised moral, societal and political crisis in the country; responsible of which was the “rotten” parliament and the political system (*17N 1988 VII*). Equally liable for the country's degradation was also the right-wing party of ND (*17N 1989 X; 17N 1989 XI*). As the main party of the Greek Right during the Metapolitefsi, ND was seen from 17N as a mere descendent of the post-civil war right-wing state, as well as a representative of the LMAT (*17N 1988 IV*). The group was particularly critical towards the programme of privatisations that ND adopted after its rise to power in April 1990. Deemed as a “policy of selling out Greece” (*17N 1991 VII*), 17N attacked the right-wing party for its measures that “surrendered the country's national wealth and served the interests of the foreign and national capitalists” (*17N 1992 II*). The group's rage towards the ND's governance during the 1990s, remained a basic characteristic of 17N's stance up to its dismantling in 2002; a stance that was also typified by: attacks towards the neo-liberal economic policies, angry bursts against the betrayal of the national interests and a deep contempt towards the party system as a whole (*17N 1997 I; 17N 2000 I*).

Another state institution that 17N often castigated was the Greek forces of law and order. According to the group's Marxist analysis, the police forces were primarily “responsible for maintaining the political conditions for the capitalist exploitation of the working classes” (*17N 1980 I*). 17N was particularly hostile towards the MAT (riot police), which through its brute force provided valuable support to the regime (*17N 1985 III*). MAT's main duty was – according to 17N – to terrorise and intimidate the masses; a role similar only to that of the torturers of the dictatorship (*17N 1980 I*). Resistant to any form of state repression, the group seized every opportunity to bring out cases of police aggression, such as violent clashes with protesters or injuries of demonstrators (*17N 1985 I; 17N 1985 IV*). More importantly, 17N made use of the occasional death of activists at the hands of the police, in order to publicly denounce

the state and to present its activity as necessary counter-violence against the regime's "fascist violence" (*17N 1991 VII*).

### Prognostic frames

Prognostic frames include the proposition of a course of action, through which a group aspires to resolve the acknowledged as problematic issues of its diagnosis. These frames consist of goals, strategies and tactics that the group should pursue, in order to reach a solution to the identified problems (Fisher 1997). 17N's prognosis shared the demands for democratisation, dejuntification, national independence and social equality that the resonant left-democratic master frame of the early Metapolitefsi (1974 – 1981) also advocated. However, the group's revolutionary ambitions were drastically shaped by the experience of the Athens Polytechnic uprising and the ensuing brutal repression of the students (November 1973). 17N, along with a significant part of the revolutionary left movement, drew heavily on the lessons learned from the event. The first message of the Polytechnic, namely that the university occupation was instigated spontaneously and against the will of the main left parties, proved to the group that radical change can only occur out of the influence of the traditional Left (*17N 1989 XI*). Moreover, the uprising had an important anti-imperialist direction that the metapolitefsi failed to satisfy, but 17N pledged itself to upkeep. Besides, 17N recognised the episode as a violent encounter with the authoritarian regime, which failed mainly because the students were unarmed; a fact that led the group to the conclusion that the armament of the masses was imperative for their future win over the regime (*ibid*). These three points constituted the "real" legacy of the uprising according to 17N, which through an anti-imperialist and armed campaign intended to live up to it. Inspired by the activity of the antidictatorship revolutionary organisations, 17N fought for the socialist and anti-imperialist revolution (*17N 1977 I*). A revolution that would "bring to an end the regime of controlled democracy, imperialistic dependency and capitalist exploitation that it was established after the junta" (*17N 1975 I*). For the achievement of those revolutionary goals, the group recognised the use of armed violence as the only recourse against a regime of "parliamentarian fascistisation," which excluded the possibility of socialist change through elections (*17N 1985 III*). The armed revolutionary violence – as 17N

regarded its violent repertoire – was only the first stage of a long process that would eventually lead to people’s power and to socialism (*17N 1977 I*). The group envisioned this future regime, as a version of libertarian socialism that would be based on direct democracy and workers' self-management of their workplace (*17N 1988 III*). This regime would be in sheer contrast with both the “reformist socialism” that PASOK represented and the “bureaucratic socialism” that the KKE supported and was dominant in the countries of the Eastern Bloc during the cold war (*17N 1989 XI; 17N 1992 II*).

The group recognised in the early years of the Metapolitefsi the ideal conditions for the formation of a clandestine group of armed propaganda (*17N 1977 I*). In particular, 17N understood this contentious era, characterised by mass protests, violent clashes between demonstrators and police forces and numerous strikes, as a pre-revolutionary period (*17N 1981 I*). During this phase (1975 – 1983), the group followed a strategy of selective attacks against widely accepted, according to 17N, enemies of the working class, in order to defend the masses from the antipopular state violence of the regime and to build revolutionary consciousness among the people (*17N 1975 I*). The attacks were also useful as they expressed revolutionary solidarity between the urban guerrilla groups and the mass movement, they showed that that the regime was not immune to violence and they exposed the reformist stance of the parties of the old Left (*17N 1977 I*). This strategy of armed propaganda aimed to highlight the value of the urban guerrilla, which along with the mass protest movement, would exploit the insurrectionary political environment and overthrow the democratic regime (*17N 1981 I*). During the group’s second phase (1983 – 1992), which largely coincided with PASOK’s dominance in the Greek political scene, 17N adopted a tactic of gradual escalation of the armed violence. The pacification of the civil society that the win of the social-democratic party brought after the 1981 elections, motivated 17N to revive its violence after two years of abstention (*17N 1983 I*). The group’s armed activity aimed to underline the enduring salience of the post-junta grievances, namely the country’s imperialistic dependency and the capitalist exploitation, as well as to reinvigorate the class awareness of the Greek proletariat (*17N 1985 I; 17N 1986 I*). This strategy culminated after the eruption of the “Bank of Crete” scandal in 1988, when 17N with attacks in the heart of the political system tried to destabilise the state and to acquire a voice in the Greek politics. More specifically, the group attempted to

take advantage of the generalised disaffection with party politics, by suggesting the need for a revolutionary solution to the popular demand for “catharsis” (*17N 1988 VIII*). This solution, according to 17N, would only come out of the revolutionary Left, which was “the only political space that could represent the interests of the proletarianised and low-paid working classes” (*17N 1988 IV*). The failure of the group to capitalise on the political turmoil of the 1988 – 1990 period, as well as the backlash against 17N after the deaths of Bakoyannis (September 1989) and Axarlian (July 1992), resulted in a strategic reorientation. During this phase (1992 – 2002), the group alternated between low and high-level attacks with small political result, as its strategy seemed rather incoherent and lacking political symbolism. Moreover, 17N’s turn towards more modest<sup>213</sup> (*17N 1992 VI*) and more patriotic – according to the group – positions (*17N 1998 I; 17N 1999 I*), seemed as significant signs of the group’s growing fatigue and ideological detachment from the revolutionary left scene.

Throughout its years in action, 17N also attempted to distinguish itself, as well as to defend its revolutionary approach from the other parties and organisations of the Left. Hence, 17N denounced the parties of the old Left for “legalistic illusions”, as both the international and Greek history had proved that there could not be a peaceful transition to socialism (*17N 1977 I*). According to the group, both the KKE and the KKE-ES through their stance engendered apathy to the labour movement and demobilised the working classes; thus, acting as a left-wing crutch to the regime (*ibid*). On the other hand, the group denied the accusations from the traditional Left of “terrorism”, arguing that “only those acts that aim to terrorise the wider social strata should be considered as such” (*17N 1989 XI*). Instead, the group claimed that its armed attacks were justified in front of the terrorism of the imperialism, the state repression and the police violence (*17N 1985 I*). 17N also defended its armed campaign against those organisations of the radical Left that although were not against revolutionary violence on principle, they criticised them for avant-gardism and militarism – as 17N’s violence did not correspond with the level of the class consciousness in the country and was not a product of the revolutionary process. Devoted to the idea of the armed vanguard, 17N viewed the urban guerrilla violence as a necessary condition for the creation of class consciousness in the masses and the first step of the revolutionary

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<sup>213</sup> 17N argued in a communique in 1992 that the group’s success was proved from its mere subsistence in the political scene (*17N 1992 VI*).



process (17N 1977 I). Finally, 17N criticised occasionally other revolutionary groups for their methods. Especially fierce was the group's condemnation, for the tactics of the "autonomist" wave of groups that emerged in the beginning of the 1980s and used firebombs to attack supermarkets and department stores. 17N castigated their repertoire of action for their disastrous effects on the armed struggle, since they alienated the working masses from the revolutionary groups (17N 1981 I). Conversely, the group argued that fruitful operations were those that: became directly apparent to the proletariat, came out of the mass struggles and their demands, targeted those engaged in violence against the people and did not cause negative consequences to the labour movement (ibid).

### 6.2.2 Framing Process

Part of the framing process is also the way that a group frames and reframes its external reality in view of the dynamic changes in its political environment. More specifically, a group embarks on a constant process of defining and redefining its positions, goals and tactics in an attempt to link its discourse with its constituents and/or with the dominant master frame of an era. Hence, this process of frame alignment leads to either master frame alignment, when a group associates its message with the dominant master frame of a given time and space; or to master frame dealignment, when the group in an attempt to reverberate the interests of a targeted group distances itself from the hegemonic discourse. In the case of 17N, the group's loyalty to its antisystem discourse, had as a result the latter to frequently dealign with the dominant master frames of the Metapolitefsi. Nonetheless, the group's selective alignment with some components of the master frames resulted at times to an increase of resonance for 17N's discourse; a fact that can partially explain the public's atypical acquiescence towards the group's armed activity.

#### 17N's first phase (1975 – 1983)

This first phase was critical for the development of 17N. It was characterised by the group's endeavour to establish itself, through its operations and discourse, in the Greek political scene; as well as to distinguish itself from other political actors, such as the

left-wing parties and other revolutionary organisations. Hence, 17N attempted to align its message with the dominant antisystem master frame of the early Metapolitefsi (1975 – 1981), which advocated the radical transformation of the country. With the promotion of demands such as the withdrawal from the NATO and the socialist transformation of the country, this left-democratic master frame had significant overlaps with the radical discourse of 17N itself. A fact that significantly facilitated the group's process of master frame alignment, which was achieved through the activation of two cognitive mechanisms, namely of *frame bridging* and *frame amplification*. *Frame bridging*, the amalgamation of ideological consistent by previously unconnected frames, was used by the 17N to associate the demand for the country's democratisation with a general contempt towards the post-junta regime. Indeed, the newly-founded democracy was comparable with the regime of controlled democracy that Dictator Papadopoulos tried to impose during the liberalisation phase of the junta (1972 – 1973) (*17N 1976 I*). It was a "totalitarian regime with a parliamentary façade" (*17N 1980 I*) that was typified by the erosion of all the state institutions – from the government and the parliament, to the justices and the security forces. In front of the complete bankruptcy of the parliamentary democracy, Greek people had as a last recourse the use of violence as a means towards the socialist transformation of the country (*17N 1975 I*). Besides, 17N made use of *frame bridging* as well in order to link the popular demand for the dejuntification of the state apparatus with the brutal police repression in the first years of the Metapolitefsi. Indeed, the group saw the violence of the security forces towards protesters as a sign of endurance of the junta's deep state mechanism (*17N 1976 I; 17N 1980 I*). The preservation of this repressive mechanism was used by PM Karamanlis in order to subjugate the civil society and to consolidate a regime of controlled democracy in the country. Moreover, 17N made use of *frame amplification* in order to reinforce and elucidate its anti-American and anti-imperialist discourse. Hence, the clandestine organisation recognised as responsible for the country's undemocratic past its imperialistic dependency on the United States. The latter was also accountable for the imposition of the junta, as well as for the fiasco of the Greek military in Cyprus. As a result, 17N argued that the only way out of the country's imperialist dependency was the use of revolutionary violence against the reactionary violence of imperialism (*17N 1975 I; 17N 1975 II*).

At the same time, 17N attempted through its proclamations to draw attention to those features that distinguish from the other segments of the traditional and radical Left. The attempt, thus, to distance itself from other leftist organisations has as a result the dissociation of its message from the resonant left-democratic master frame of the early Metapolitefsi. Master frame dealignment, namely the alienation of a group's discourse from the culturally resonant discourse of a certain era, was activated in 17N's case during this period through two cognitive mechanisms, namely *boundary framing* and *counter-framing*. Originally, 17N made use of *boundary framing* by employing in-group/out-group distinctions in order to differentiate itself from the parties of the parliamentary Left as well as the from other various revolutionary organisations. Refusing to accept the post-1974 consensus, 17N condemned the KKE and the KKE-ES for submission to the ruling class, as they failed to mobilise the working classes in the struggle for socialism (*17N 1980 I*). The group also castigated the parties of the traditional Left for their reformism, as they had abandoned the goal for radical social change, focusing instead only on extending their presence in the parliament. Besides, 17N denounced those "revolutionary" organisations that by accepting the democratic regime they rejected the use of dynamic actions (*17N 1977 I*). These groups became – according to 17N – largely obsolete, as through the routinisation of their tactical repertoire (e.g. publication of newsletter, members' assemblies in theatres) and their sectarianism, they led to the fragmentation of the revolutionary left movement and to the withdrawal of a great number of activists. Furthermore, 17N employed *counter-framing* – namely the adoption of frames that discredit the views of competing actors and promote the opinions of an own group – in order to respond to the criticism for the use of clandestine violence from the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary left alike. Regularly characterised as merely *agent provocateurs* by the KKE and the KKE-ES, 17N slammed their policy of actually denying the existence of revolutionary Left as an attempt to subjugate and demobilise the masses from the class struggle (*ibid*). The group also defended its strategy from those groups of the radical Left that characterised it as premature and perilous, as it did not correspond to the level of the class struggle in the country and could endanger the violent reaction of the state. In response, the group justified the use of armed violence as a necessary first step in the long process for the formation of the armed people and the socialist revolution (*ibid*).

### 17N's second phase (1983 – 1992)

During this phase, 17N's followed two different strategies of frame alignment. Hence, while the group largely dealigned its frames from the dominant master frame of "change" in the first half of the 1980s, the rise of the master frame of "catharsis" in 1988 led 17N to align its discourse with the popular demand for the purge of corruption in the Greek political scene. At the same time, the group also employed frame alignment mechanisms to connect its message with some elements of the master frame of "change" in the first case, and partially disconnect it from some of the elements of the master frame of "catharsis" – demonstrating the concurrent and contentious nature of the relationship between master frame alignment and dealignment processes.

17N's master frame dealignment process was activated during the first half of the 1980s through the operation of *adversarial framing* and *boundary framing*. Initially, the group used adversarial frames against PASOK, which – according to 17N – largely abandoned its pre-electoral pledges after its win in the 1981 elections. PASOK's reluctance to fulfill its anti-imperialist agenda (e. g. expel the US bases, withdraw from NATO), was seen from the group as "a betrayal of the popular mandate for the country's radical change" (17N 1986 I). For 17N, the socialist party played the role of a "trojan horse" of capitalism, as through the use of a populist discourse managed to deceive the people and to mask a right-wing anti-popular policy as socialist (17N 1983 I; 17N 1985 IV). Moreover, the clandestine group employed *boundary framing* as a way to differentiate itself from the – acknowledged as – reformist left-wing parties of the country; namely, from PASOK, the KKE and the KKE-ES. In fact, the failure of PASOK's government to follow an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist policy despite the unequivocal support of the people, signified the "failure of reformism which accepted the post-junta consensus and the deception of democratic elections" (17N 1985 I). On the other hand, 17N aligned its discourse with the resonant master frame of "change" through the use of *frame transformation*. Indeed, the group appropriated the demand for the country's comprehensive change, to reorient its message towards the revolutionary makeover of the country. Hence, while 17N castigated the bourgeois democracy for perpetuating a regime of controlled parliamentarism, it advocated the use of organised armed violence as the pathway to socialism (17N 1985 IV).

At the end of 1980s, 17N aligned its discourse with the dominant master frame of “catharsis.” Master frame alignment process was activated then through the operation of *frame amplification*. More specifically, the group recognised the exposed scandals as an opportunity to reinvigorate its criticism towards parliamentary democracy, which allegedly facilitated the appearance and impunity of phenomena of corruption (*17N 1989 V*). Hence, 17N argued that the widespread corruption was a sign of a multifaceted political, economic and cultural crisis of the bourgeois democracy as a whole (*17N 1988 VIII*). In this context of acute crisis, the group claimed that the popular demand for “catharsis” could be only materialised through the revolutionary left movement and not through new elections (*17N 1988 IV; 17N 1988 VIII*). At the same time, 17N dealigned from the resonant master frame through the use of *boundary framing*. In particular, the group juxtaposed itself with the main agents of “catharsis,” namely the ND and the SYN. 17N considered both parties responsible for the rise of corruption: the ND because it had enabled the construction of the corruption nexus after the metapolitefsi and the SYN since it had not done anything to oppose it (*17N 1989 I*). Besides, the decision of the left-wing party to participate in two coalition governments demonstrated – according to 17N – that SYN had sold-out its principles and had betrayed the working classes (*17N 1989 X*). On the contrary, the group saw itself as the only actor that had actively fought corruption, by castigating the abusive relationship of the capitalist class with the state and by attacking the LMAT – namely “all those that had enriched themselves at the expense of the proletariats and the country” (*17N 1989 IX*).

### 17N’s third phase (1992 – 2002)

17N’s third phase saw the activation of *frame transformation*, the cognitive mechanism that entails the drastic change of a frame and the production of a new one. Hence, the group during this phase aligned its discourse to the dominant modernisation master frame, only to appropriate and adapt it to its revolutionary ideology afterwards. More specifically, 17N re-interpreted the concept of modernisation through the prism of its anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist nationalism. Hence, for the group modernisation was not a platform for the rationalisation and Europeanisation of the economy, but the end of the already restrained economic independence of Greece (*17N*

1991 III). In the quest of modernisation, neoliberalism became the dominant paradigm in the country, leading to “the sell-out of the Greek economy through privatisations, the plunder of people’s income and the abolition of the workers’ rights” (17N 1990 VII). A process that had already started in the 1980s with the introduction of the EEC-inspired austerity policy (17N 1986 III), continued with the neoliberal reforms of ND in the beginning of the 1990s (17N 1992 II) and culminated with the project of “modernisation” from the mid-1990s onwards (17N 1997 I). However, modernisation deepened the country’s subjugation to the foreign capitalist interests and worsened its dependency on the US hegemony, as the fiasco of Imia demonstrated<sup>214</sup> (17N 2000 I).

Through the analysis of 17N’s framing process, this section identified the fame alignment mechanisms that the group used to align and/or dealign its discourse from the dominant master frames of the different periods of the Metapolitefsi. The detection of the master frame alignment and dealignment mechanisms was later used for the specification of the cognitive, environmental and relational sub-mechanisms that drove 17N’s radicalisation process – acting as mechanisms-as-indicators of the true mechanisms-as-causes of radicalisation.

### 6.3 The Mechanisms of Radicalisation

Drawing on the historical analysis of the post-dictatorial period and the frame analysis of 17N’s communiqués, this section specifies the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms that triggered, sustained and defused the group’s radicalisation process. Central role in the delineation of the process had the group’s framing alignment mechanisms, which 17N used to connect or dissociate its frames from the resonant master frames of each phase of the Metapolitefsi. Then, master frame alignment (frame bridging, fame amplification and frame transformation) and master frame dealignment mechanisms (boundary framing, adversarial framing and counter-framing) acted as mechanisms-as-indicators for the identification of the mechanisms-as-causes. These were the cognitive, environmental and relational sub-mechanisms that composed the consequential relational mechanisms of the four arenas of interaction. Indeed, every

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<sup>214</sup> The Imia incident (1996) was recognised by 17N as a disgraceful political and military defeat.

arena of interaction, namely the context that individual and collective actors interrelate during a contentious episode, corresponded with one key relational mechanism that captured with greater efficacy the relational dynamics within each arena. These crucial mechanisms were: the upward spirals of political opportunities in the arena between the movement and its political environment; the outbidding in the arena between the movement and the security forces; the competition for power in the intra-movement arena; and the dissociation in the arena between the movement and the public. As in the case of LEA, the fifth interactive arena – the one between a movement and counter-movement – was less consequential for 17N's contentious episode as well, and thus was not included in the analysis of the mechanisms.

### 6.3.1 Movement – Political Environment Arena

The arena of interaction between movement and political environment was rather consequential for the emergence and persistence of 17N. In particular, the group's radicalisation process was facilitated from the operation of the central relational mechanism of this interactive arena; namely, from the upward spirals of political opportunities. Defined as the changes in a movement's political environment that constraint its collective action, the upward spirals of political opportunities mechanism was constituted from four sub-mechanisms; these were: *attribution of threat*, *disillusionment*, *retaliation* and *attribution of opportunity*. The identification of these sub-mechanisms was attained through the study of the 17N's framing process and the detection of the group's framing alignment mechanisms; the latter acted as mechanisms-as-indicators of the previously outlined sub-mechanisms (see Table 9 below). Hence, during the group's first phase (1975 – 1983) frame bridging played the role of mechanism-as-indicator for the attribution of threat sub-mechanism, as 17N recognised the post-junta regime as "a junta by another name" (Kassimeris G. 2005a); while the group's boundary framing against the traditional Left signposted the operation of the disillusionment sub-mechanism. Besides, 17N's use of frame amplification, which fortified the group's anti-Americanism and its connection with the dominant left-democratic master frame of the 1974 – 1981 period, indicated the operation of the sub-mechanism of retaliation. During the group's second phase (1983

– 1992), adversarial framing acted as mechanism-as-indicator for the disillusionment sub-mechanism, as PASOK's departure of its pre-electoral agenda triggered 17N's disappointment. Moreover, the detection of frame amplification and boundary framing regarding the master frame of "catharsis" during the political crisis of 1988 – 1990, denoted the activation of attribution of opportunity sub-mechanism; as 17N saw the crisis as an opportunity to increase its political influence in the Greek political scene. In its latest phase (1992 – 2002), frame transformation acted as a mechanism-as-indicator for attribution of threat sub-mechanism, as the group deemed modernisation as dangerous towards the country's sovereignty.

To start with the operation of the mechanisms, *upward spirals of political opportunities* had a significant effect on the development of violence throughout the contentious episode of 17N. Particularly critical for the rise of radicalisation were the first months after the fall of the junta. The "noiseless and discreet withdrawal" (Andrews 1980, p. xvi) of the army left a power vacuum that Constantinos Karamanlis was eager to fill. The return of the conservative politician was a hard "reality-check" for a part of the antidictatorship movement, which sought a clean break with the past and the country's radical transformation. To their dismay, the transitory regime was a fusion of continuity and change, as key sectors of the public administration remained under the control of the old order. For the radical flank of the movement especially, namely the revolutionary groups of the anti-junta struggle, the new regime was recognised as a mere continuation of the dictatorship with a democratic façade. It was this view that triggered the activation of *attribution of threat*, the cognitive sub-mechanism that includes the perceived negative consequences that an action, or the failure to act, would have to a political actor (McAdam 2003). The threat perception grew further on the eve of the first national elections of the Metapolitefsi in November 1974, as they latter took place under the widespread fear of a military coup from junta sympathisers (Diamandouros 1995). The overwhelming win of the Right – despite the rise of a prevalent antiright stance within the civil society – worsened further the distress of those on the left of the political spectrum that fretted about the country's relapse into its undemocratic past.



**Table 9:** Disaggregation of sub-mechanisms within the movement – political environment in 17N's episode

Concept	Militant Phases of 17N		
	<i>First phase</i> (1974 – 1983)	<i>Second phase</i> (1983 – 1992)	<i>Third phase</i> (1992 – 2002)
<i>Mechanisms-as-causes</i>	A. Attribution of threat B. Disillusionment C. Retaliation	D. Disillusionment E. Attribution of opportunity F. Attribution of opportunity	G. Attribution of threat
<i>Mechanisms-as-indicators</i>	i. Frame bridging ii. Boundary framing iii. Frame amplification	iv. Adversarial framing v. Frame amplification vi. Boundary framing	vii. Frame transformation

With capital letters are the mechanisms-as-causes of the radicalisation, while the Latin numbers represent the mechanisms-as-indicators. Each mechanism-as-cause matches with a corresponding mechanism-as-indicator (e.g. Ai, Bii etc).

Alongside the rise of perceived threats, a feeling of disappointment with the parties of the old Left was generated among leftist militants. Emanating from the stance of the two parties – namely of the KKE and the KKE-ES – during the dictatorship<sup>215</sup>, disaffection grew further due to the parties' frail opposition to a democratic transition that was recognised as partial and slow-paced. Hence, the aftermath of the metapolitefsi saw the emergence of *disillusionment* – the cognitive

<sup>215</sup> The two parties of the traditional Left were often criticised for the failure to organise the resistance against the military coup in April 1967, the reluctance to engage in dynamic resistance against the junta and the positive stance towards the attempt of Dictator Papadopoulos to liberalise the authoritarian regime.

sub-mechanism that entails the decline of political actors' commitment in previously held beliefs (Sageman 2017). More specifically, the parties' *de facto* acceptance of the post-junta consensus through their participation in the elections of 1974: intensified the effect of disillusionment; strengthened the salience of the boundary between moderate and radical Left that had already been observed during the dictatorship; and facilitated the materialisation of a revolutionary left movement that was critical towards the traditional left parties and challenged the regime through the use of confrontational and violent tactics. Part of this movement were a number of armed groups, which organised clandestinely in order to engage in the most radical forms of collective action and to create an insurrectionary atmosphere in the country; one of those groups was 17N as well.

The operation of disillusionment also resulted in the activation of *attribution of opportunity*. Identified as the cognitive sub-mechanism that refers to the possible positive consequences that an action, or the failure to act, would have to a political actor (Demetriou and Alimi 2018), opportunity attribution was an outcome of the opening of the political opportunity structure and the disappointment with the reformism of the traditional Left. In this political context, mobilisation became the weapon of the previously excluded leftist strata to defend their newly-acquired rights and to call for the deepening of the regime's democratisation process. The rise of mobilisation during the early Metapolitefsi quickly took the shape of a protest cycle that consisted of demonstrations, marches, wild cat strikes and violent clashes between protesters and the security forces. This turbulent political environment was recognised by parts of the revolutionary left movement as a pre-revolutionary period that could bring the destabilisation of the bourgeois democracy and trigger the socialist transformation of the country. That was also the perception of 17N, which through its attacks sought to build the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and prepare them for the fight for the revolution.

At the same time, the fall of the junta coincided with the dramatic upsurge of anti-Americanism in the country, as the majority of Greek citizens believed that the United States was responsible – to a greater or a lesser degree – for both the imposition of the junta in 1967 and the outbreak of the crisis in Cyprus in 1974. According to this perspective, even the return of Karamanlis – who was well-known for his anti-communist ideals – was seen as orchestrated from the United States, in order to

safeguard its interests in the sensitive during the cold war area of Eastern Mediterranean. Besides, the Left blamed US interventionism in the country for the dominance of the Right and its subjugation during the post-civil war era; a view that 17N shared as well. Actually, it was the overall role of the United States as well as the enduring presence of the US military bases in Greece that activated the operation of *retaliation* sub-mechanism in 17N's radicalisation process. Defined as the relational sub-mechanism that includes the reprisal by an actor of the wrongs experienced by the actor or its constituency (Malthaner 2017), retaliation was consequential for the emergence of 17N. Indeed, since its first attack, namely the execution of Richard Welch – the CIA station chief – in Athens (December 1975), the group demonstrated its anti-American fanaticism by killing four US officers and regularly targeting the US interests in Greece during the 27 years of its armed campaign.

Retaliation remained salient in the movement – political environment arena of interaction throughout 17N' activity, as the group recognised the Greek-US affairs as a colony-coloniser relationship that restrained the country's national sovereignty. Characteristic example of retaliation's continuing importance was the rise of attacks against US targets in periods of national crises with Turkey, as the group considered responsible for the occasional strives between the two countries the US imperialism and its interests in the Aegean Sea. Apart from retaliation, central role in the salience of upward spirals of political opportunities for the persistence of 17N's violence played the sub-mechanism of disillusionment. Especially during the group's second militant phase (1983 – 1992), it was 17N's disaffection with PASOK that stimulated the group's reappearance after an almost three-year period of suspended operations (1980 – 1983). Hence, the group put an end to its abstention from violence, in order to demonstrate its displeasure with PASOK's policies and especially with the party's fundamental divergence in the foreign and defense policy; as PASOK broke its promises to withdraw the country from NATO and to expel the US bases from Greece. Significant for the persistence of 17N's violence were also the opportunity/threat spirals that encouraged/discouraged the group from engaging in contention (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012). Opportunity attribution was consequential for 17N's escalation of violence during the 1988 – 1992 period, as the group recognised the political crisis over the corruption scandals as a favourable juncture to intervene in the country's political scene and to increase its political

influence. Alternatively, threat attribution was critical for the persistence of the group's violence during its third militant phase (1992 – 2002). In this period, 17N identified the neoliberal restructuring of the economy as an assault to the Greek working class and the Europeanisation of the Greek politics as an attempt to curb the country's national independence.

### 6.3.2 Movement – Security Forces Arena

The interactive arena between the group and the security forces was rather critical for the intensification and persistence of 17N's violence, as *outbidding* was one of the key mechanisms throughout the group's radicalisation process. Described as the reciprocal escalation of protest actions and repressive measures between a movement and a state's security forces (Della Porta 2013), outbidding was constituted during 17N's contentious episode from three sub-mechanisms: *retaliation*, *delegitimisation* and *repression by proxy*. The identification of the above sub-mechanisms was made possible through the study of the 17N's frame alignment mechanisms, as in the case of *delegitimisation* (mechanism-as-cause) through the group's use of *frame bridging* (mechanism-as-indicator)<sup>216</sup>; as well as through the adoption of a process tracing approach that delved into the group's historical trajectory, as in the cases of *retaliation* and *repression by proxy*.

Originating from the antidictatorship movement and specifically from the revolutionary groups of the resistance, 17N – or at least some of its members – had first-hand experience of the junta's extensive regime of terror. For more than six years, if we exclude the period of the regime's liberalisation experiment (January 1972 – November 1973), practices such as the violation of human rights and the exile of dissidents became part of everyday routine. At the same time, the torture of militants or anti-conformists at large was institutionalised as a means of public control and deterrence of activism. In the aftermath of the junta's fall, a universal demand in the Greek civil society was that of dejuntification – namely the cleansing of the state machine from all the junta's sympathisers. For the Greek Left especially, that entailed

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<sup>216</sup> Through frame bridging 17N attempted to associate the popular demand for dejuntification with the police violence of early Metapolitefsi.

the punishment of all those in the state apparatus that had made the day-to-day running of the dictatorship possible. Against the public's will, however, Karamanlis' government followed a rather restrained approach, which avoided the extensive purge within the ranks of the police and the public services. The failure of the government's dejuntification policy, along with the questionable results of the prosecution of the junta's accomplices, triggered once more the operation of *retaliation* – the relational sub-mechanism that refers to acts of vengeance by an actor towards the wrongs experienced by the actor or its constituency. Characteristic example of the leniency that was exercised from the post-junta state, was the case of those accused of torture. One of the most notorious torturers during the dictatorship was Evangelos Mallios, who was 17N's second victim (December 1976) and was targeted in response to the government's failed dejuntification and transitional justice policies.

At the same time, the protest cycle of the early Metapolitefsi was characterised by the regular diversion of peaceful protests to street fights and violent clashes between protesters and security forces. These clashes were typified by the brutality of police repression, which often resulted in injuries or even the death of protesters; with four casualties in a period of six years during the early Metapolitefsi (1974 – 1980). The intensification of state violence activated the operation of *delegitimisation*, the cognitive sub-mechanism that entails the decline in positive representations of certain actors and their actions. Particularly notorious for their violence, were the MAT squads (riot police) that the government of New Democracy founded in 1976 for the control and disperse of mass protests. For the leftist militants, however, the MAT represented a reactionary institution that was responsible for the violent subjugation of protesters through the extreme use of force. Thus, it was not a coincidence that 17N targeted and killed the deputy director of the MAT, Pantelis Petrou (January 1980), as a reaction to the police violence of the first period of the Metapolitefsi. In conjunction with the prevalence of police repression, the first years after the country's democratic transition witnessed the rise of far-right violence from clandestine groups that were sympathetic to the junta. These groups made use of indiscriminate violence<sup>217</sup> through the detonation of bombs in public places, such as cinemas, bookshops, trade union offices and left-wing party offices, which resulted in the injury of dozens of bystanders. The

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<sup>217</sup> Indiscriminate violence includes harm against random civilians and/or their property (Alimi et al. 2015).

most notorious of these far-right groups was the Organisation of National Restoration (OEA) that perpetrated 74 bomb attacks between in a two-year period before its arrest in 1979 (Kiesling 2014). The rise of right-wing violence was recognised by the leftist militants as another sign of continuity between the junta and the post-junta regime, which used the groups as a means for the legitimisation of the newly-founded democracy (Xenakis 2012). Hence, the rise of far-right triggered the operation of *repression by proxy*, the relational sub-mechanism that entails the outsourcing of law-and-order activities by state actors to non-state actors. Thus, the early years of the Metapolitefsi saw the mobilisation of the left-wing clandestine groups – and in our case of 17N – in opposition to both the state violence and the right-wing clandestine groups; a fact that raised the overall importance of outbidding in 17N’s radicalisation process for this period.

Despite its centrality during the group’s first militant phase, the significance of repression by proxy waned as soon as right-wing mobilisation dwindled and far-right groups grew smaller by the end of the 1970s. That was not, though, the case with the two other sub-mechanisms of outbidding, namely with delegitimisation and retaliation, which remained consequential throughout the group’s operation. In terms of the persistence of the group’s violence, delegitimisation and retaliation formed a recurring causal sequence<sup>218</sup> of sub-mechanisms within the mechanism of outbidding. More specifically, during 17N’s contentious episode escalating police repression led consistently to the activation of delegitimisation and retaliation (outbidding: delegitimisation → retaliation), as well as to the increase in outbidding’s salience in the group’s radicalisation process. That was especially the case on the occasion of transformative repressive events (Davenport, Johnston and Mueller 2005; Della Porta 2013), such as the killing of demonstrators by the police. Such instances were the two attacks that 17N perpetrated against riot police buses (November 1985 and November 1991), in response to the killing of a student by a riot policeman in the first case (November 1985) and the death of a left-wing activist in the hands of right-wing vigilantes in the second case (January 1991). Consequently, police violence remained a frequent incentive for the spiraling and persistence of 17N’s revolutionary violence.

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<sup>218</sup> As causal sequence is defined the causal chain that two or more mechanisms in a chronological sequence form (Seawright and Collier 2010).

### 6.3.3 Intra-Movement Arena

Focusing on the 17N's intra-movement arena entailed the study of the developments within the revolutionary left movement. This interactive arena had substantial effect on 17N's emergence and decline, as *competition for power* – the central mechanism of this arena – was consequential for the intensification and decline of group's violence. Defined as the struggle between two or more political actors within a movement over issues of strategy, tactics and goals, competition for power was constituted by three sub-mechanisms, namely by *boundary formation*, *decertification* and *identity shift*. For the measurement of the sub-mechanisms a triangulation of methods was used for this arena as well<sup>219</sup>.

In the aftermath of the junta's fall, the antidictatorship movement found itself disintegrated. While one part of the movement decided to carry on the fight in the political arena, another part chose to withdraw from active politics. At the same time, a minority – based on the revolutionary groups of the anti-junta resistance – opted for the continuation of the fight against what was recognised as a dictatorship with a democratic façade. The internal disagreements within the remnants of the anti-junta revolutionary groups prompted the activation of *boundary formation*, the relational sub-mechanism that constructs “us versus them” distinctions between two political actors. Boundary formation had as a consequence the division of this radical milieu in two segments: one that denounced the use of armed violence and one that was in favour of the formation of a clandestine armed organisation that would continue the struggle for socialist revolution. Hence, in the summer of 1974 the supporters of the armed struggle founded ELA, which constituted the first revolutionary group of the Metapolitefsi.

Alongside the formation of new revolutionary groups, a radical social movement emerged out of the ashes of the antidictatorship movement and fueled by the opening of the political opportunity structure after the metapolitefsi. This revolutionary left movement opposed the reformism of the traditional Left and maintained a radical

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<sup>219</sup> The measurement of the mechanisms-as-causes was facilitated by the use of framework of methodological triangulation that applies a combination of frame analysis and mechanism-based process tracing in the study of a group's radicalisation process. The operation of boundary formation mechanism was indicated by the identification of boundary framing mechanism in the group's discourse.

agenda that advocated the country's revolutionary change. Part of this movement that was comprised from an array of different actors, were also the revolutionary groups. Despite the common elements, though the majority of this radical milieu (Malthaner and Waldmann 2014) was officially against the use of armed violence. The criticism against the revolutionary groups, then, triggered the activation of *decertification*, the relational sub-mechanism that involves the lack or withdrawal of validation and recognition of an actor, its actions and its claims by an external authority. The operation of decertification had as an effect the consolidation of the boundary between the opponents and the supporters of the armed struggle. While the wider movement condemned the use of revolutionary violence, a debate was underway within the ranks of ELA over the legitimacy of violence as a tactic. Hence, while the majority of ELA's militant cadres supported the perpetration of low-level attacks (symbolic attacks against buildings or objects), a radical minority advocated the intensification of violence so as to include high-level attacks (attacks against people). The disagreement led to the exit of this minority from the ranks of ELA and the formation of 17N. The wide decertification of the use of high-level armed violence from the bulk of the revolutionary left movement and the revolutionary group's milieu had as a consequence the raise of the relative weight of competition for power in 17N's radicalisation process during the group's first phase (1975 – 1983).

The combined effect of boundary formation and decertification reinforced 17N's determination to use high-level armed tactics. The adoption of such a radical repertoire of tactics distinguished the group from both the "pseudo-revolutionaries," which although they accepted the use of violence, they postponed its use due to absence of the objective conditions for the revolution; as well as those that through the perpetration of low-level attacks they alienated the working classes from the revolutionary violence (*17N 1977 I; 17N 1980 I*). Hence, the group's espousal of a high-level militancy was a manifestation of the operation of *identity shift*, namely the relational sub-mechanism that facilitates the construction of new identities within challenging groups. The decision of 17N to engage in high-level violence within the bounds of a democratic regime distinguished the group from the rest of the clandestine groups and created a new militant identity as the group came to identify itself as urban guerrilla (*17N 1977 I; 17N 1989 XI*). The concept of urban guerrilla gradually became synonymous with the use of the most radical forms of collective action, including the



execution of civilians, from left-wing clandestine groups. Identity shift remained salient throughout the group's operation, as the identification with urban guerrilla led to the progressive adoption of a more radical attitude and tactics from the group and to the increase of detachment between the group and the revolutionary left movement.

Significant for the group's detachment from the revolutionary left movement was also the operation of boundary formation. Boundary formation was specifically important during the movement's transition periods, which were characterised by the entry of new cohorts of activists, the exit of old cohorts and the redefinition of the movement's collective identity (Whittier 1995; 1997). As the radical left movement started to change in the beginning of the 1980s with the entrance of a new subcultural generation of activists (e. g. rise of Choros and of an anti-authoritarian/anarchist current), so the movement's collective identity began to change as well. Thus, the 17N's left-wing nationalism was then recognised as obsolete in the face of the increasing anarchist influence in the revolutionary left movement throughout the 1980s. This trend culminated in the group's third militant phase (1992 – 2002), as 17N turn towards nationalism isolated further the group from movement, which was then dominated by the anarchist element. Hence, whereas in the 1970s boundary formation had solidified 17N's place within the revolutionary left movement, after the 1980s the group's position started to deteriorate; leading to the decrease of salience of competition for power in the group's radicalisation process, as well as to the relative decline of the group's violence during the 1990s.

### 6.3.4 Movement – Public arena

The interactive arena between the 17N and the public was particularly important for the group's radicalisation process, as it had exceptional influence on the intensification, persistence and slowdown of violence. Interestingly enough, in this arena it was observed the operation of two central relational mechanisms, namely of *dissociation* and *association*. While dissociation is defined as the relational mechanism that indicates the growing political distance between a movement, its supporters and the wider society, association is recognised as the former's reverse mechanism as it generates the opposite outcome (Alimi et al. 2015). Hence, association can be defined

as the relational mechanism that involves the shrinking of the political distance between a movement, its constituents and the general public. In 17N's contentious episode association was constituted by *attribution of similarity* and *legitimisation*, while dissociation by *encapsulation* and *withdrawal*.

Established only some months after the fall of the dictatorship, 17N took advantage of the specific historical conditions of the post-junta Greece to begin its violent campaign. Indeed, the first years of the Metapolitefsi were an extremely volatile period that was stigmatised by the national tragedy of Cyprus and was characterised by the possibility of war with Turkey and a widespread fear of a new military coup. Furthermore, the electoral win of ND that brought in power PM Karamanlis was recognised by a part of the society as a return to the pre-junta *status quo*. For the leftist constituency specifically, the largely ineffectual process of dejuntification and the rise of far-right violence were clear signs of a political regime in peril. At the same time, the opening of the political opportunity structure and the rehabilitation of the excluded for decades leftist citizens had as a result the mass mobilisation and the radicalisation of the society (Dimitras 1990). Besides, the seven-year reign of the junta and the radical utopianism of the Polytechnic uprising gave rise to a deep distrust towards the police and a culture of sympathy towards acts of resistance against the state (Andronikidou and Kovras 2012). In this politically tensed environment, the mobilisation took the shape – as we already saw – of a protest cycle that expressed the popular demands for the deepening of the democratisation process, the dejuntification of the state and the country's disengagement from the US imperialism. With a strategy that sought to capitalise on the generalised disaffection, 17N managed to present itself as a mouthpiece of the public anger by targeting the adversaries of the protest movement; namely, the United States, the junta's torturers and the police. In the aftermath of the attacks, the public did not respond to 17N's deadly campaign with the unanimous condemnation that someone might expect, as for a part of the Greek population the targets were legitimate. It was this public attitude that triggered the operation of two cognitive sub-mechanisms, namely of *similarity attribution*, defined as the identification of a political actor as falling within the same category as your own (Tilly and Tarrow 2007); and *legitimisation*, defined as the increase of positive representations of an actor and its actions (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 109). Since the early Metapolitefsi, then, 17N followed a revolutionary approach that

sought to not alienate the public opinion, by making selective attacks and explaining at length the individual responsibility of the targets through its leaflets. As a result, a general attitude of acquiescence, tolerance and even affinity towards the group's armed campaign prevailed in the country up to the end of 1980s.

The public image of the group changed only when the mechanism of dissociation through *encapsulation*, at first, and *withdrawal* later came into effect. Hence, the 17N's clandestinity led gradually to *encapsulation*, identified as the relational sub-mechanism that entails the isolation of a movement from its social and political environment (Della Porta 2013)<sup>220</sup>. Encapsulation's operation became evident with the group's turn towards nationalism at the end of the 1980s. Hence, 17N's decision to perform attacks against Turkish targets, in response to the tensions in Greek-Turkish affairs, demonstrated the group's detachment from the social struggles of the period. In particular, 17N failed to discern the changes that were ongoing in the ranks of the revolutionary left movement, as the rise of a new cohort of anarchist activists within the movement had led to the redefinition of the movement's collective identity; rendering the group's anti-imperialist nationalism redundant. The group's encapsulation from the society intensified further during the political crisis of 1988 – 1990, when 17N mistakenly diagnosed the period as an opportunity to escalate its violence. The group's decision to strike at the heart of the political system by killing the popular MP Bakoyannis in September 1989, generated a public backlash against the group and revolutionary violence in general. The assassination of the MP and the collateral death of a bystander in July 1992 triggered the activation of *withdrawal*, namely of the relational sub-mechanism that entails the decrease in support of individuals or groups towards a movement's goals and activities. It was the combined effect of encapsulation and withdrawal that intensified the salience of dissociation and shattered any remaining public sympathy towards 17N. By the beginning of the 1990s, 17N's violence had transformed from an externally oriented propaganda into an inner-oriented campaign, which slowly but steadily isolated further the group from its social environment.

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<sup>220</sup> Della Porta (2013) argues that “the very choice of clandestinity brings [armed groups] ... toward a military conception, which tends to isolate them from a broader social movement environment focusing on resisting state repression” (p. 151).

Table 10 below illustrates the sub-mechanisms that facilitated (*sub-mechanisms of intensification*) and inhibited (*sub-mechanisms of slowdown*) 17N’s violence per arena of interaction. Through the application of a framework that combined mechanism-based process tracing and frame analysis, we identified the sub-mechanisms that constituted the central relational mechanisms in 17N’s contentious episode. Thus, this chapter delineated the environmental, cognitive and relational factors that enabled the rise of 17N as the radical flank of the revolutionary left movement after the metapolitefsi and its persistence for almost three decades.

**Table 10:** Sub-mechanisms per arena of interaction in 17N’s episode (1975 – 2002)

Interactive Arenas and Mechanisms	Sub-mechanisms	
	<i>Sub-mechanisms of intensification</i>	<i>Sub-mechanisms of slowdown</i>
<i>Between movement and political environment / Upward spirals of political opportunities</i>	Attribution of threat Diffusion Retaliation Attribution of opportunity	_____
<i>Between movement and security forces / Outbidding</i>	Delegitimation Retaliation Repression by proxy	_____
<i>Between movement actors / Competition for power</i>	Boundary formation Decertification Identity shift	_____
<i>Between movement and public / Association and Dissociation</i>	Attribution of similarity Legitimation	Encapsulation Withdrawal

## *Chapter 7: Stages of Radicalisation: Emergence, Decline and Resilience*

This chapter concerns itself with the analytical comparison of the two case studies of the thesis, namely of LEA and of 17N. The comparison of the two contentious episodes takes place in an attempt to trace the similarities and differences between the groups' radicalisation pathways. For that, this chapter focuses on the composition (particularity of radicalisation) and concatenation (variety of radicalisation) of the core relational mechanisms that drove the radicalisation process in the two episodes. Furthermore, it compares and contrasts the different stages of the groups' radicalisation: from early (emergence) and stepped up radicalisation (intensification), to declined (slowdown) and ceased radicalisation (deradicalisation). Through the adoption of a cross-temporal comparative framework, this chapter also attempts to provide an explanation to one of the most interesting questions in the literature of political violence, namely the resilience of the phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece since the 1960s – one of the oldest and most protracted cases of revolutionary violence globally (Karampampas 2018). However, the cross-historical analysis of the phenomenon does not only contribute to the study of the Greek case, but also to the wider literature of social movements and contentious politics as it: highlights the role of causal sequences in the dynamics of radicalisation, draws attention to the rise of violent groups in the beginning of protest cycles and reveals the importance of agency for the perpetuation of violence through time. Taking everything into account then, this chapter proceeds as follows: the first section presents the systematic comparison of the radicalisation processes of LEA and 17N; while the second section deals with the issue of the persistence of revolutionary violence in Greece in terms of the proliferation of the phenomenon in time through different generations of revolutionary groups.

## 7.1 Comparing Processes of Radicalisation

### 7.1.1 Particularities of Radicalisation

As a first step in the comparison of the two contentious episodes, this section engages in the delineation of the particularities of radicalisation (Alimi et al. 2015) – recognised as the different sets of sub-mechanisms that constituted the radicalisation process of LEA and 17N. Table 11 below presents the different sub-mechanisms per arena of interaction that the frame and mechanistic analysis of the groups' identified. A quick look at the table demonstrates that there are more similarities than differences between the mechanisms that triggered the radicalisation of the two groups; as it was expected to a certain extent due to the methodological setting of the thesis and the application of a local process account<sup>221</sup> (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Then again, the number of differences between the two episodes can be attributed to the different initial conditions of each case (LEA – authoritarian regime / 17N – post-dictatorial democratic regime) and the distinct way that the interaction between sub-mechanisms and mechanisms took place in each episode.

In the movement – political environment interactive arena, the mechanism of *upward spirals of political opportunities* was constituted in both cases by the sub-mechanisms of threat attribution, retaliation and opportunity attribution. Threat attribution was consequential for the operation of the upward spirals of political opportunities in both episodes, as in LEA's case it was the imposition of the junta and in 17N's case the return of Karamanlis that triggered the activation of the sub-mechanism and raised the overall saliency of the core mechanism. Hence, in the two cases political violence erupted as a reaction to the unfavourable political environment that the political change (LEA – military coup / 17N – bourgeois democracy) generated. Retaliation sub-mechanism was triggered in both cases by the groups' anti-Americanism, since the United States was recognised as responsible for the country's subjugation to imperialist and capitalist interests. For both groups, Greece was a

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<sup>221</sup> The local process account entails the outlining of the relationship of an established model of a process with a series of episodes of a stream of contention located in one setting.

victim of US interventionism, which was behind the overthrow of the pre-junta regime in LEA’s case and for the Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 17N’s case.

**Table 11:** Sub-mechanisms diversity across contentious episodes

Arenas and Mechanisms / Episodes	LEA (1965 – 1974)	17N (1975 – 2002)
<i>Between movement and political environment / Upward spirals of political opportunities</i>	Attribution of Threat Retaliation Diffusion	Attribution of Threat Retaliation Attribution of Opportunity Disillusionment
	Attribution of Opportunity Delegitimisation	_____
<i>Between movement and security forces / Outbidding</i>	Repression by Proxy Threat Attribution	Delegitimisation Retaliation Repression by Proxy
	Resource Depletion Disillusionment	_____
<i>Between movement actors / Competition for power</i>	Boundary Formation Decertification/Certification Identity Shift	Boundary Formation Decertification Identity Shift
	Boundary Deactivation Depolarisation	_____
<i>Between movement and public / Dissociation and Association</i>	Encapsulation*	Attribution of Similarity** Legitimation**
	Withdrawal*	Encapsulation* Withdrawal*

In white background are presented the sub-mechanisms that intensified the group’s violence (sub-mechanisms of intensification), while in light grey background the sub-mechanisms that hindered the groups’ violence (sub-mechanisms of slowdown).

\* Constituent sub-mechanism of dissociation

\*\* Constituent sub-mechanism of association

While threat attribution and retaliation acted as catalysts for the intensification of violence in the two episodes alike, attribution of opportunity had a dissimilar effect. Hence, while in the case of LEA the activation of opportunity attribution caused the slowdown of the radicalisation process, in the case of 17N it stimulated the further intensification of the process. In the first occasion, it was the liberalisation of the dictatorship that functioned as an opportunity for the rise of legal forms of mobilisation that prompted the decline of LEA's violence; while in 17N's episode the protest cycle of early Metapolitefsi acted as an incentive for the escalation of the group's armed struggle. The differences between the two episodes were manifested not only in the function of certain sub-mechanisms, but also in the appearance of episode-specific sub-mechanisms in the composition of the upward spirals of political opportunities. Hence, LEA's case witnessed the activation of diffusion and delegitimisation sub-mechanisms, while 17N's episode the operation of disillusionment. In the first case, diffusion played an important role in the emergence of LEA's violence, as the group was significantly influenced by the revolutionary ideologies of the 1960s; whereas the operation of delegitimisation, triggered by the reluctance of the student movement to sanction the use of bombs against the junta's liberalisation experiment, facilitated the slowdown of the group's radicalisation process. Then again, the episode of 17N was distinguished by the operation of disillusionment, triggered by the disaffection of the group with the role of the traditional left parties after the Metapolitefsi, which fuelled the group's militancy.

In the movement-security forces arena of interaction, we can observe a comparable picture with the previous arena, as the operation of some common sub-mechanisms coincided with the operation of some episode-specific sub-mechanisms in the constitution of *outbidding*. More specifically, both episodes were characterised by the activation of repression by proxy and sub-mechanism, which facilitated the rise of the groups' radicalisation. Repression by proxy was triggered in the case of LEA thanks to the protracted and systematised persecution of the leftist citizens from a deep state machinery throughout the post-civil war era. In 17N's episode, it was the rise of far-right indiscriminate violence – recognised by the Left as a sign of the endurance of the deep state – which triggered the repression by proxy sub-mechanism. The brutal police repression that protesters faced during the protest cycles of the 1960s and the 1970s, which were commonly characterised by the serious injury of activists,



caused the activation of delegitimisation . Eventually, delegitimisation triggered the rise of retaliation in the case of 17N as the group in response to the widespread state repression directed its violence against the security forces of the newly-established democratic regime. On the other hand, the episode of LEA also witnessed the rise of two other sub-mechanisms, namely of resource depletion and disillusionment, which mitigated the saliency of outbidding and led to the gradual deradicalisation of the group. Both sub-mechanisms were consequences of the intensification of repression against the antidictatorship resistance, as the crackdown of the junta on the clandestine groups restricted the available material and organisational resources and generated a climate of disenchantment within the ranks of the resistance.

In the intra-movement arena, the similarity between the two episodes was greater, as the sub-mechanisms that intensified the operation of *competition for power* in the two cases under examination were in agreement. Hence, it was the activation of boundary formation, decertification and identity shift that raised the saliency of the intra-movement arena and drove the process of radicalisation in the cases of LEA and 17N alike. In the episode of LEA, the combination of the three sub-mechanisms – enhanced with the parallel operation of certification – led to the solidification of the boundary between moderate and radical Left and to the rise of a new wave of resistance organisations that identified themselves as revolutionary groups. LEA, as part of this new wave of groups, differentiated itself from the rest of the antidictatorship movement with the adoption of a radical agenda that advocated the fight for the socialist revolution and involved the demise of the dictatorship, of the pre-coup political establishment and of the US interventionism in the country. In a similar vein, the combined effect of boundary formation, decertification and identity shift caused the erection of a boundary within the ranks of revolutionary left movement after the metapolitefsi in the contentious episode of 17N. This time, though, the boundary regarded the use of high-level violence (attacks on human targets) from clandestine groups. The fierce disagreement between the proponents and the critics of high-level violence led to the emergence of a new contentious actor – namely, that of urban guerrilla. Urban guerrilla groups – including 17N – were typified by the willingness to use the most radical forms of collective action, against human targets if necessary, within the largely democratic context of Metapolitefsi, in order to trigger the socialist revolution in the country. Despite the similarity between

the two episodes in terms of the sub-mechanisms for the intensification of violence, they varied regarding the operation of the sub-mechanisms for the slowdown of violence. Hence, while in LEA's case the activation of boundary deactivation and depolarisation led to the decline of violence and the group's deradicalisation, in the case of 17N competition for power remained largely consequential and propelled the group's radicalisation process at least up to the end of the 1980s.

The last consequential arena of interaction, namely the one between the movement and the public, demonstrated a diverse picture than the previous arenas, as it witnessed the most differences between the two contentious episodes. The most interesting characteristic of this arena was definitely the operation of *association* as central relational mechanism in the case of 17N. Indeed, it was the group's conviction in the support of the public, based on the acquiescence and tolerance of a silent majority and the consent or even support of a radical minority, which drove the 17N's radicalisation process during the first and second militant phases of the group (1975 – 1992). The mechanism of association was constituted from attribution of similarity and legitimisation, as a part of the revolutionary left movement shared the diagnosis of the 17N for the post-junta democracy – seen more as a continuity rather than a change from the dictatorship – and accepted as legitimate the violence of the group. Dissociation became consequential only after the protracted clandestinity took its toll on 17N, which steadily grew more and more detached from the social struggles of the left-wing constituency. The mechanism of *dissociation* for 17N's episode was constituted from encapsulation and withdrawal, as the growing distance between the group and the revolutionary left movement manifested in the decrease of support for the group's armed campaign. The rise of dissociation had as a result the isolation of 17N by the beginning of the 1990s, which during the last militant phase turned increasingly towards inner-oriented operations and low-level attacks without symbolical force; as if the loss of the public's support triggered disillusionment within the ranks of the group itself (Koufontinas 2014). In contrast with 17N, LEA's episode saw the operation of *dissociation* throughout the group's activity. More specifically, during LEA's early (1967 – 1971) and stepped-up phase (1971 – 1972) the mechanism of dissociation was driven by encapsulation. Encapsulation was triggered by the group's physical distance from Greece and its proximity to the rebellious environment of Paris during its early phase, which prompted LEA to adopt a rather radical

ideology. The group's revolutionary discourse, though, largely failed to win the hearts of the bulk of Greek leftists, thus resulting in isolating the group from the antidictatorship movement and in intensifying its radicalisation. During LEA's politically active phase (1972 – 1974), the effect of dissociation in the group's radicalisation was mitigated by the operation of withdrawal, as the public's support towards the more dynamic forms of resistance dropped exponentially. A drop that was caused by the rise of the mass student movement during the junta's liberalisation phase, which largely disapproved the use of armed tactics and challenged the regime through a non-violent repertoire of action.

### 7.1.2 Varieties of Radicalisation

Identified as the way that mechanisms concatenate to form a certain sequence, varieties of radicalisation draw attention to the interaction between the different arenas of a contentious episode (Alimi et al. 2015). Contrary to the particularities of radicalisation that focused on the context within the arenas, the varieties of radicalisation provide the wider picture of a group's radicalisation process as they focus on the interplay of the different mechanisms across the interactive arenas.

Table 12 below gives an analytic depiction of the concatenation of the central relational mechanisms in the contentious episode of LEA. One of the most consequential mechanisms for LEA's radicalisation and the one that sparked the process was *outbidding*. The operation of outbidding was driven in the post-civil war era (1949 – 1967) by threat attribution and repression by proxy. Main agents of the outbidding were during this period the security forces and a deep state mechanism, which were responsible for the systematic suppression of the Greek Left. Repression grew considerably during the 1960s as a response to the protest cycle that was sparked by the massive democratisation movement that challenged the post-civil war *status quo*. The protests culminated with the "July events", a pro-longed period of violent contention between protesters and security forces, which coincided with the rise of *competition for power* in the radicalisation process; as a new generation of activists challenged the approach and tactics of the old Left (boundary formation).

The overthrow of the democratic regime in April 1967, raised the saliency of *upward spirals of political opportunities*. The military coup and the widespread

repressive measures that followed it, activated the operation of threat attribution and prompted the first attempts for the organisation of resistance. Hence, in the aftermath of the putsch the competition for power gained once more momentum, as the discussion over the tactics and the form of resistance led to the reinvigoration of the boundary formation sub-mechanism. Boundary formation triggered the operation of decertification and identity shift, which had as a result the rise of new political actor in the face of the revolutionary groups of the anti-junta resistance.

Table 12: Radicalisation path in LEA’s episode

LEA contentious episode	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
<i>Outbidding</i>				Repression by proxy						
	Threat Attribution									
					Resource depletion					
					Disillusionment					
<i>Competition for power</i>				Boundary formation						
				Decertification						
				Certification						
				Identity shift						
	Boundary deactivation									
	Depolarisation									
<i>Upward spirals of political opportunities</i>				Attribution of threat						
				Diffusion						
				Retaliation						
	Attribution of opportunity									
	Delegitimisation									
<i>Dissociation</i>				Encapsulation						
	Withdrawal									

Sub-mechanisms with dark grey background denote operation at high level; light grey background denotes operation of sub-mechanisms at low level; no background denotes absence/disappearance of sub-mechanisms’ operation [Based on Alimi et al. 2015, p. 199].

These groups were organised almost exclusively abroad from members of the diaspora, who – influenced by the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s – adopted an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist agenda that sought to bring the socialist revolution in the country (sub-mechanism of diffusion). Part of this wave of groups was also LEA,

which from Paris relocated to Athens in order to pursue the fight against the dictatorship and its US patrons (sub-mechanism of retaliation).

However, LEA found significant difficulties in establishing its militant cadres in Greece. Indeed, the group encountered a rather hostile political context that triggered the operation of *dissociation*. This environment was characterised by the low-level response of Greek leftists to the group's radical discourse (sub-mechanism of encapsulation) and the shrinking of the already limited political space due to the soaring state repression (sub-mechanism of resource depletion), as the dictatorship's security forces had managed to dismantle the majority of armed resistance groups by 1969. Nonetheless, LEA by exploiting the regime's phase of limited reforms (1969 – 1971) (sub-mechanism of opportunity attribution) undertook a series of bombings between 1971 and 1972, targeting mainly the US presence in the country; with the attack against the US Embassy in August 1972 to be acknowledged as the group's greatest and last success. The period after 1972 coincided with the dictatorship's liberalisation experiment (1972 – 1973), which witnessed the opening of the political system and the rise of a mass student movement. The successful mobilisation of the students against the regime mitigated the operation of competition for power and triggered the weakening of the partisan lines between the revolutionary and moderate resistance groups (sub-mechanism of depolarisation), as well as the rapprochement between proponents and critics of violent resistance (sub-mechanism of boundary deactivation). At the same time, the success of the students to challenge the regime through the use of non-violent and legal methods had as a result the rejection of dynamic resistance as harmful for the students' struggle (sub-mechanism of delegitimisation) and a wave of public disaffection with dynamic forms of action (sub-mechanism of withdrawal). After 1972, the suspension of LEA's violent campaign became permanent, due to the slowdown in the operation of the upward spirals of political opportunities and the competition for power mechanisms. The group's gradual deradicalisation eventually found LEA on the margins of the political scene, as a mere onlooker of the momentous events (e.g. Polytechnic uprising, Ioannidis' coup, Cyprus crisis) that brought the fall of the dictatorship in July 1974.

Turning now to the case of 17N, Table 13 below provides insight into the sequence that the central relational mechanisms of the contentious episode followed. In the case of 17N, it was the *upward spirals of political opportunities* that unravelled the process of radicalisation. The mechanism gained momentum in the aftermath of

the junta’s fall due to combined effect of retaliation and disillusionment. More specifically, it was the growing anger towards the role of the United States in the crisis of Cyprus, as well as the public disaffection with the parties of the traditional Left due to their frail role in the antidictatorship struggle. Successively, the next mechanism that was triggered in the 17N’s pathway to radicalisation was that of *competition for power*. Indeed, it was the return of Karamanlis that triggered the almost immediate reaction of the remnants of the antidictatorship movement, regarding their stance towards the newly-founded regime. The disagreement over the protraction or not of the armed struggle led to the activation of boundary formation between those against and those in favour of violence, to the formation of ELA – the first revolutionary group of the Metapolitefsi – and to the solidification of the role of the competition for power mechanism within the radicalisation process.

Table 13: Radicalisation path in 17N’s episode

17N contentious episode	1974	1977	1981	1985	1989	1996	2002
<i>Upward spirals of political opportunities</i>				Attribution of threat			
	Disillusionment						
	Retaliation						
		Attribution of opportunity					
<i>Competition for power</i>	Boundary formation						
		Decertification					
		Identity shift					
<i>Outbidding</i>		Delegitimisation					
		Retaliation					
		Repression by proxy					
<i>Association / Dissociation</i>		Attribution of similarity					
		Legitimisation					
	Encapsulation						
	Withdrawal						

Sub-mechanisms with dark grey background denote operation at high level; light grey background denotes operation of sub-mechanisms at low level; no background denotes absence/disappearance of sub-mechanisms’ operation [Based on Alimi et al. 2015, p. 199].

Later on, the win of ND in the first elections of the Metapolitefsi (November 1974) had as a result the activation of threat attribution and the rise in the saliency of upward spirals of political opportunities. For a part of the leftist citizens the appointment of Karamanlis as Prime Minister was seen as a mere change of a NATO-ist guard, which rather threatened than facilitated the country's democratic transition. At the same time, the country witnessed the rise of a cycle of contention that mobilised with demands such as the deepening of the democratisation process and the dejuntification of the state apparatus. Part of this protest cycle was also a revolutionary left movement that emerged as a reaction to the reformism of the traditional Left. Through a radical agenda and the use of an unconventional repertoire of action, the revolutionary left movement sought to exploit the mass mobilisation of the early Metapolitefsi and to destabilise the regime (sub-mechanism of opportunity attribution).

Outbidding was activated due to the questionable results of Karamanlis' dejuntification policy and manifested in the rise of the sub-mechanism of retaliation. The intensification of outbidding also occurred through the triggering of delegitimisation and repression by proxy. Indeed, the first years of Metapolitefsi were characterised by violent clashes between protesters and state security forces, often as a result of the latter's practice of escalating policing – leading to the establishment of a rather hostile attitude towards the police for the revolutionary left movement's part (sub-mechanism of delegitimisation). The escalation of state repression was later followed by the rise of far-right violence, which on the eyes of the leftist milieu was a continuation of the deep state mechanism of the post-civil war era and the police state of the dictatorship (sub-mechanism of repression by proxy).

In front of the state aggression, the issue of the intensification of the movement's violence came at the forefront. The disagreement within the ranks of revolutionary left over the means of struggle (violent vs non-violent) led once again to the activation of boundary formation, which then triggered the sub-mechanisms of decertification and identity shift; elevating at the same time the role of competition for power in the radicalisation process. The rift within the revolutionary groups' milieu about the level of violence (low-level vs high-level), finally caused the split of ELA and the formation of 17N (summer 1975), as well as the construction of new militant actor; namely, that of urban guerrilla.

In December 1975, 17N made its first attack against the the CIA station chief in Athens, demonstrating the group's determination to perform high-level attacks against politically significant targets. The group's strategy – to perform attacks against targets that were stigmatised by the revolutionary left movement – coincided with the activation of legitimisation and similarity attribution sub-mechanisms in the movement-public arena; as for a considerable part of the Greek population the targets were legitimate and the level of violence acceptable. Indeed, up to the end of the 1980s Greek public demonstrated a rather tolerant, or even approving, stance towards 17N's armed campaign; thus, raising the consequentiality of *association* in the group's radicalisation process.

This attitude changed only after the group distanced itself from the revolutionary left constituency in the late 1980s, which had as a result the rise of dissociation – triggered by the activation of encapsulation and withdrawal. Dissociation's role in 17N's radicalisation process continued to be consequential during the 1990s, a period that was characterised by the steady decline of the group's political influence. Equally influential during the group's latter period (1992 – 2002), was the operation of the upward spirals of political opportunities, in view of the enduring saliency of the group's anti-Americanism (sub-mechanism of retaliation) and its disaffection with the bourgeois democratic regime (sub-mechanism of disillusionment).

### 7.1.3 Stages of Radicalisation<sup>222</sup>

Based on the composition (particularity of radicalisation) and concatenation (variety of radicalisation) of mechanisms in the two contentious episodes, this section outlines the similarities and dissimilarities between the different stages in the radicalisation process of LEA and 17N.

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<sup>222</sup> This section designates the mechanisms that were more consequential in each phase of radicalisation during the two contentious episodes, or what Alimi et al. (2015) call “modalities of radicalisation” (p. 173). Then again, this section summarises the comparison of the two episodes per phase of radicalisation, rather than just describing the mechanisms with the more relative weight in each phase of the process.



### Early radicalisation: Emergence of political violence

Identified as the period that experiences the emergence of violence, early radicalisation in the episode of LEA was triggered by the operation of *outbidding* (see Table 12 above). More specifically, it was the action – counteraction dynamics between the democratisation movement and the security forces in the protest cycle of the 1960s that sparked the rise of violence. This contentious cycle peaked during the “July events” in 1965 – a two-month period of everyday conflict between protesters and security forces. As contentious interaction between the two rival sides was escalating, a spiral of violent confrontation occurred that triggered the radicalisation of a minority of the demonstrators. This minority formed the base for the rise of the armed groups. Hence, the antidictatorship movement can be seen both as an extension of the 1960s democratisation movement and as a new stage of the later, in view of the changes that the military coup enforced regarding the groups’ aims and repertoire of action (Notaras 1999; Serdedakis 2007).

In 17N’s contentious episode, the most consequential mechanism for the group’s early phase of radicalisation was the *upward spirals of political opportunities* (see Table 13 above). As we already discussed, the regime change was not seen as a positive development from a minority within the ranks of the antidictatorship movement. For the radical flank of the movement especially, namely the revolutionary groups’ milieu, the democratic transition meant the reconstitution of the pre-junta *status quo*, which they had fought to disintegrate – along with the military rule – in the first place. Moreover, the unravelling of the crisis in Cyprus and the government’s alleged subjugation to the US interests in the area, were a cruel reminder of the country’s enduring dependency to the US imperialism. On the whole, it was the unfavourable political context that propelled the radicalisation of a part of the antidictatorship movement, which recognised the return of Karamanlis and the Cyprus’ crisis as threats to the movement’s goals for national sovereignty, democratisation and radical political change. Consequently, with the demands of the antidictatorship struggle seemingly pending, the formation of the first armed groups after the fall of the junta can be seen as both continuation and evolution of the anti-junta armed groups (Seredakis 2006); as while the groups’ demands remained the same, their tactical repertoire escalated to include more violent methods.

The comparison of the early phases of the two episodes, revealed – apart from the difference in the mechanisms that drove the radicalisation processes (outbidding for LEA’s radicalisation and upward spirals of political opportunities for 17N) – one important similarity. In both cases, armed groups emerged in the beginning of a cycle of protest, as an extension and evolution of groups that were active in a previous cycle. The latter groups acted as holdover organisations and, therefore, provided the necessary abeyance structures for the organisational continuity of the groups and the movement in general (Taylor 1989; Van Dyke 1998; Almeida 2003). That was the case of the leftist groups of the democratisation movement of the 1960s, namely of the EDA, the KKE and the DYL, that acted as “bridges” for the rise of the first armed groups of the antidictatorship struggle, such as of the PAM and of the RF. A process that was also observed almost a decade later, when the revolutionary groups of the anti-junta resistance (LEA, ARF and the 20Oct) facilitated the rise of the first revolutionary group of Metapolitefsi; that is, of ELA. The new organisations in both cases displayed simultaneously continuity with their predecessors, in terms of ideology, frames and beliefs, but also change, regarding their demands and their tactical repertoire. The latter was constantly escalating: from street fighting and unorganised violence against the police before the junta (democratisation movement), to small bombs against symbolic targets and more organised violence during the junta (antidictatorship movement), and larger bombs that caused extensive material damages and clandestine violence after the junta (revolutionary left movement).

Then again, despite their differences, those – evolved into – new armed groups emerged in the beginning of the cycle of protest, a fact that sets Greece apart from similar cases of left-wing violence globally. More specifically, the Greek case differs from those that acknowledge the rise of left-wing radicalism as a phenomenon that is observed either at the end or at the peak of a protest cycle. According to the most dominant paradigm, violent groups are a by-product of the decline of mass protest and of the competition between rival factions within a protest movement, as in the cases of Italy and Germany (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Della Porta 1995). More recently, a second view emerged challenging the notion that the turn to left-wing violence is integral part of the demobilisation phase of a protest cycle. This perspective argued, instead, that armed militancy occurs at the peak of a protest cycle, when new members enter the ranks of the protest movement in an already polarised context

characterised by the reciprocal adaptation of tactics between the protesters and the police. It was this socialisation into violence of a new micro-cohort of militants that propelled the adoption of violent tactics from a radical minority, as in the cases of the United States and Japan (Zwerman et al. 2000; Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005, 2012). Hence, while in the first case the emergence of armed clandestine groups involves the dissolution of the protest movement, the latter case entails its appropriation from a more violent generation. In contrast to both cases, though, violent groups in Greece emerged as evolution of previous, either violent or non-violent groups, as the protest movement adapted in the new and – acknowledged as – threatening political environment. Therefore, the Greek case challenges the overemphasis of the dominant paradigm to the contextual level of radicalisation, in which violence is recognised merely as a side-effect of the decline of mass mobilisation and of the competition of different groups for resources (Della Porta 1995); at the same time as, it elaborates further on the focus of the second approach on the agential level, where radicalisation is seen as a result of the infusion of a new micro-cohort of militants at the peak of a protest cycle (Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005). Contrary to the latter, though, the Greek case highlights the role of key individuals (Han 2009) in the diffusion of violence through time, and not only within the same protest cycle. In this way, this research highlights the importance of agency in the dynamics of contention (Chabot 2010; 2012) across different generations and underscores the role of micro-meso linkages in the process of radicalisation (Bosi and Della Porta 2012; Romanos 2016). Another implication of this analysis is that in order to trace the origins of armed groups is important to situate their emergence not only within the right political environment, but also within the wider temporal context that involves the interrelation and rise of different protest cycles, as well as the continuity and change within a protest movement (Whittier 1995, 1997).

### Stepped-up radicalisation: Intensification of political violence

Stepped-up radicalisation refers to the phase that is characterised by the intensification of violence and includes the perpetration of violent acts against state and non-state actors alike; basic characteristic of this phase is the divergence between the target of violence and the target of political claims (Alimi et al. 2015, p. 12). While outbidding

was the most consequential mechanism in the early phase of LEA's contentious episode, the mechanism that stimulated the escalation of violence was that of competition for power. Triggered originally due to the reluctance of the old Left to adapt its tactics to the mounting repression of the 1960s, competition for power's operation intensified in the aftermath of the military coup. Disillusioned with the mediocrity of the antidictatorship movement's tactics (symbolic bombs of low explosive capacity) and aspirations (reconstitution of pre-coup democracy), a radical minority challenged the established repertoire of action. The friction over the means of the struggle led to the formation of a boundary between moderate and revolutionary Left within the ranks of the anti-junta resistance. The saliency of this boundary – solidified further due to the opposition of the KKE towards dynamic resistance – sparked eventually the rise of a wave of revolutionary groups that encouraged the escalation of the level of violence with the intention of overthrowing the junta and of destroying the pre-coup political establishment. Thus, it was against the backdrop of the anti-junta resistance and its moderate tactics that revolutionary groups such as LEA formed, adopting a *modus operandi* of higher capacity bombs that advocated the fight for radical transformation and socialist revolution in Greece.

The operation of competition for power was consequential in the stepped-up phase of 17N as well. It was initially activated after the fall of the junta, when the sudden regime-change generated wide disagreement within the antidictatorship movement and the revolutionary groups' milieu over the continuation or not of the armed struggle; with the supporters of the first path founding in due course ELA as a vehicle for the perpetuation of the fight. Competition for power became even more salient when the dispute over the tactics reached a tipping point within the ranks of the newly-formed organisation. With 17N – as a cell still of ELA – arguing for the intensification of violence in order to also include attacks against human targets, the distance between the supporters of high-level armed violence and those of low-level violence was growing. The reluctance of ELA to legitimate the use of high-level attacks, coupled with the general disagreement of the revolutionary left movement against the use of armed struggle, resulted in the isolation of the supporters of high-level armed violence and in the split of 17N from ELA. In this context, the employment of a tactic of deadly violence also indicated the group's will to differentiate itself from the rest of the revolutionary Left – both armed and non-armed – movement and the

creation of a new militant identity, that of urban guerrilla. The identification of 17N with urban guerrilla signified the group's intention to carry on the most radical forms of collective action, including the execution of civilians, despite the reconstitution of democratic regime in the country.

The comparison of the two contentious episodes had as result the identification of competition for power as the most consequential mechanism that drove the groups' stepped-up radicalisation. Based on the consideration of the mechanism and sub-mechanism levels of the radicalisation processes alike, the systematic analysis of the episodes also disclosed the existence of a causal sequence of sub-mechanisms, identified as the discrete steps of a causal process that form a chronological sequence (Seawright and Collier 2010), within the operation of competition for power. In particular, in both contentious episodes we observed the activation of boundary formation, which triggered the sub-mechanisms of decertification and identity shift, led to the formation of new militant identities and caused the overall increase in the mechanism's salience in LEA's and 17N's radicalisation processes. This causal sequence of sub-mechanisms – within the operation of competition for power mechanism – can then be portrayed as such:

*Competition for Power: Boundary Formation → Decertification → Identity Shift.*

Consequently, the study of the two contentious episodes facilitated the identification of the above causal sequence of sub-mechanisms within the core mechanism; and, thus, provided original insights into the operation of the competition for power mechanism for the wider phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece.

### Deradicalisation: Slowdown and termination of political violence

De-radicalisation is identified as the phase that witnesses a group's slowdown of violence and may lead to either the latter's preservation in lower levels or to the entire discontinuation of violence. In the contentious episode of LEA, the group's deradicalisation was mainly caused by the operation of outbidding. Hence, while the group's deradicalisation process was also facilitated by the slowing down in the operation of competition for power and the upward spirals of opportunities, it was the

enduring saliency of outbidding that led to the decline and eventually to the cessation of the group's violent tactics. In particular, it was the dictatorship's tight grip on the civil society that impeded the group's radicalisation process. The regime's relentless repression of all subversive – or considered as such – activities, had as a consequence the depletion of the necessary resources, material and organisational, for a clandestine group to subsist. The shrinking of the political space and the failure of LEA to seriously challenge the regime, also generated the rise of a feeling of disenchantment with armed struggle within the group and the revolutionary groups' milieu in general. Indeed, outbidding was critical even during the junta's liberalisation phase (1972 – 1973), as the regime's policy of persecution towards armed groups remained unchanged. Nonetheless, the liberalisation led to the slowdown of the upward spirals of opportunities (opening of the political opportunity structure) and of the competition for power (decrease of partisan lines' saliency) mechanisms, which enabled the overall decline of the group's radicalisation. Then again, the most consequential mechanism for LEA's deradicalisation phase (1972 – 1974) and final disengagement from violence was outbidding.

On the other hand, in 17N's contentious episode the most consequential mechanism for the deceleration of the group's violence was dissociation. In contrast with the consistent failure of the Greek security forces to attain any success in the pursuit of 17N for over than two decades, it was the group's isolation from the revolutionary left movement and the general public that led to the relative slowing down of its violence. Throughout its armed operation, 17N tried to generate sympathy within the Greek population through the perpetration of operations that meant to express the anger of the working class against those ruling (political establishment) and exploiting it (the United States and the capitalist class). When the attempt to act as a mouthpiece of the public anger eventually failed, as the backlash against the group's violence mounted after the two unpopular killings in the beginning of the 1990s, 17N seemed to lose its *raison d'être*. As a result, during the ensuing militant phase (1992 – 2002) the attacks of the group declined, whereas the ratio of low versus high-level attacks grew in favour of the former for the first time in 17N's three-decade-long campaign. Hence, while 17N continued to perpetrate high-level attacks and even kill people, its armed operation saw a relative decrease in its level and volume, as well as in its density – as attacks became more scattered.

## 7.2 Resilience of Revolutionary Groups in Time

According to Whittier (1995) who studied the persistence of the feminist movement in the United States, “the question of how social movements endure is inseparable from the question of how they change... as lasting social movements undergo repeated transformations” (p. 255). This was the premise that guided the study of the resilience of the revolutionary groups in Greece as well. Recognised as one of the forms that collective action within a social movement can take, this thesis acknowledged revolutionary groups as a manifestation of the leftist protest movement that rose in the country in the 1960s (democratisation movement), fought for the overthrow of the military rule during the junta (antidictatorship movement) and continued the struggle for radical change in the country after the metapolitefsi (revolutionary left movement). Hence, through the application of a comparative approach that juxtaposed two episodes of the same stream of contention, or in other words the adoption of a local process account (Tilly and Tarrow 2007), this thesis attempted to give an explanation to the revolutionary groups’ resilience in Greece and to the proliferation of the phenomenon through time.

While revolutionary groups appeared first time in the country after the imposition of the dictatorship (April 1967) and within the context of the anti-junta resistance, their origins can be traced back to the pre-coup period and within the democratisation movement of the 1960s. The rise of the latter was facilitated by a series of developments that took place between the late-1950s and the early-1960s and laid the bases for the opening of the country’s political opportunity structure; such developments were the country’s economic reconstruction, the reorganisation of the Left and the split within the post-civil war political elites. It was in this context that the dominant since the end of the civil war “subculture of accommodation” gave gradually its place to a vibrant “subculture of opposition.” Identified as the subculture that is characterised by the parallel negation of a society’s dominant values and behaviours (Morris A. D. 1984; Johnston 1991, 1995b; Johnston and Snow 1998), this oppositional subculture emerged within the leftist milieu as state repression weakened. Hence, the relative liberalisation of the regime in the 1960s facilitated the transformation of the post-civil war accommodative subculture to an oppositional subculture, and eventually to the mass mobilisation of the protest cycle of the 1960s.

The decline of the protest cycle for democratisation after 1965, though, did not mean the demise of the oppositional subculture as well. The latter manifested anew in the formation of the first groups of the anti-junta resistance in the aftermath of the dictatorship. Competition for power then played a decisive role in the construction of a boundary between moderate and revolutionary Left over the means of the resistance. The disagreement over the tactics was once again the reason for the formation of a boundary in the aftermath of the junta's fall, as within the ranks of the revolutionary milieu a rift was created between the supporters of low-level and high-level violence. The analysis of the two contentious episodes resulted in the identification of a causal sequence of sub-mechanisms within the operation of competition for power (competition for power: boundary formation → decertification → identity shift). More specifically, in both contentious episodes the sequential activation of the sub-mechanisms of boundary formation, decertification and identity shift led to the formation of new militant identities and to the proliferation of violence from an old generation to new one.

The fall of the junta also signified the emergence of a revolutionary left movement, with a collective identity that was characterised by a combination of instrumental and countercultural elements. Progressively, the influence of the instrumental flank of the movement (extra-parliamentary political parties) diminished and the countercultural faction came to dominate the movement, which by the end of the 1970s had a countercultural character. The countercultural transformation of the revolutionary left movement had as a result the rise of police repression and counter-violence as key mobilising incentives, as countercultural movements derive “their collective identity from conflicting and confrontational interaction” (Kriesi et al. 1995, p. 84) with the state and other groups. Characteristic example of the centrality of conflictive interaction for the revolutionary left movement was the case of 17N, as during its contentious episode escalating police repression commonly led to the strengthening of 17N's violence. Moreover, the study of the 17N's case resulted in the detection of a causal sequence of sub-mechanisms within the operation of outbidding, as police repression led consistently to the activation of delegitimisation and retaliation sub-mechanisms and to the increase of outbidding's saliency in the group's radicalisation. This causal sequence of sub-mechanisms can then be visualised as such:

*Outbidding: Delegitimisation → Retaliation.*



This trend eventually came to characterise the revolutionary left movement as a whole, as violence between protesters and the police became an everyday phenomenon, while the occasional incident of transformative repressive events has regularly caused the intensification of the movement's violence.

In certain cases, the mechanisms of outbidding and competition for power also worked together to propel the proliferation of revolutionary violence. Such an incident was that of November 1980, when the death of two protesters led to the rise of competition within the ranks of the revolutionary left movement and the creation of new urban guerrilla groups; such as the Revolutionary Organisation October 1980 (O80) (Koufontinas 2014). A similar occasion was the December 2008 events, when the death of a student acted as a catalyst for a massive wave of protest actions all over the country (Sotiris 2010; Psimitis 2011) as well as for the rise of a series of new revolutionary groups (Xenakis 2012; Karampampas 2018). Hence, the identification of the two causal sequences of sub-mechanisms within the competition for power and the outbidding mechanisms facilitated the recognition not only of the reasons for the intensification of violence in the cases of LEA and 17N, but also of the causes for the proliferation of revolutionary violence from one generation to another.

Consequently, it was the combined effect of a consolidated – already by the 1950s – oppositional subculture, as a result of the chronic repression of the country's leftist milieu, with the operation of outbidding that facilitated the conditions for the rise of the first revolutionary groups in Greece. All the same, it was the operation of competition for power that led to consecutive splits within the body of the Left and in the creation of new – more and more – militant identities; triggering in turn the formation of further revolutionary groups in the country. Thus, it was competition for power that sparked the radicalisation of the democratisation movement in the 1960s, that caused the emergence of the revolutionary left groups within the antidictatorship movement during the junta and instigated the rise of urban guerrilla groups in the ranks of the revolutionary left movement after the *metapolitefsi*. Taking everything into consideration then and without ignoring the fact that all mechanisms – especially outbidding – played vital role to the rise of radicalisation in the episodes of LEA and 17N, competition for power was the most consequential for the spiralling and perseverance of violence.



## *Chapter 8: Conclusion*

Drawing on a mechanism-based comparative design across generations of armed groups and the study of their communiqués, this thesis attempted to provide an answer to the striking resilience of the phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece. Recognised as one of the oldest and most protracted cases of revolutionary violence in Europe, Greece was ideal for the cross-temporal examination of clandestine groups' radicalisation processes; since the country has experienced a great volume of violence, as well as multiple generations of armed groups during its recent history. Despite of the phenomenon's endurance, revolutionary violence has been a rather under-researched case of collective action, at the same time as the existing literature has been rather descriptive and unable to give a persuasive response to the questions over the phenomenon's emergence and/or persistence.

At the same time, the most prevalent views over the topic are expressed by those that see it either as a facet of the country's "endemic culture of violence" (Psimitis 2011) or by those that acknowledge it as a by-product of the *Metapolitefsi* (Kalyvas S. N. 2008a). Hence, while the first understanding considers revolutionary violence as a "national anomaly" that can be attributed to the dominance of an "underdog" culture in Greece, itself a consequence of the country's backwardness and late transition to Enlightenment (Diamandouros 1984; Psychogios 2013); the second recognises it as a counter-effect of the Polytechnic uprising and the mass mobilisation of the early *Metapolitefsi*, which generated a "culture of sympathy" towards acts of resistance (Andronikidou and Kovras 2012; Kalyvas S. N. 2010). As a matter of fact, apart from their different focus on historical time, the two approaches seem quite close as they share a contempt towards collective contentious actions in general, which are automatically marginalised as part of a deviant or even an anomic behaviour. According to their position, any act of disobedience, protest or political violence in Greece, is considered as an impulsive, almost irrational, reaction against the country's modernisation and rationalisation (Xenakis 2013).

Contrary to the normativity of the above perspectives, this thesis employed a contentious politics approach that understands violence as part of the spectrum of possible tactics that a social movement has and may employ in its interaction with other actors. Abiding to a relational ethos, this approach recognised a group's radicalisation – namely the shift from nonviolent to predominantly violent tactics – as a processual phenomenon, which rises out of the dynamic interaction of the movement with its political environment. One of the modes of this approach is what Tilly and Tarrow (2007) called local process account; namely, the systematic study of two or more episodes from the same stream of contention through the use of an established theoretical model. That was precisely the approach that this thesis followed as: the cases of LEA and 17N (contentious episodes) were studied through the application of the relational approach to radicalisation (established model) (Alimi et al. 2015), in order to generate a picture for the overall phenomenon of revolutionary groups in Greece (stream of contention).

Through the application of a local process account to the episodes of LEA and 17N, this thesis managed to provide answers to the research questions set out at the introduction of the thesis. Hence, in the case of LEA it was the mechanisms of outbidding and competition for power that facilitated the emergence and escalation of the group's violence respectively; while outbidding had a consequential role in the group's deradicalisation as well. On the case of 17N, it was the operation of upward spirals of political opportunities that triggered the group's radicalisation process, which intensified further when the competition for power was activated. Finally, it was the operation of dissociation that slowed down the radicalisation process of 17N during the group's third phase.

Furthermore, the systematic comparison of LEA and 17N, through the tracing of the particularities and varieties of the two episodes, facilitated the detection of the similarities and differences between them. Despite the differences in the composition and concatenation of sub-mechanisms in the two cases, certain similarities were located; thus, providing valuable insights not only into the group's radicalisation process but also into the wider stream of contention (revolutionary groups in Greece). Hence, by studying LEA and 17N, we figured out that armed groups in Greece emerged in the beginning of cycles of protest as extension and evolution of previously

inactive or split organisations. The radicalisation of the groups in the beginning of the protest cycles of the late 1960s (antidictatorship cycle) and mid-to-late 1970s (revolutionary left cycle) defied the dominant view of left-wing radicalism as a phenomenon that is observed either at the end (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Della Porta 1995) or at the peak of a protest cycle (Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005, 2012).

The comparison of the two cases also unearthed the existence of causal sequences of sub-mechanisms within the intra-movement and the movement-security forces arenas. In the first case, it was the sequential operation of boundary formation, decertification and identity shift within the bounds of competition for power mechanism, which resulted in the increase of the mechanism's saliency during the early radicalisation of both episodes. Hence, it was the operation of competition for power, as it was manifested in the consecutive splits within the Left and in the formation of new militant identities, which propelled LEA's and 17N's radicalisation process. Another causal sequence was observed within the movement-security forces arena, as in the episode of 17N it was the recurring activation of delegitimisation and retaliation sub-mechanisms that raised the importance of outbidding during the phase of stepped-up radicalisation. What is more, the mechanisms of outbidding and competition for power worked together to propel the proliferation of revolutionary violence, especially in times of widespread repression or in the aftermath of transformative protest events. On such occasions, the severity of repression commonly led to the reciprocal adaptation of tactics between the protesters and the police, to the division of the protest movement over the tactics for retribution and to the creation of new more violent groups; therefore, leading to both the intensification of violence and its proliferation from one generation to another.

The intertwined operation of the two mechanisms has been significantly facilitated by the formation of a revolutionary left movement after the fall of the junta. Having its origins in the vibrant oppositional leftist culture that made its appearance during the 1950s, the radical left movement dominated the civil society of the newly-founded democracy in the aftermath of the regime change. It was the study of the two contentious episodes that demonstrated how the oppositional subculture sparked the rise of mass mobilisation, as well as how the left protest movement transformed

throughout the years: from the democratic movement of the 1960s, to the antidictatorship movement under the military rule and to the revolutionary left movement after the metapolitefsi. By the end of the 1970s, the revolutionary Left was dominated by a countercultural faction, which had as a result the rise of police repression and counter-violence as key mobilising incentives for the movement.

All in all, the story of the revolutionary violence in Greece, is one of multiple splits within the body of the Greek Left. These splits were facilitated by the operation of outbidding and competition for power mechanisms and led to intergenerational proliferation of the phenomenon through the formation of new militant groups that derived their identity from the conflicting interaction with the state. Characteristic example of this process was the two consecutive splits in a period of ten years that saw the transformation of the moderate anti-junta groups, to the revolutionary groups of the antidictatorship struggle and finally to the urban guerrilla groups of the Metapolitefsi. Groups – like the 17N – that were, and have been, willing to use the most radical forms of collective action, even against human targets, within the largely democratic context of the post-junta period, in order to create the insurrectionary conditions for a socialist revolution in the country.

In terms of the broader implications of the thesis, the cross-historical analysis of Greek revolutionary groups acted as a critical and instrumental case study, as the examination of the country's experience provided valuable lessons to the wider literature on social movements and contentious politics. To begin with, this research presented an alternative way of studying movement dynamics; namely, through the analysis of the interaction of the processes of meaning formation and radicalisation. Regarding the process of meaning formation specifically, this thesis contributed to the framing theory of social movement studies with the development of a longitudinal interactive approach that focuses on the recurring interrelation of frames and master frames in order to trace how a movement constructs and reconstructs its own social reality (Alimi 2007a, 2007b). Moreover, this thesis by (re-)introducing in the study of causal mechanisms the taxonomy of Falleti and Lynch (2008, 2009), offered a framework for the enhancement of the validity of mechanism-based process tracing. Furthermore, through the adoption of a cross-historical analysis, this research highlighted the role of causal sequences of mechanisms/sub-mechanisms in the diffusion of contention and violence through time. The application of this cross-

temporal comparative framework also contributed to the literature on left-wing radicalism, as it challenged the dominant view of clandestine violence as a phenomenon that materialises either at the end (Della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989; Della Porta 1995) or at the peak (Zwerman et al. 2000; Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005, 2012) of a protest cycle. In fact, Greek case demonstrated how violent groups can also emerge in the onset of a wave of protest as a continuation and an evolution of previously established holdover organisations (Taylor 1989; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 1995, 1997) and due to valuable individuals in the role of brokers (Han 2009; Vasi 2011; Romanos 2016). The latter finding exhibited the significance of the micro-level of analysis in the dynamics of contention, as well as drew attention to the under-researched role of agency in the studies of mobilisation and radicalisation (Bosi and Della Porta 2012; Chabot 2010; 2012); as while the meso-level is rightly considered as the most consequential for the relational study of a group' radicalisation process (McAdam et al. 2001; Alimi et al. 2015), its interaction with the micro and macro-levels remains crucial for the holistic examination of such phenomena (Della Porta 1995; Bosi and Della Porta 2015).

In terms of directions for future research, several recommendations can be made based on the findings of the thesis. First and foremost, it would be worthwhile for researchers to replicate the above study in different contexts or within different levels of analysis. Hence, one particularly promising line for future enquiry is the study of meaning formation and radicalisation dynamics through the application of a local process account in the cross-temporal level. More specifically, further research is necessary in order to investigate the role of causal sequences in the dynamics of radicalisation, the rise of violent groups as by-product of a movement's adaptation to hostile environments and the function of agency in the proliferation and diffusion of violent tactics through different generations of groups. Especially since, despite the rise in relational studies of political contention and violence, there is an observed lack of cross-historical analyses either in the intra-national or the international level. Another possible research direction is the expansion of the framework in order to study cases either in the cross-country intra-movement level – namely between groups of corresponding ideological orientation but from different countries (comparison of left wing and/or right-wing groups); or in the intra-country cross-movement level – namely between groups of different ideological orientation (comparison of left-wing with

right-wing groups). The implementation of a “site comparison account” (Tilly and Tarrow 2007), which focuses on two countries in order to determine their similarities and differences in the frequency, origins and consequences of a certain process, would be rather valuable for the study of groups’ radicalisation, as it would prove the framework’s transferability. Finally, future researchers will benefit significantly from the adoption of the mechanistic taxonomy that this thesis introduced, as it would enhance mechanism-based process tracing and the measurement of causal mechanisms in the study of collective action.



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## Appendices

### Revolutionary groups' communiques

#### LEA's communiqués

*LEA 1971 I.* Claim of responsibility for a triple bomb attack in central Athens against junta and US targets (July 1971) – September 1971<sup>223</sup>

*LEA 1971 II.* Claim of responsibility for bombs against two US cars in Glyfada (October 1971) – October 1971

*LEA 1971 III.* Proclamation for thanking the 'Epithesi' journal for publishing their previous attack communiqué – October 1971

*LEA 1972 I.* Claim of responsibility for a bomb in the bust of General Ioannis Metaxas in Nikaia, Athens (April 1972) – April 1972

*LEA 1972 II.* Claim of responsibility for the bomb in the US Embassy (August 1972) – September 1972

*LEA 1972 III.* Second proclamation for the US Embassy attack (August 1972) – September 1972

*LEA 1972 IV.* Internal document for the ideological indoctrination of the group's members over the armed struggle – October 1972

*LEA 1973 I.* Proclamation in favour of the student mobilisations – February 1973

*LEA 1973 II.* Proclamation against the referendum of June 1973 – July 1973

*LEA 1974 I.* Proclamation for the coup in Cyprus – July 1974

*LEA 1974 II.* Common proclamation in the aftermath of the Polytechnic uprising – November 1973

#### 17N's communiqués

*17N 1975 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the CIA station chief Richard Welch (December 1975) – December 1975

*17N 1975 II.* Proclamation addressing the media's stance towards the group (December 1975)

*17N 1976 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the ex-police officer Evangelos Mallios (December 1976) – December 1976

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<sup>223</sup> Within brackets the month and year of the armed action; out of brackets the month and date of the communiqué.

## *Appendices*

- 17N 1977 I.* Proclamation addressing the criticism towards the group from parts of the Left (April 1977)
- 17N 1980 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of riot police officer Pantelis Petrou and Sotiris Stamoulis (January 1980) – January 1980
- 17N 1981 I.* Proclamation against the arson of department stores (July 1981)
- 17N 1983 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of US officer George Tsantes and Nikolaos Veloutsos (November 1983) – November 1983
- 17N 1984 I.* Claim of responsibility for failed attack against US officer Robert Judd (April 1984) – April 1984
- 17N 1984 II.* Proclamation with armed attacks during the dictatorship – July 1984
- 17N 1985 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of newspaper journalist Nikos Momferatos and Panagiotis Roussetis (February 1985) – February 1985
- 17N 1985 II.* Proclamation addressing the media – September 1985
- 17N 1985 III.* Claim or responsibility for bomb attack against riot police bus (November 1985) – November 1985
- 17N 1985 IV.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the bus attack – December 1985
- 17N 1986 I.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the industrialist Dimitris Aggelopoulos (April 1986) – April 1986
- 17N 1986 II.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the Aggelopoulos attack – April 1986
- 17N 1986 III.* Claim of responsibility for bomb attacks against four tax revenues offices (October 1986) – October 1986
- 17N 1987 I.* Claim of responsibility for kneecapping attack against the doctor Zacharias Kapsalakis (February 1987) – February 1987
- 17N 1987 II.* Claim of responsibility for bomb attack against US and Greek military bus (April 1987) – April 1987
- 17N 1987 III.* Claim of responsibility for remote-controlled car bomb against US military bus (August 1987) – August 1987
- 17N 1988 I.* Claim of responsibility for failed attack against US officer George Carros (January 1988) – January 1988
- 17N 1988 III.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the industrialist Alexandros Athanasiadis-Bodossakis (March 1988) – March 1988
- 17N 1988 IV.* Proclamation addressing the media – March 1988
- 17N 1988 V.* Claim of responsibility for bomb attacks against two Turkish Embassy cars (May 1988) – May 1988
- 17N 1988 VI.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the US officer William Nordeen (June 1988) – June 1988
- 17N 1988 VII.* Proclamation for the raid of a police department (August 1988) – August 1988

- 17N 1988 VIII.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the “Bank of Crete” scandal – November 1988
- 17N 1988 IX.* Leaflet over the coming elections– November 1988
- 17N 1989 I.* Claim of responsibility for kneecapping attacks against judges Kostas Androulidakis and Panagiotis Tarasouleas (January 1989) – January 1989
- 17N 1989 IV.* Claim of responsibility for failed attack against ex-PASOK’s minister Giorgos Petsos (May 1989) – May 1989
- 17N 1989 V.* Proclamation addressing the media – May 1989
- 17N 1989 IX.* Proclamation against the coalition government between ND and SYN –July 1989
- 17N 1989 X.* Claim of responsibility for the execution of the MP Pavlos Bakoyannis (September 1989) – September 1989
- 17N 1989 XI.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the Bakoyannis’ execution – October 1989
- 17N 1989 XII.* Proclamation addressing the media – October 1989
- 17N 1990 I.* Proclamation for the raid of an army camp (December 1989) and a museum in central Athens (February 1990) – February 1990
- 17N 1990 II.* Claiming responsibility for a series of bombing attacks in a high-end area (May 1990) – May 1990
- 17N 1990 VII.* Claiming responsibility for failed rocket attack against industrialist Vardis Vardinoyannis (November 1990) – November 1990
- 17N 1990 VIII.* Claiming responsibility for rocket attack against the EEC offices in central Athena (December 1990) – December 1990
- 17N 1991 I.* Claiming responsibility for bomb and rocket attack against the office of a French military attaché and bank offices (January 1991) – January 1991
- 17N 1991 II.* Claiming responsibility for the assassination of US officer Ronald Stewart (March 1991) – March 1991
- 17N 1991 III.* Claiming responsibility for a rocket attack against a luxurious hotel (March 1991), a bomb attack against a tugboat in support of the port workers’ strike (April 1991) and four rocket attacks against European interests in the country (May 1991) – June 1991
- 17N 1991 IV.* Claiming responsibility for failed attack against Turkish embassy personnel (July 1991)
- 17N 1991 V.* Claiming responsibility for the execution of Turkish official Cettin Gorgu (October 1991) – October 1991
- 17N 1991 VI.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the execution of Gorgu (October 1991)
- 17N 1991 VII.* Claiming responsibility for rocket attack against riot police bus (November 1991) – November 1991

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- 17N 1992 II.* Claiming responsibility for failed attack against Minister of Economics, Ioannis Palaiokrassas – Collateral death of a Thanos Axarlian (July 1992) – July 1992
- 17N 1992 III.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the operation against Palaiokrassas – July 1992
- 17N 1992 IV.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the operation against Palaiokrassas – July 1992
- 17N 1992 V.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the operation against Palaiokrassas – July 1992
- 17N 1992 VI.* Strategic communiqué that justified the group’s tactics and overall strategy – November 1992
- 17N 1994 I.* Claim responsibility for the assassination of the ex-head of the Greek National Bank, Mihalis Vranopoulos (January 1994) – January 1994
- 17N 1994 II.* Claim responsibility for the assassination of the Turkish diplomat, Omer Sipahioglou (July 1994) – July 1994
- 17N 1997 I.* Claim responsibility for the assassination of the shipowner, Kostas Peratikos (May 1997) – May 1997
- 17N 1998 I.* Claim responsibility for a series of bomb attacks against companies of US interests.
- 17N 1999 I.* Proclamation addressing the media regarding the Ocalan case – March 1999
- 17N 2000 I.* Claim responsibility for the execution of British officer Steven Sonders – June 2002.