

Liberal Democracy in Crisis: Redefining Politics and Resistance through Power

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my brother Žan, my mother Jana Krajnc, my sister Etien Horvat, the rest of my family, and to the people that I can call my friends.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Lasse Thomassen for his caring support, patience, readiness to help me with his expertise and advice, for being the best supervisor I could ever wish for.

I tend to forget, but my move to the UK would not be possible without the financial support from the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund (Ad Futura). I am also grateful to Katja Cankar for her very much appreciated advice on administrative matters when I needed it most.

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to create a more robust concept of resistance that may respond to the crisis of liberal democracy in contemporary neoliberal society. The crisis comes as a result of increasing dissatisfaction with the liberal democratic institutions, which are viewed by citizens as unrepresentative and unresponsive to their political demands. I argue that the post-2008 wave of protest movements represents an important attempt at challenging neoliberalism through the political project of radicalising democracy. Drawing upon different post-Marxist and poststructuralist approaches in contemporary political theory, the key theoretical contribution of the thesis is to elucidate the relationship between radical politics of protest movements and the existing political institutions. I suggest that the relation between the two is antagonistic largely due to the tension in liberal democracy between liberal institutions and rights and popular sovereignty. To this end, I argue that the political project of theorising radical democracy needs to be complemented with a political economy analysis. The political project of radicalising democracy responds to the limitations of the pluralist-elitist conception of politics in contemporary democratic theory and points towards social movement and new radical left literature as a fruitful way for constructing an alternative model of democracy. In response to the objection to power in parts of the radical left, I maintain that a more nuanced understanding of resistance is needed, which accounts for the structural relation between resistance and power. Finally, to properly account for the structural conditions and obstacles facing the radical left in the struggle against neoliberalism, the thesis also provides an economic-institutional analysis, which explains the ideological relationship between liberal democracy and neoliberalism from a historical perspective. The different theoretical contributions together help elucidate the empirical case of radical politics in Southern Europe and the challenges lying ahead.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: neoliberalism and depoliticisation

The beginning of the present decade saw an eruption of significant collective resistance to the way governments were dealing with the 2007–2008 financial crisis and an intensified desire for systemic change. From the Indignados in Spain, the global Occupy movement to the Syntagma Square anti-austerity protests in Greece and the people's uprisings in Slovenia, governments around the world were criticised by political movements for their complicity in the continuing neoliberalisation of society and for failing to protect vulnerable people from the negative effects of turbulent market activity. In this thesis, I will argue that this wave of protest movements points towards a new crisis in liberal democracy, which demands that we reconceptualise the relationship between resistance and institutional politics. The crisis takes on different manifestations at different levels of society. The fall in support for the established political parties, especially the social democratic parties on the centre-left and the conservative or liberal parties on the centre-right, coupled with the decline of party membership around Europe and the decimation of their vote share (Van Biezen 2013; Keen 2015); democratic institutions that are seen as unrepresentative and unrepresentative by voters, the professionalisation of politics, and the alignment of mainstream political parties around the neoliberal consensus – these are all signs of what may be seen as a growing democratic deficit in liberal democratic institutions. These are also some of the factors that have contributed to the intensification of radical politics outside formal institutions. Different scholars of social and political movements have described this increase in protest activity as a political response to the depoliticisation of established democratic processes (for instance, Graeber 2013; Katsambekis and Kioupiolis 2014; Laclau 2014; della Porta 2015a; Mouffe 2013c, 2015). Others, mainly in mainstream political science, have focused on the anti-political sentiments among voters and on the processes that lead to depoliticisation in modern politics (for instance, Burnham 2001; Flinders and Buller 2006; Hay 2007; Flinders and Wood 2015). In political theory, concepts, such as post-politics and post-democracy have been used to explain the depoliticised state of liberal democracy (Rancière 1999, 2010; Žižek 1999; Mouffe 2000, 2005).

Liberal democracy in contemporary democratic theory

The crisis of liberal democracy is not a new subject of scholarly debate (Offe 1974, 1984; Habermas 1976; Held 2006). The late 1960s and the 1970s were times of intense social upheaval across the West as the oil crises hit currency reserves and economic growth in major industrial economies. The challenge coming from the civil rights, ecological, feminist and anti-war movements prompted, especially conservative, scholars to question the ability of democracies to govern. The increase in democratic pressure on the political system, which they believed to be plural and fair, led them to view the governing elites as overloaded by unrealistic political expectations and demands (Crozier *et al.* 1975; King 1975; Sartori 1975; Parsons 1982). Progressive sociologists and neo-Marxists challenged the overload thesis and viewed the rise in social movements and protest activity as a legitimate response to the loss of legitimacy of governing elites. The reawakened civil society and the appearance of new social movements challenged the boundaries of institutional politics and prompted a re-evaluation of key precepts in democratic theory (Offe 1985; Macpherson 1973, 1977; Wolfe 1977).

In order to capture the theoretical complexity of the debates in democratic theory, which continue to this day, and how they correspond with the crisis of liberal democracy, one can start by looking at the analytical models that purport to explain the dynamics between the dominant conceptions of politics in liberal democracies. I return to this in more detail in Chapter 1, but for the moment the following brief outline suffices. The dominant analytical model of democracy is the aggregative model, which draws heavily upon the pluralist-elite assumptions about political life. It emphasises the view of liberal democracy as an electoral competition among a plurality of interests, where the nexus of political power lies with the elected politicians, while the citizens take the role of passive spectators (Schumpeter 2010; Sartori 1975). With the rise of new social movements in the 1970s, this conception of liberal democracy comes under increasing pressure. The deliberative model of democracy is presented as an alternative to the aggregative model by challenging the instrumental economic rationality underlying its main assumptions and shifting the axiom of politics towards solving normative questions through deliberation (Habermas 1984, 1987, 1996; Dryzek 2000; Rawls 1971, 2005).

However, both of these models fail to capture the antagonistic aspect of resistance to institutional politics and the resulting crises of liberal democracy: why do social conflicts arise even in well-order societies, such as advanced liberal democracies? Can all conflict be institutionalised and dealt with through established democratic procedures? If not, what other analytical model could better account for the inherently conflictual character of social relations

and the political divisions among different political groups and rationalities? I will use the agonistic model, proposed by the political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2000, 2005, 2013a), as a partial response to the questions posed. I will not treat her agonistic democratic theory as exhaustive, but in the first instance use it as a starting point for conceptualising an alternative understanding to the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy (Chapter 1), and then build up on it through engaging with social movement and new radical left literature. To underline its theoretical merits for my analysis, Mouffe's agonistic democracy provides an account of politics, which puts emphasis on its antagonistic character, and underlines the centrality of power in the constitution of political identities and positions. It also explains how liberal rationality moves the axiom of democratic politics away from recognising the antagonistic character of politics. These two important contributions provide a basis for Mouffe's project of theorising a radical democratic politics. Like the other two models, however, it treats the institutions of liberal democracy as a neutral mechanism for the translation of political grievances and demands. All three models of democracy, notwithstanding their qualified differences, take an indulgent approach to understanding liberal democracy, while leaving aside the structural and historical analysis of the changing role of state institutions in the context of neoliberalism, which could explain its recurrent crises. And, while the agonistic model does identify the depoliticisation of liberal democracy as the source of extra-institutional contestation of formal politics, a systemic analysis of what drives this contestation is missing in the literature.

What would such a systemic analysis entail? As already pointed out above, it would need to explain why there has been a trend of depoliticisation in the politics of liberal democracy over the past few decades. It would also need to take account of how neoliberalism, as the main governmental rationality in contemporary societies, has influenced the functioning of liberal democracy and its inability to respond to the democratic demands of citizens. My argument in the thesis will be that neoliberalism is in fact one of the key drivers of depoliticisation of institutional politics since it reconfigures the governmental rationality of the state towards further marketisation of society. At the same time, the latter process will also be viewed as politicising, even if indirectly, in the sense that it provokes a counter-movement of resistance. The post-2008 wave of protests, I will argue, demonstrates this contradictory effect. Based on this diagnosis, an analysis that would combine the project of theorising the radicalisation of democracy with a critical understanding of the political-economic conditions of depoliticisation could, therefore, point the way forward for the radical left politics.

I will suggest that this task can be accomplished by combining the project of theorising radical democratic politics, the starting point for which will be Mouffe's agonistic view of politics,

with a political economy analysis, which will offer a structural explanation of the interaction between political and economic processes in liberal democracy. Neoliberalism will be understood as a governmental rationality that manages and conditions the market economy through a complex nexus of political knowledge and institutions, which operate across the political/economic division prevalent in classical political economy. The thesis will not be so much concerned with providing a detailed description of how neoliberalism was rolled out in the West and its consequences for social cohesion, the rise in inequality and the aggravation of socio-economic injustices – I believe that this has already been extensively covered by the existing literature (see, for instance, Chomsky 1999; Harvey 2005; Crouch 2011; Jones 2011; Mirowski 2013; Brown 2015). The analysis in my thesis will instead concentrate on interrogating how the development of liberalism and its relationship with neoliberalism influenced the political rationality of governing and the resistance this transformation provoked following the 2007–2008 financial crisis. The main theoretical problem that presents itself is, therefore, two-fold and interconnected: (1) an institutional understanding of the dynamics between liberal democracy and the market economy is needed in order to account for the systemic depoliticisation of democratic politics; and (2) a reconceptualisation of resistance in relation to depoliticised institutional politics, which would address the structural obstacles facing radical left politics in challenging neoliberalism. Both parts of the problem address the specific theoretical gaps in the respective scholarly literature. Political theory will be used as a resource for manoeuvring between critical political economy and democratic theory on one side, where the relationship between politics and economics will be expounded, and the radical new left and social movements literature on the other. This task will also require political theory to elucidate the concepts of crisis and resistance as a link for rethinking the relationship between institutional politics and protest movements. I will now expound on each of these in turn.

The question of the relationship between liberal democracy and the market economy has been identified by many sociologists, political scientists and thinkers, particularly those with Marxist leanings, as the key for comprehending the depoliticisation of politics in recent years. One way the relationship has been addressed in the literature is by underlining the tension in liberal democracy between liberal institutions and rights and democracy or popular sovereignty. Colin Crouch (2004) maintains that there needs to be an equilibrium between a flourishing liberalism (that is upholding a plurality of opinions and interests, the freedom of expression and press, the right to association, and so on) and a healthy democracy (that is, a well-functioning electoral democracy, state party funding and media access). However, in the present state of post-democracy, where politics is but a “tightly controlled spectacle”, Crouch observes, the balance is

being disproportionately shifted in favour of big corporate interests, which decreases the citizens' ability of democratic oversight and their influence over public affairs (*ibid.*, 4). For Crouch, therefore, the aim is to maintain a perfect balance between the two. Whereas Crouch views the relationship between liberalism and democracy as a compatible and reconcilable one, Mouffe (2000) emphasises the paradoxical character of the tension between the two, and, although she views the relationship as inherently unstable, she believes the institutional arrangement can be a constructive one in her agonistic model of democracy. In *Undoing the Demos* (2015), Wendy Brown goes to great lengths to demonstrate the extent to which neoliberalism economises and marketises various spheres of private and social life. However, she disregards the role of liberal democracy in supporting the process of neoliberalisation. All three accounts either treat the spheres of politics and economics as separate domains, where the challenge is to find the right balance between the two, or view liberal democracy as a victim of neoliberalisation and as ideologically and structurally independent from the economic processes.

Another way the relationship between liberal democracy and market economy can be addressed is through the Marxist debate about the relative autonomy of the state in capitalism. The added theoretical value of approaching the relationship from a Marxist perspective is that it provides a dialectical explanation from a historically informed account. Moreover, it shifts the debate away from more pluralist accounts of liberal democracy to one that poses the following analytical questions: can we critically analyse neoliberalism without also addressing the capitalist modes of production, which underpin it? What is the role of liberal democracy in preserving neoliberalism as the dominant hegemony in contemporary Western societies? There are different interpretations of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' stance on democracy and its role in abolishing capitalism, and it is not my intention to get into these debates in this thesis. To put it very schematically for illustrative reasons, the most influential assertion by Marx and Engels that "the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" has gained considerable traction in Marxist literature (Marx and Engels 2012, 76). The debate between Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas in the 1970s on the relative autonomy of the state in capitalism, presented competing interpretations of this influential assertion by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*. The main purpose of the debate was to move away from the economism in the classical Marxist interpretation, which took the political realm as a mere reflection of the economic realm. Despite this shared endeavour, Miliband was accused of providing an instrumentalist theory of the state and a voluntaristic theory of the class struggle (Clarke 1991, 17–8), while Poulantzas's theory was viewed as too deterministic and abstract (Wood 1995, 56). Whereas Miliband viewed liberal democracy as a relatively autonomous state

system that existed in the wider social context of capitalism, Poulantzas believed that, despite the state's relative autonomy from the capitalist class, the state functioned to ensure the optimal operation of capitalism.

Another interpretation of Marx and Engels' influential assertion is that the liberal notions of citizenship and individual freedom represented nothing more than a "lion's skin" concealing the subjection of workers in capitalist modes of production (Niemi 2011). However, this does not mean that Marx and Engels were opposed to the idea of democracy. As Ellen Meiksins Wood (1995) points out, one also needs to acknowledge that liberal democracy is not just a sham to be left to the ruling classes, but a result of a long class struggle, which in the process of democratisation managed to win over significant benefits and new institutional ways of organising. Despite these efforts towards re-evaluating the relationship between politics and economy, the underlying thesis, that the internal contradictions of capitalism will lead to its self-destruction, is still dominant in the contemporary Marxist literature. This teleological understanding of capital as a transhistorical force, and the centrality of the working class in conceiving radical politics, I will argue, are not helpful for taking forward the project of building resistance to neoliberalism, when contemporary circumstances are considered. The last few decades and the latest financial crisis have clearly demonstrated the persistent survival of capitalism and thus invalidated the teleological trajectory predicted in the Marxist literature for the end of capitalism.

Governmentality and institutions: Foucault and Polanyi

While sharing the same political concern with Marxists on the need for a radical challenge to capitalism, I believe that this radical project would benefit from taking a different, more post-Marxist approach. Such an approach would divorce the notion of resistance from the category of class, making it possible to submit it to a philosophical re-evaluation with respect to the existing political institutions, while at the same time providing a critical political economy understanding of the relation between liberal democracy and neoliberalism. Doing so would better explain the role of institutions and political ideas in the transformation of the state under neoliberalism. To this end, in Chapter 2, I will propose an economic institutional approach in order to explain the structural and historical conditions of the tendency of depoliticisation in contemporary politics. This approach will draw upon Michel Foucault's genealogy of liberalism and Karl Polanyi's critical analysis of the dynamics between liberalism and democratic advances.

In taking up Michel Foucault's genealogy of liberalism, which features in the lectures Foucault gave at the College de France between 1978 and 1979 (Foucault 2008), the notion of

governmentality will be of key theoretical value. Foucault's neologism hybridises government and political rationality within a single word and in this way captures "the uniquely modern combination of governance by institutions, knowledges, [and] disciplinary practices" (Brown 2008, 73). Moreover, by combining his earlier work on the microphysics of power with the macro-political question of the state and political economy, Foucault shows "how power relations historically could concentrate in the form of the state – without ever being reducible to it" (Lemke 2002, 41). In contrast with the Marxist critique of political economy, which reproduces the classical economic separation between politics and economics, Foucault's genealogy of (neo)liberal governmentality brings the two domains together as it focuses on the market as a new regime of truth in liberal government. In this way, Foucault also explains why the depoliticisation of the state takes place and how, through its optimisation under (neo)liberalism, the state extends its control over the population through biopolitics. Together with Karl Polanyi's theses about the great transformation and the disembedding of market activity from its wider social context (Polanyi 2001), the institutional framework that connects politics and the economy is exposed as contingent and a product of the nexus between a political rationality and technologies of power. Furthermore, by underlining the crisis-ridden nature of (neo)liberal governmentality, the Foucauldian-Polanyian political economy approach incorporates a prognosis of extra-institutional challenges to the process of market liberalisation, opening the door for a radical left politics to reconfigure the role of the state and the principles of governmental rationality.

Although my Foucauldian-Polanyian critical political economy approach does not reject the Marxist analysis of capitalism outright, it will put more emphasis on the role of the institutional frameworks and ideas in structuring and enabling the running of the market economy, rather than ascribing the persistence of capitalism to the singular logic of capital. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the multiplicity of different ways in which the market economy is organised institutionally. This in turn, opens up the possibility of an alternative reconstruction of the dominant governmentality through institutional change. Instead of restricting the possibility of radical change to the Marxist solution of overthrowing capitalism, which has proved an impossible task, or foreclosing it altogether by taking Brown's pessimistic view of the totality of neoliberalisation in contemporary society, my approach emphasises that we are dealing with a political phenomenon, meaning that it can be tackled, resisted and reversed through political means (Toplišek 2016, 14).

Resistance

The critical times we are living in represent an opportunity for a renewed effort to properly account for extra-institutional resistance to established politics. Resistance remains an under-theorised phenomenon in conventional political science, where it is viewed as an incidental aberration, rather than as the structural part of politics. I will be particularly concerned with the question of how resistance emerges in the context of further marketisation of society under the dominant neoliberal governmentality. What are the conditions of emergence for resistance? Are these psychological, socio-economical or an interplay of both? And also, under what circumstances will resistant subjectivities, once they emerge, unite into political movements for radical change? I will propose to think about these questions by using the concept of crisis as a starting point for my analysis into the emergence of resistance. Crisis will, therefore, be used as an analytical framework. At the conceptual level, it will drive the reflection about the necessary conditions or elements, which when aligned, can create a favourable context for resistance. At the contextual level, it will be probed both as an enabler of political agency, a driver of repoliticisation, as well as a structural constraint on the emergence of resistant subjectivities. I hope to accomplish this task by suggesting that an alignment of critique, the temporality of crisis and the trauma resulting from socio-political violence in a crisis, present the right set of circumstances for the emergence of resistance. In this way, the analysis will combine an inquiry into the subjective elements of resistance with an inquiry into the objective structural conditions. The latter will not be viewed as unchangeable and fixed, but as contingent and amenable to discursive/material re-articulation. To this end, I will primarily draw upon the work of Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler to distinguish between different qualities of critique; the temporality of crisis will be thought through Derrida's discursive formation of an event and Foucault's archaeological method, which integrates both the linguistic and material qualities of the analysis;¹ and psychoanalysis to account for the trauma of socio-political violence on the emergence of resistant subjectivities.

The political fate of the post-2008 protest movements has demonstrated, however, that the momentum of protesting and congregating in public squares is only temporary. The exhausted bodies and minds of resisting subjects all too often retreat back to the normality of the everyday life. In order to overcome the ephemerality of resistance in radical politics, I will argue that it is not enough to be mired in the moments of suspension that crises create. The urgency of crisis demands a quick response from the political forces present. This leads me to the second part of

¹ For an argument on how Foucault's methods of genealogy and archaeology do not privilege the linguistic over the material, but integrate both of these elements in an intimate relationship, see Susan Hekman (2010).

the theoretical problem in this thesis, which presents the following research questions: if neoliberalism can be challenged through political means, what form does this radical politics need to take? Can neoliberalism be transformed from outside the established political institutions, for instance, through social movements and prefigurative autonomous politics? Or does radical politics need to take an institutional form as well? These theoretical questions, which have important implications for radical left politics, follow from the existing debates in political theory, where one group of scholars advocates for the construction of a counter-hegemonic struggle to neoliberalism through vertical forms of radical politics, that is, by engaging with the existing structures of power and infiltrating them through institutional means (for instance, Laclau 2005; Mouffe 2005; 2013; Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis 2014); whereas the other believes in the autonomous and horizontal forms of radical politics through social movements and prefigurative politics (for instance, Hardt and Negri 2004; Day 2005; Côté *et al.* 2007; Graeber 2013; Boggs 2014; Sitrin and Azzellini 2014). The autonomist and horizontalist scholars argue that the problem is not only neoliberalism, but the notion of representation in institutional politics itself, which, in their view, can only be truly overcome through enacting a radical politics that prefigures alternative forms of social relations, organisation and decision-making. To bridge this divide in the literature, I will argue that a reconceptualisation of radical politics is needed in protest movements and scholarly literature, a reconceptualisation, which would not view resistance as an extra-institutional and apolitical phenomenon separate from the world of institutional politics. Instead, due to its embeddedness in the matrix of power, it is a structural part of politics itself. This requires a theoretical recognition of power not only as a repressive and coercive force, but also as constitutive and enabling of alternative forms of political conduct and organisation (Foucault 1982, 2009; Arendt 1958; Brown 2008).

To create long-term historical change, I further argue that collective resistance in the form of protest movements must enter the phase of institutionalisation and engage with the existing institutions of political power. This analytical observation has important political implication for the political strategy of the radical left and challenges the view of the autonomists that social movements should be independent from political parties or any type of hierarchical structures of power. By recognising the shared ontology of power in these seemingly antithetical forces, the move to institutionalisation by social movements should no longer be viewed as problematic when extra-institutional radical politics is also recognised as embedded within the wider matrix of power relations and structures. Bridging the divide between non-institutional resistance and institutional politics dismantles the enigma of radical left politics, which has paralysed the protest movements,

such as the alter-globalisation and Occupy movements, from engaging with established power and bringing the struggle to the institutional arena of liberal democracy.

The key theoretical contribution of this thesis is, therefore, to create a more robust concept of resistance that may respond to the diagnosed contemporary crisis of liberal democracy. Just as I seek to bring “the political” and “the economic” together in my analysis, I seek to synthesise our understanding of resistance and institutional politics. Before examining different forms of resistance in radical politics, however, an explanation of the historical and systemic trends that have contributed to the crisis of liberal democracy is in order as well. To achieve these complementary tasks, I will draw upon a variety of approaches and theories and intervene in an interdisciplinary manner into different scholarly fields, from the sociology of social movements, democratic theory, and political science to critical theory, political economy, psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. My aim is to explore the political implications of the different theoretical approaches and how they can help us explain “the real world” of politics. Political theory will act as the methodological glue in this analytical practice. Exploiting both its explanatory as well as normative functions, I will use it to theorise, critique, and diagnose the practices and political rationalities that direct the organisation of political action in contemporary liberal democracy, while bringing to light the interstices between theoretical and empirical problems of resistance in radical left politics. The intention behind the theoretical endeavours in this thesis are thus deeply political since all political theory carries political and ideological effects (Ashcraft 1989; Dryzek *et al.* 2006).

Structure

The thesis is structured into five chapters. The structure follows a logical analytical route from examining the reasons for the crisis of liberal democracy, situating the crisis within the wider historical context of liberal governmentality, to using the notion of crisis as a possibility of resistance to neoliberalism. The first thematic part of the thesis links depoliticisation of politics to the dominant conceptions of democracy and analyses the relation between politics and liberal democracy through a critique of liberalism as the dominant ideology of Western societies (Chapters 1 and 2). In the second part of the thesis, the notion of crisis is explored conceptually as a potential productive site for the emergence of resistant subjectivities and disruption of the dominant neoliberal order (Chapter 3). The third and the final part of the thesis uses resistance

as the starting point for rethinking politics through the concept of power. The protest movements and the new radical left parties that emerged in response to the neoliberal management of the financial crisis of 2007–2008 are used as examples to build upon the theoretical observations from previous parts of my thesis and to analyse the challenges ahead for radical politics (Chapters 4 and 5).

In Chapter 1, I argue that latest episode in the crisis of liberal democracy comes as a result of the continuing neoliberalisation of societies. Similar to the previous crises of democracy in the 1970s and 1930s, economic downturn challenges the legitimacy of the dominant political-economic model of society and provokes a resurgence of mass movements and populist politics. After analysing different responses to the crisis of governability in academic scholarship in the 1970s, I follow sociological and neo-Marxist scholars in framing the crisis as a manifestation of the irresolvable tension between liberal tendencies of capitalist accumulation and the democratic aspirations of popular sovereignty. Moreover, I contend that only by repoliticising the class antagonism in advanced capitalist societies can progressive movements and the new radical left parties in Europe construct an alternative to neoliberalism. My analysis in this chapter centres on the political side of the problem by first analysing the dominant models of democracy that are responsible for the depoliticisation of politics and connecting them with the pluralist and elitist assumptions found in democratic theory. While my critical examination of Chantal Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy finds that it can serve as a framework for understanding the dynamics of contemporary politics, I also argue that it lacks an analysis of the relationship between liberalism and capitalist processes that is said to provoke crises of governability in liberal democracies. I frame this as the institutional dilemma of liberal democracy. While the social movements and discursive populism studies can help us in understanding the repoliticisation of democratic politics in the post-financial crisis world, an economic institutional history of the liberal state in capitalism is needed in order to properly account for the challenges lying ahead for the project of radicalising democracy.

Chapter 2 provides a historical analysis of how liberalism transformed the role of state institutions in accommodating ongoing market expansion. By drawing upon Michel Foucault's genealogy of the liberal governmentality and Karl Polanyi's study of the dynamics between liberalism and the counter-movement, I attempt to construct a critical political economy approach that will help in understanding the relationship between the liberal state and free market capitalism, which in turn will inform us how this relationship transforms under neoliberalism. With this examination, I aim to place the institutional dilemma of the state within the wider historical-ideological context and explore the principles guiding the liberal governmental rationality. The

chapter begins by situating my theoretical approach within the institutional economics tradition and explaining the ways in which it complements and updates Marxist approaches to political economy. It then moves on to analysing Foucault's genealogy of the liberal government, where particular attention is given to the self-limitation principle, the emergence of political economy and biopolitics. These dimensions of liberal governmentality demonstrate how the depoliticisation of governing increasingly leaves the liberal state in a double-bind: as the government self-limits its interventions into the market economy, it increasingly relies on the self-government of civil society and the market, while extending its control in more covert ways through biopolitics. Thus, both depoliticisation of governing and politicisation of society are taking place in this process. In the next section, the liberal idea of a self-regulating market is exposed as a myth by Karl Polanyi's critique of liberalism and examination of the destructiveness that its implementation has for society and the environment. The social cost of the institutional conditioning of a laissez-faire economy – which requires a competitive labour market, the automatic gold standard and free trade to all work together – leaves the liberal governments in a state of paralysis, unable to counter-balance the negative effects of unequal development and impoverishment of the masses. The contradiction of this situation and the crisis of governmentality that ensues brings me to examining the neoliberal shift that was necessary in order to enable further marketisation of society. The last part of the chapter assesses three transformative shifts with regards to the role of the state in a neoliberal society and outlines the contemporary relevance of neoliberalisation.

In Chapter 3, I explore the possibility and conditions for resistance to neoliberal governmentality by conceptually unpacking the notion of crisis. I first analyse different conceptions of crisis that can be found in business and management studies, international relations and Marxism. Due to a lack of theoretical sophistication of the concept in the first two and economic determinism in the third, I propose to proceed with the conceptual analysis of the crisis by examining whether the alignment of critique, the temporality of crisis and the trauma of socio-political violence can provide sufficient ground for the emergence of resistance. The shared ontology of crisis and critique is examined in the first instance through readings of Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler and Michel Foucault to uncover the transgressive and reflective qualities of critique in moments of crisis. The alignment of crisis and critique marks two different phases: first comes the reflective moment, the moment of suspension in making judgements, and then the determinative moment, the moment of decision. Through a critique of Jacques Derrida's critique of Schmittian decisionism, I argue that a decision, or a new critical judgement, cannot really take place without the suspension of old judgements, an opening of the undetermined possible, which conditions the possibility of decision in the first place. However, using the example of the Occupy

movement, I point out that the moment for reflective critique should be limited in the face of the need for political determination. The second section of the chapter establishes the discursive formation of a crisis as an event. Like an event, a crisis surprises us and disturbs the dominant order of intelligibility. In this sense, it achieves a similar effect to the suspension of old ways of thinking in critique. Yet, as I will demonstrate through Derrida, the very gesture of announcing a crisis – an example of determining the eventuality of the 2007–2008 financial crisis will be given – marks the systemic readiness to master it and tame it, so the dominant order can go back to normality. In the third section of the chapter, I explore the possibility of a critical and resisting subjectivity arising from traumatic experience in the socio-political violence of the crisis. By politicising the notion of trauma, I hope to demonstrate how its internal effects at the subjective level relate to the socio-political trauma of the crisis. Depending on the severity of the trauma for an individual's sense of self and reality, I argue that a crisis can be either disabling or enabling for fostering resistance.

Chapter 4 responds to the prevailing reluctance in social movements and parts of the radical left to engage with the existing structures of power and to address the question of government. Moving away from a romanticised view of resistance in radical politics, I argue that resistant practices cannot operate outside of the network of power relations, but form a structural part of it. By critically analysing Michel Foucault's and Hannah Arendt's conceptions of politics and power, I problematise the conventional understanding of power as something that is necessarily repressive, reserved for powerful subjects and exercised over the less powerful ones. The analysis of Hannah Arendt's understanding of politics reveals the empowering and constitutive aspects of power through her emphasis on active participation and deliberation of all citizens in public spaces. Yet this very insistence by Arendt on power as a positive and non-coercive element of politics neglects its structural relation to the notions of rule and governing, which Foucault manages to address through his concept of counter-conduct. In light of the occupation and protest movements erupting in response to the neoliberal managing of the financial crisis, I argue that radical politics should not shy away from their (counter-)conducting power that is a structural part of resistance. This observation has important political and strategic implications for radical politics as it demonstrates the need to overcome the ephemerality of power in protest movements through institutionalisation. I evaluate this thesis through Antonio Gramsci's analysis of political passions and Jacques Rancière's argument that the circularity of rule in radical politics can be displaced. Through Walter Benjamin's and Jacques Derrida's exposition of the violence of law, the next section argues that the aporetic structure of rule (or power) cannot be avoided in radical politics. At the same time, the danger of over-stratification of political power is

illustrated with the example of Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico, ending with the consideration that a similar fate can hit the new radical left parties in Slovenia, Spain and Greece.

On the basis of the theoretical observations and findings from previous chapters, Chapter 5 assesses the challenges that the protest movements and the new radical left parties are facing in resisting neoliberal governmentality. My argument in this chapter insists on the need for radical Left politics to engage with structures of power, following my examination of the shared ontology of institutional and non-institutional politics through the notion of power in the previous chapter. It argues that the post-2008 wave of protest movements and the emergence of new radical left parties act as a repoliticisation of the depoliticised democratic structures, while constructing an alternative to neoliberal governmentality. The analysis starts by using the literature on social movements in order to identify the continuities and discontinuities of the anti-austerity movements with the Global Justice Movement. This inquiry will show how some activists take account of the limitations of working outside institutional politics and multiply the effectiveness of their struggle by entering electoral politics through the establishment of party-movements. In order to understand the challenges for maintaining the hybrid relationship between the horizontality of social movements and the verticality of electoral politics, I argue for greater analytical synergy between the social movement and political party literature, with contemporary populism studies serving as a bridge between the two. I then use the case study of the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests and the emergence of the United Left party to illustrate in more depth how these theoretical observations matured through the practice of the activists on the ground. In the last part of the chapter, I identify two inter-connected challenges that the new radical left parties are facing in their resistance to neoliberal governmentality, which goes back to the institutional dilemma in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1: Challenging Liberal Rationality and Depoliticisation: Rethinking Democratic Politics

Introduction

The governmental response to the financial crisis of 2007–2008 provoked a wave of new protest movements in Southern Europe, North America and other parts of the world. In the social movements studies literature, the eruption of these new movements is viewed as an intensified popular response to austerity measures and structural reforms in the wider context of neoliberal politics (della Porta 2015a; della Porta 2015b). As I will show through my analysis in subsequent chapters, these movements are not a mere spontaneous reaction to the neoliberal programme of the political-economic elites, coming from both the centre-right and the centre-left, but in fact demonstrate a significant organised effort in building an alternative way to the neoliberal politics of establishment political parties. To restate, the main argument in the thesis is that a conceptual rethinking of resistance is needed for a radical politics that recognises the importance of institutional struggle for effectively challenging neoliberalism. But before we can undertake this endeavour, I first need to establish what propels the depoliticisation of democratic politics. I will suggest that neoliberalism is a key driver in the depoliticisation of institutional politics, with liberal rationality serving as the axiom of the state's role with regards to the economy and wider society. The analysis of the relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism and how neoliberalism depoliticises the state through the redefinition of its parameters will be undertaken more systematically in Chapter 2. The present chapter will take the analysis of the dominant models and responses in democratic theory as the starting point for understanding the crisis of liberal democracy. I will suggest that the increasingly antagonistic tension between the development of (neo)liberalism and democracy in recent years can explain heightened repoliticisation to the depoliticisation of institutional politics.

There has been much discussion about the general disenchantment with formal politics and anti-political sentiment in contemporary neoliberal societies (Stoker 2006; Hay 2007, 2009; Flinders 2012). In the depoliticisation literature, depoliticisation is primarily understood as governing strategy, which places “at one remove the political character of decision-making” (Burnham 2001, 128). The depoliticisation of politics has also been a subject of reflection in

sociology (Himmelstrand 1962; Wolfe 1977) and, although using a different terminology and mode of inquiry, it features in political philosophy as well (*post-democracy*, Rancière 1999; *post-politics*, Žižek 1999, Mouffe 2000), before it developed into its own field of depoliticisation studies in political science (Burnham 2001; Flinders and Buller 2006; Hay 2007; Wood and Flinders 2014). The depoliticisation scholars mostly focus on instances of technocratisation, managerialism in institutional politics, rational decision-making, running of the state in the form of a business, and the shift of governing from hierarchical and centralised statist structures to a more network-based model, involving public/private and national/transnational actors. The definition of depoliticisation proposed by Peter Burnham (2001) and the linear concentric model put together by Colin Hay (2007) are widely accepted in the depoliticisation studies as the main conceptual framework for analytical inquiry. While this analytical approach has generated many fruitful illuminations through specific case studies (Wood and Flinders 2014; Kuzemko 2014; Wood 2015a, 2015b; Flinders and Wood 2015b) and sustained efforts in developing the original models further (Flinders and Buller 2006; Flinders 2008; Flinders and Wood 2015a; Wood 2015c), there has not been much attempt to critically assess the very premises on which these models are based. What understanding of politics do they rely on and how do its advocates respond to its crisis in the context of growing anti-political sentiment in society? Under what historical and structural conditions does depoliticisation emerge as the principal tendency of the contemporary art of government? In this chapter, and the chapters to follow, I will not understand depoliticisation only as a technique used by governments in contemporary societies, the purpose of which it is to displace decision-making powers to non-representative and non-elected bodies of administration. While the critique of the rationale behind the use of this techniques is correct, *i.e.* that policy decisions should not be based on political beliefs about the world but instead upon rational evidence (Clarence 2002, 4), it does not explain why depoliticisation emerges in the first place, why it is undesirable, and how it can be challenged. Alternatively, I will endeavour to contextualise depoliticisation within the wider historical and institutional transformations of governing, while understanding depoliticisation as the underlying tendency of (neo)liberal governmental rationality, which is most exposed in moments of crisis.

In a special issue to the *Democratic Theory* journal, Wolfgang Merkel (2014) notes that the crisis of governing in democracy has been a topic of debate in different circles and in different historical periods. In public discourse and opinion, there is the crisis of trust in political structures and elites (political parties, parliaments, governments, politicians), which aggregates into a wider crisis of democracy (Stoker 2006; Hay 2007; della Porta 2015a). In intellectual circles, the debate about democracy and its durability spans from “the ancient writings of Plato, Aristotle, and

Polybios”, continues “in the early modern age with Thomas Hobbes, and reaches the beginning of the modern era with writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, and Max Weber” (Merkel 2014, 11–2). In the more contemporary period, the debate about the crisis of democracy gains traction again in the 1970s, both on the left (Offe 1972; early Habermas 1976; Macpherson 1977) and on the right with the publication of the Trilateral Commission report (Crozier *et al.* 1975), and carries on into the 21st century with the debate on post-democracy and post-politics (Rancière 1999; Žižek 1999; Mouffe 2000, 2015; Crouch 2004). The crisis of liberal democracy is, therefore, not new – it has been growing during the last few decades, gradually building up across the globe during the 1960s as a result of liberation, civil rights, anti-military, anti-nuclear, environmental and anti-capitalist movements, challenging the minimalist postulates of both the democratic elite theory and aggregative democracy (Schumpeter 2010; Posner 2005; Przeworski 2000; Riker 1982), as well as the well-meaning pretensions of the pluralist model of democracy (Dahl 2005; Rawls 2005; Lipset 1994). If the democratic elite theorists and pluralists were united in praising the US political system as an ideal model of democracy, the civil rights and social movements, starting in the 1950s and 1960s, challenged the instrumental rationality behind the electoral method and leadership competition of elites as the epitome of modern democracy, as well as refuting the pluralist claim that power was distributed equally through the political system.

In this chapter, I will first go back to the crisis of liberal democracy in the 1970s, which challenges the dominant pluralist and elitist conceptions of politics and provokes different responses among scholars. In the light of the publication of the Trilateral Commission report, conservative scholars explain the crisis as the overload of democratic demands on the political system, triggering a crisis of governability. Sociological and neo-Marxist thinkers extend the scope of analysis to the crisis-ridden economic system and point towards the contradiction between the economic and the political system. Through a critical discussion of the theses put forward Jürgen Habermas, Alan Wolfe and Chantal Mouffe on the crisis of liberal democracy, I then identify two key tendencies that emanate from the irresolvable contradiction of the liberal democratic institutional arrangement. On the one hand, by foreclosing the space for the democratic contestation of political alternatives, liberal democratic politics is increasingly depoliticising under neoliberal capitalism, which results in the alienation of citizens from participating in the formal democratic mechanisms. On the other, depoliticisation contributes to the sense that the liberal democratic system is not responding to political demands and grievances, which instigates the repoliticisation of politics through the emergence of protests, social movements and new political parties. If depoliticisation is the underlying tendency of (neo)liberal governmentality, which is exposed in periods of recurrent crises, then this depoliticisation must correspond to particular

models of democracy and conceptions of politics, which are dominant at a given historical period. In the third part of the chapter, I proceed by analysing the liberal rationalism of the pluralist-elitist conception of democracy through Chantal Mouffe's critique of the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy. Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy is then critically assessed as an alternative conception needed for the project of radicalising democracy. I will argue that the anti-austerity protests and the new populist left parties in recent years serve as an illustrative example of significant attempts at reenergising democracy and challenging neoliberalism.

Liberal democracy's governability crisis

Global economic troubles and internal social tensions in the United States and across the world in the 1960s and 1970s provided the grounds for challenging the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a fair and representative political system. Stagnating economic growth, high inflation and unemployment across the West, and the political inability to respond to these economic problems opened up the liberal democratic system to criticism from various angles of civil society. The civil rights movement and the opposition to the Vietnam War exposed the illusion of US democracy as a pluralist and fair political system, demonstrating its lack of representation and responsiveness. These factors in turn shaped the academic debates in the democratic theory literature. Whereas during the post-war economic boom years there was strong support for pluralist-elitist principles of democracy among liberal-democratic theorists, this changed by mid-1970s when there was a growing perception that liberal democracy was in crisis. The social unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s called for revisions of pluralist and liberal thought.²

The pluralist theorists pictured the US and Western democracy as an efficient system that reinforces moderation and agreement amongst different segments of society and in this way preserves social peace (Dahl 1956; Lipset 1960; Polsby 1960). Sociologically oriented political scientists challenged the pluralist assumption of evenly dispersed power among a plurality of organised groups and underlined the less obvious, non-observable, ways of power exercise which precludes certain underprivileged groups and individuals from voicing their grievances

² Apart from the emergence of neo-pluralism and neo-elitism, rational choice theory, initially as a challenge against welfare state economics, but later entering political science through its attack on the role of the state and politics in shaping society, was particularly strong across the 1980s and 1990s and could be viewed as a response by "revisionist liberals" (Macpherson 1973, 77) to the crisis of socially oriented liberal democracy in the 1970s (see Hay 2007, 95–122; Hindmoor 2010). I will come back to the project of revisionist liberalism in Chapter 2.

(Schattschneider 1960; Bachrach and Baratz 1962). This led pluralists like Charles E. Lindblom (1977, 1982) and Robert A. Dahl to revise some of their key assumptions about the state of Western democracies in the 1970s. Despite pluralism's key focus on associations and interest groups, Lindblom observed that democratic theory has not accounted enough for "the privileged position of business" which thwarted the political impact of ordinary citizens (Lindblom 1977, 5). Dahl observed a similar distortion caused by the centralisation of privately or publically owned economy, but ruled out that private campaign contributions were distorting access to political representation or that the US political system was dominated by a ruling class (Dahl 1982, 171–3). While revisionist pluralists did respond to some of the criticisms from radical sociology of elite theory (Mills 1956; Domhoff 1978; Bachrach 1967, 1975), especially with regards to corporate power and the importance of socio-economic (in)equality in determining political participation, they remained ambiguous about the need to make democracy more participatory (Lawrence 1981). Moreover, as John S. Dryzek and Patrick Dunleavy point out, both the revisionist pluralists and radical sociologists in democracy theory remained methodologically focussed on showing how power was distributed in the United States, while lacking an explanatory theory of why it had to be distributed that way (Dryzek and Dunleavy 2009, 77).

A more conservative response to the social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s comes from democratic elitists. In a report *The Crisis of Democracy*³ by the so-called Trilateral Commission, Michel Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki investigated the state of democracy in the US, Western Europe and Japan. Taking into account the world-wide context of economic and political instability, the authors came to a conclusion that the crisis of democracy mostly stemmed from "an excess of democracy" and thus necessitated a restoration of authority of governmental structures (Crozier *et al.* 1975, 113). We must remember that these were the times of radical and often militant movements, such as the Black Panthers, campus wars and anti-Vietnam War protests, and the anti-nuclear movement, all happening in the context of the ideological Cold War rivalry. The authors of the Trilateral Commission report were openly hostile to progressive resistance and activism of "value-oriented" intellectuals, students and the media, seeing it as a threat to democratic government similar to the one posed "by the aristocratic cliques, fascist movements, and communist parties" (Crozier *et al.* 1975, 6–7). The fundamental problem that the authors underline in the report is what they described as the declining governability of democracy: "[t]he demands on democratic government grow, while the capacity of democratic government stagnates" (*ibid.*, 9). Instead of supporting and calling for more

³ The report has been mentioned numerous times in the preceding years and sometimes used as a starting point for further analysis (Lawrence 1981; Cunningham 2002; Hay 2007; Mastropaolo 2012; Pilon 2013).

democracy, the authors of the report argued for “a more equitable relationship between governmental authority and popular control”, since “[a]n excess in democracy means a deficit in governability” (*ibid.*, 173–4). This thesis, which has been popularised as “the overload thesis” (King 1975; Sartori 1975; Simeon 1976; Parsons 1982), was picked up by other conservative groups and New Right think tanks, paving the way for a fundamental revisionism of liberalism, or what is more commonly known as the neoliberal turn. The crisis of governability debate that ensued concentrated on popular excess and governments’ inability to meet unrealistic expectations, rather than on elite failure and unpopular decisions (Simeon 1976, 545). As Parsons (1982, 431) explains, the overload thesis situated the crisis on both the supply and demand side: on the supply side the politicians needed to act more responsibly so as not to promise too much, whereas on the demand side, the citizens needed to show more self-restraint in their expectations. Compared to revisionist pluralists, democratic elitists see the main problem with the political system in that it is too democratic, which undermines government’s authority (Lawrence 1981, 184).

In the following section, I will analyse responses to the same identified crises, but from authors coming from a neo-Marxist perspective. Compared to scholars in the pluralist and democratic elitist tradition of democratic theory, they argue that the crisis runs deeper and stems from a fundamental contradiction between depoliticising market liberalism and repoliticising drives for further democratisation.

The tension between liberalism and democracy: depoliticisation and politicisation

There are other authors who also identified a crisis of democracy in the 1970s, but who offered a more systemic critique of liberal democracy on the basis of contradictions between capitalism and democracy. First, I will look at early Jürgen Habermas’s *Legitimation Crisis* (1976) and Alan Wolfe’s *The Limits of Legitimacy* (1977), both of which come from a neo-Marxist perspective and tie the crisis of democracy to the contradiction between market liberalism and democracy. Where their thesis differs from the overload theory is in that it is based on a non-elitist conception of democracy: whereas the authors of the Trilateral Commission were more concerned about the declining authority of elites in society, Habermas and Wolfe formulate the issue of governability in terms of the conflicted position of the state between democratising demands on one side and

capital accumulation on the other. I will analyse their contributions to the discussion in turn and then extract two contradictory theses as the focal point for the remaining analysis in the chapter, where Chantal Mouffe's critique of liberal democracy will bring the discussion to the contemporary period.

Another way of identifying the crisis of liberal representative democracy is through what Jürgen Habermas (1976) calls "a legitimation crisis". A legitimation crisis occurs when a political system is not supported by sufficient "input of mass loyalty" (1976, 46). Habermas situates legitimation crises within the wider framework of advanced capitalism, while emphasizing its contradictions that lead to the crisis of the political-economic system. Habermas argues that under advanced capitalism the state is seen as the collective capitalist, which purports the state is not merely a "blind organ of the [capital] realization process", as in classical liberalism, but actively engaged in the economic system by making "the accumulation of capital the substance of political planning" (*ibid.*). According to this thesis, when the capital realisation process encounters problems, which translates into an economic crisis, the crisis logic in advanced capitalism is not contained within the economic sphere, but is itself displaced to the administrative system. When the administrative system cannot maintain or establish effective normative structures that would reconcile and fulfil the imperatives received from the economic system, the rationality crisis in the economic system provokes a withdrawal of legitimation from democratic state institutions (*ibid.*, 46–7). Habermas explains this failure as a paralysis of the state in advanced capitalism, which I will come back to in Chapter 2: on the one hand, the state needs to secure capital realisation and take over the tasks complementary to the market, acting in effect as a collective capitalist, and on the other, the presumed autonomy of the market forces demands a self-limitation of the state and prohibits it from "planned coordination of the contradictory interests of individual capitalists" (*ibid.*, 47).

A similar thesis is supported by US political scientist Alan Wolfe. He describes the capitalist state as caught up between the imperatives of democratic legitimation and capitalist accumulation (1977, 6–7). For Wolfe, the political expression of this duality of imperatives is symbolised by liberal democracy, which he argues is inherently contradictory: "for liberalism becomes the ideology of and justification for accumulation while democracy upholds the importance of legitimation, of some kind of popular participation and some equality of results" (*ibid.*, 7). Wolfe's neo-Marxist analysis avoids taking the simple pluralist view of liberal democracy as "the realization of the good life", nor does Wolfe settle for the opposite view that democracy is just "a 'sham' designed to keep the 'masses' happy" (*ibid.*, 9). Instead Wolfe contends:

To label a system liberal democratic, in other words, is to indicate that class struggle between the few and the many is taking place, not that it has been resolved. To make sense out of late capitalism, a political analysis must attempt to comprehend these struggles, not pretend that they have already been decided. (Wolfe 1977, 9)⁴

Wolfe's conception of liberal democracy underlines its inherently contradictory nature between liberalism, which depoliticises the class struggle and legitimises capital accumulation, and the repoliticising drive of democracy. Like Habermas, Wolfe argues that this situation leaves the liberal-capitalist state in a position of paralysis.

There are, however, some key differences between Habermas and Wolfe on understanding liberal democracy's governability crisis. While Habermas' systems theory approach leads him to ascribe the legitimation crisis of the political-economic system to the internal contradictions of the system under democratic capitalism, Wolfe's more dynamic historical analysis posits liberal democracy's limits of legitimacy in relation to the continuing tension between the liberal and democratic conceptions of the state. This divergence between the two authors' analytical observations can be explained by Habermas' concentration on the internal dynamic of the system and the ways in which the system internally moderates crisis tendencies (Habermas 1976, 92–3; Habermas 1986, 64). Wolfe, on the other hand, puts more focus on the need for the repoliticisation of democracy, which can only come from outside the political system. Moreover, Habermas believes that the tension, which Wolfe identifies between democratic legitimation and capitalist accumulation, is already decided. This is due to Habermas' evolving thinking, where in his later writings he maintains that in the "welfare-state mass democracies class conflict has been institutionalized and thereby pacified" (Habermas 1987, 391–2). For later Habermas, the institutionalisation of class conflict signifies the shift from "the old politics" of the labour movement and class conflict to a "new politics" of the new middle class, that is, struggles for equal rights, individual identity, participation and human rights (*ibid.*, 392; Edwards 2004, 119). The composition of the new movements, for Habermas, is thus "no longer rooted in class but across social classes and involved in a range of groups drawn from the margins of society" (Edwards 2009, 382). For Wolfe, the class struggle may be subsumed by different arrangements between the state and capitalism, but ultimately the tension would result in its renewed emergence as a result of state paralysis and the resulting legitimacy crisis. Habermas' widening

⁴ I will attend to this political analysis later on in the chapter where I will view class struggle as an expression social conflict and antagonism (in the Mouffeian sense), which arises as a result of the continuing marketisation of society. Moreover, following Chantal Mouffe, I will also argue that in order for antagonism in society to be properly accounted for, a democratisation of existing political institutions is needed.

of analytical focus from material to identity politics was characteristic of the wider shift in social movements studies in the 1970s (see Walder 2009), which I will problematise in the last section of the chapter.

For now, it is sufficient to state that, for Habermas, class conflict would only ever resurface from the grip of the “instrumental-rational procedure of the system” (Habermas 1987, 356), if the welfare state came under threat of being dismantled (Habermas 1987, 63). If this were to happen, Habermas maintained, there would be “a massive reaction from the traditional workers’ organizations” (*ibid.*). Back in the early 1970s, Habermas saw the dismantlement of the welfare state by the governing elites as highly improbable. Yet, by the end of the decade, Wolfe (1977, 343) already identified the first intensified attacks by the “dominant forces” on the welfare state that Habermas believed was beyond challenge. As Wolfe observed, the neoliberal attack on Keynesian economics was well underway in the 1970s, as the general public accepted the necessity of spending cuts in times of recession. The depoliticised bureaucracies of the liberal democratic states that performed the function of confronting “the irresolvable tensions that one time lay within the province of the entire society” were now being slowly dismantled and decentralised under neoliberalism (*ibid.*, 269–70). The governability crisis thus followed due to the inability of the bureaucracy to deal with the tensions between the drives for capital accumulation and democracy, producing what Wolfe calls a “double-bind situation”: the greater the tension between the two drives, the more paralysed the depoliticised bureaucracy, yet at the same time the greater the need for state intervention to keep it in check (*ibid.*, 270). This is ultimately what the Trilateral Commission identified as a crisis of governability, yet failed to diagnose the underlying political-economic tendencies for its eruption. As a result of this double-bind situation, the administration of the state underwent a politicisation as it need to actively attend to the liberalising drives for continuing capital accumulation. But, at the same time, neoliberal politicisation was accompanied by a process of depoliticisation as the liberal governments failed to address the concerns of the communities who were most affected by these liberalising processes (*ibid.*, 344). The cumulative failure of the liberal governments to respond to these concerns ultimately results in their alienation from the established political process. The neoliberal depoliticisation of the democratic process leaves political groups seeking alternative routes “to express their repoliticization” outside the formal political arena (*ibid.*, 345).

Following my analysis of the two authors’ contributions to the discussion on the crisis of governability in liberal democracy, both Habermas and Wolfe identify advanced capitalism as the basis for the intensification of the tension between democratic legitimation and capitalist accumulation. While Habermas, especially in his later writings and with respect to his co-originality

thesis (Habermas 2001a), dedicates his attention to reconciling the liberal capitalist logic with democratic legitimacy through clarifying “the instrumental-rational procedure of the system” (Edwards 2004, 113), Wolfe emphasises the irresolvable character of this tension. The notable influence of systems theory approach in Habermas’ work puts considerable emphasis on studying the ability of the system to adapt and manage the internal contradictions between the administrative and economic sub-systems. Yet this focus on the instrumental rationality of the administrative system precludes Habermas from properly accounting for the dynamics between liberalism and democracy outside the system in the wider socio-political context. As Wolfe demonstrates, the increasing depoliticisation of the (neo)liberal state alienates voters from the established processes of political participation and most often, those same voters are the ones most affected by the liberalising processes of market expansion. This process in turn propels into movement repoliticisation from outside the political system. While Habermas’ thesis supposes that the tension between liberalism and democracy can be reconciled through its institutionalisation, Wolfe maintains that this institutionalisation is untenable as the contradictions between the two drives show in the 1970s.

After the financial crisis of 2007–2008 and in the light of the post-2008 protests, Wolfe’s thesis on liberal democracy’s governability crisis will prove better suited for understanding the general distrust of citizens in their political institutions and the emergence of movements, which are repoliticising the citizenry in an attempt to address the political system’s unresponsiveness to their needs. Following Wolfe’s call for repoliticisation, I will now turn to Chantal Mouffe’s critique of the depoliticising tendency of liberal rationality, which underlines the inability of liberalism to account for the inherently antagonistic character of politics. Chantal Mouffe (2005, 10) also identifies the problem of the current practices of democratic politics in the irreconcilable tension between liberalism and democracy. More specifically, she emphasises liberalism’s “negation of the ineradicable character of antagonism” as its main deficiency (*ibid.*). For Mouffe, antagonism is a key dimension in understanding politics and our social reality. It is most intimately tied with the recognition that division and power are ineradicable in the construction of social reality. While Mouffe recognises that there are many different variants of liberal thought, some more progressive and others more conservative, the dominant tendency is geared towards methodological individualism and rationalism. This means that liberalism envisages society as consisting of different perspectives and values, which, when put together, can form “an [*sic*] harmonious and non-conflictual ensemble” (Mouffe 2013c, 3). For this reason, liberalism is unable to properly account for the conflictual and the pluralistic character of our social reality (*ibid.*). Mouffe argues that antagonism and conflict in social relations are inevitable, and a politics that

tries to evade this fact by forcing a "universal consensus based on reason" is bound to fail in accounting for the troubles that concern collective identities. It is in this sense that Mouffe understands the antagonistic character of the political:

It deals with the formation of a 'we' as opposed to a 'they' and is always concerned with collective forms of identification; it has to do with conflict and antagonism and is therefore the realm of decision, not free discussion. (Mouffe 2005, 11)

A politics that aims to overcome the antagonism of this we/they opposition is what Mouffe calls post-politics. Mouffe (*ibid.*, 12–3) explains that ever since the 1930s, the evolution of liberalism has moved between two different fields of principle, either economics and ethics, which in turn informed the scholarship in democratic theory, resulting in two main paradigms of democratic politics: the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy. The aggregative model advocates for a minimalist conception of democracy, based on rational choice theory and democratic elitism (see Higley 2008; Green 2014). The deliberative model, on the other hand, emerges in critical response to the aggregative model, proposing a rationality based on a more ethical approach through discursive reasoning, rather than on narrow calculating of individual preferences (see Green 2006). Mouffe contends that both models fail to capture the antagonistic character of pluralism in society, as well as the centrality of collective identities and the role of affects in their constitution (Mouffe 2013c, 6). In response to these limitations, Mouffe proposes an agonistic model of democracy where conflict and antagonism are always present and the political struggle is framed within a real confrontation between opposing hegemonic projects (*ibid.*, 9). In the next section, I will explain how the two dominant paradigms of democracy can be used as analytical models to characterise the post-democratic state of contemporary liberal democracy.

In the rest of the chapter, I will first show how and why Habermas' position on the reconcilability of liberalism and democracy is narrow when considered through Mouffe's critique of liberal rationality and its failure to properly account for antagonism and conflict in society. Following Wolfe's analysis, I will argue that only via a radicalisation of democratic politics can capitalist accumulation under neoliberal governmentality be properly addressed and altered. This will be done by using Mouffe's critique of the incapacity of both aggregative and deliberative models of democracy in mounting this radical challenge, leading me to consider the case for agonistic democracy as a way of radicalising democratic politics and challenging neoliberalism. In doing so, I will also point out two problems with Mouffe's conception of agonistic democracy and outline the institutional dilemma that the project for radicalising democracy is facing. In the

last part of the chapter, I will dispute Habermas' thesis that social conflicts no longer emerge along ideological and class divides. In view of the post–2008 occupations and anti-austerity movements, I will demonstrate how these movements challenge Habermas' presupposition that class conflict is pacified through its institutionalisation and challenge the very structural and ideological underpinnings of the liberal capitalist system.

The critique of aggregative and deliberative models of democracy: what's the alternative?

In this section, I will critically interrogate the liberal rationalism of the two main models of democracy, aggregative and deliberative, and demonstrate their depoliticising tendency in liberal democracy. I will use Chantal Mouffe's analysis which draws upon Carl Schmitt's critique of liberal individualism and rationalism, and then proceed to interrogate Mouffe's proposal for an alternative analytical model – agonistic democracy. Before I turn to outlining the models, I would like to briefly explain the analytical rationale behind the models and how they can illustrate the reality of post-democratic order of politics. Here, we can turn to C. B. Macpherson (1977) who made a similar intellectual gesture in the 1970s when he was analysing the conjuncture of liberal democracy at the time. The purpose of using analytical models is in "a theoretical construction intended to exhibit and explain the real relations, underlying the appearances, between or within the phenomena under study" (*ibid.*, 3). In other words, they illustrate the trends and patterns in the underlying reality of relations and institutions and provide a regulatory frame, which pictures a more or less coherent narrative of the way things stand. In light of this, I will analyse aggregative and deliberative conceptions of democracy in order to identify and explain the factors that are contributing to the depoliticisation of politics. Interestingly enough, Macpherson also situates these debates within the reformulations of liberalism that were taking place in academic discussions in the 1970s. These reformulations moved the axiom of liberal democracy away from questions of justice and ethics and towards market principles (Macpherson 1973, 77). I will come back to the revisionism of liberalism in Chapter 2, where I will situate this tendency within the shift to neoliberal governmentality.

Mouffe (2005, 24) notes that until this day the axiomatic basis of liberal democratic thought has moved between the rational calculation of interests (aggregative model) and moral deliberation (deliberative model). First, I will turn to the *aggregative*, instrumentalist understanding

of democracy, which purports to establish "a compromise between differing competing forces in society" and which sees human subjects as rational, enlightened beings, striving for the maximisation of fixed self-interest. Rationalist thinkers and liberals see the arena of politics as "a neutral terrain in which different groups compete to occupy the positions of power", however, "[t]hey do not put into question the dominant hegemony and there is no attempt at profoundly transforming the relations of power" (*ibid.*, 21).

The instrumentality of the aggregative model attests to the perception of politics and the way it is supposed to run as predominantly based, again, on the rationality of the market and economic concepts (*ibid.*, 12–13). Joseph Schumpeter (2010, 241) was one of the main advocates of aggregative democracy where "the role of the people is to produce a government ... which will then in turn decide" on political issues pertaining to the whole of society. His key proposition was to redefine the classical theory of democracy by giving importance to competition for political leadership through the "democratic method" first and making "the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary" (Schumpeter 2010, 241–51). In her critique of the aggregative model, Mouffe (2013a, 192) explains what this redefinition of traditional democratic theory entailed:

The authors who adhered to this school considered that under modern conditions, notions like "common good" and "general will" had to be relinquished and that the pluralism of interests and values had to be acknowledged as coextensive with the very idea of "the people". Moreover, given that in their view, self-interest, was what motivated individuals to act – not the moral belief that they should do what was in the interest of the community – they declared that it was interests and preferences that should constitute the lines over which political parties should be organized and provide the matter over which bargaining and voting would take place. (*ibid.*)

The aim of the aggregative model is, therefore, to extract the normative content, related to questions of the common good, general will and justice, from the democratic theory and replace it with a descriptive and empirical account of democracy which focuses on the self-interested individual rather than on collectivities (see Macpherson 1977, 77–92; Christiano 1996, 133–46). This approach to understanding politics empties democracy of its radical idealism and replaces it with an understanding of democracy as a political marketplace, where voters act as consumers.

While Schumpeter's account of democracy as a competition for electoral votes between elites could be described as an elite theory conception of democracy for assigning "the main role

in the political process to self-chosen group of leaders” (Macpherson 1977, 77), Young (2001, 19) makes the case that the aggregative model could also be described as pluralist. The empirical method and instrumental rationality of the aggregative model are also shared by pluralist accounts of democracy, as well the presupposition of the equilibrium between different interest groups (see Macpherson 1973, 78; 1977, 77–8). Robert A. Dahl’s early pluralist conception of democracy is an example of aggregative democracy, where “equality in voting” and “effective participation” of voters are one of the key criteria for a functioning democracy (Dahl 2000, 38). Free, fair and frequent elections enable the voters to maintain control over the agenda and their elected officials, or so early Dahl’s argument went (*ibid.*, 95–6). In his critique of the aggregative model, Macpherson characterises it as “an empirical theory of democracy”, backed by the so-called “Schumpeter-Dahl axis” (Macpherson 1973, 78). The pluralist elitist model, Macpherson argues, is a realistic portrayal of the state of liberal democracy: “realistic, that is, for a society which is thought incapable of going beyond the oligopolistic economic market, the inequality of classes, and people’s vision of themselves as essentially consumers” (Macpherson 1977, 91).⁵ It needs to be stressed that this assertion is made within the Cold War context, a time when pluralist political scientists were defending the Western model of democracy as the only alternative to a “wholly non-liberal totalitarian state” (*ibid.*, 92). Macpherson, thus, stresses that this model will persist as the only viable option for as long as “Western societies continue to prefer affluence to community (and to believe that the market society can provide affluence indefinitely)” (*ibid.*).

The seemingly realistic and merely descriptive view of democracy as a simple aggregation of individual preferences and competition between organised interests, common to both elitist and pluralist conceptions of democratic politics, prompted a new wave of normative political theory which has sought to bring democratic theory back to questions of justice and ethics (Mouffe 2013a, 192). This new wave in liberal democratic thought is captured by the *deliberative* model of democratic politics, advocated by political theorists, such as Jürgen Habermas (1996), Seyla Benhabib (1996), John Rawls (1971) and John S. Dryzek (2000). In response to the instrumental rationality of the aggregative model of democracy and its theoretical impoverishment of the democratic process, deliberative democrats provide a view of democracy that is “anchored in conceptions of accountability and discussion” (Chambers 2003, 308). Preferences are not seen as fixed and mechanisms for the aggregation of those preferences are not fair by default – what deliberative democrats emphasise is the communicative process by which opinions and views are arrived at. The democratic procedures and mechanisms are only legitimate if “*justified* to all

⁵ Also see Lawrence (1981) for making the case that post-war democracy in the 1950s and 1960s contained both the pluralist and elitist elements.

those living under its laws" (*ibid.*). Under these postulates, deliberative democrats hope to encourage a debate that produces "reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion" (*ibid.*, 309).

For Mouffe, what is fundamentally at issue in the deliberative turn to normative underpinning of democratic theory, is "reformulating the democratic principle of popular sovereignty in such a way as to eliminate the danger that it could pose to liberal values" (*ibid.*). The aim is not to oppose pluralist and liberal ideas espoused by aggregative democrats, but to uphold them through reinterpreting the tension between liberalism and democracy. Mouffe exemplifies this by Rawls' ambition to reconcile two diverging traditions in democratic thought: (1) the Lockean tradition, which gives prominence to freedom of thought and conscience, right to property and privacy, and the rule of law; and (2) the Rousseauian tradition, which emphasises popular sovereignty and the value of equal political liberties. Deliberative democrats maintain that a rational consensus can be reached to reconcile this tension, provided that there are procedures of deliberation in place which secure "impartiality, equality, openness and lack of coercion" for all deliberating participants involved, "thereby producing legitimate outcomes" (Mouffe 2013a, 196). However, in their attempt to find a final rational resolution to the democratic paradox between liberalism and democracy, deliberative democrats merely replace one rationality, instrumentalism and the promotion of self-interest in the aggregative model, with another which is based on "communicative action and free public reason" (*ibid.*, 199). Mouffe argues that allegiance to democratic institutions, which deliberative democrats are attempting to re-establish through rational justification, can only be secured by understanding the role of passions and emotions in constructing democratic citizenship. Instead of "operating with a conception of the subject, which sees the individuals as prior to society" (*ibid.*, 200), she believes democratic theory needs to consider how social and power relations, language and culture condition the existence of the democratic subject. Only by reconceptualising our understanding of democracy in order to account for the contingency of existing power structures and the inevitability of conflict can we start thinking how to construct a counter-hegemonic resistance to the neoliberal consensus.

To summarise and elaborate on the key points from the critical analysis above, by basing our understanding of democratic politics on economic rationality and market principles, we treat citizens as self-interested consumers with fixed preferences. As Christiano (1996, 281) points out, resources are not distributed equally throughout our society which "undermines equality in rational social deliberation" and modelling of voters' choices. Although the advocates of the aggregative model of democracy purport it to be merely empirical and descriptive in its analytical purpose and character, allegedly showing no normative pretensions, this is exactly what the model achieves –

it transverses economic principles and rationality into democratic theory. In doing so, it not only gives a “realistic” view of democracy, of what democracy already is, but what democracy ought to be like. As such, it is inherently normative. It strips democracy of its political content and removes the analytical concern with structures in society. Consequently, conflict and antagonism in society are just an aberration to governing, rather than an expression of social divisions and troubles that need to be taken account of. On the other hand, the deliberative model presupposes that conflict can be resolved through a rational and inclusive deliberative procedure which ultimately aims to eliminate it and achieve a rational agreement among a plurality of parties. Where I see the key deficiency of the deliberative model is in its overemphasis on reaching a harmonious agreement and not paying enough attention to disagreement and conflict that are bound to arise in deliberation of political matters. Even when disagreement is considered by deliberative democrats, it is still measured against contested standards of impartiality, truth and objectivity, or empty signifiers, such as justice and liberty (see Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 2004; Macedo 1999; Misak 2004), while failing to account for the intransigence of ideological differences and structures of power.

With these points considered, we can say the two models encounter the same critique that can be levelled against elite and pluralist conceptions of democracy: they preserve the order of power relations as they are and as such they depoliticise the axiom of politics. Through foreclosing the antagonistic dimension of politics, the mainstream consensus elites in fact exacerbate conflict by offering the political forces outside the establishment an opportunity to articulate the unaddressed antagonism in society. To counter these limitations, we first need an analytical model that envisions a place for antagonism, violence and conflict in politics. In the following, I will offer my critical view of the agonistic model of democracy, which Mouffe proposes as an alternative to the two dominant paradigms of democracy that I have analysed above. In the last part of my chapter, I will then show how the post-political consensus of mainstream political forces invites a repoliticisation of liberal democratic structures through social movements and the rise of the new populist left parties. I will show how the agonistic understanding of democratic politics can serve as the baseline for the political project of radicalising democracy in response to neoliberal hegemony.

Abandoning the rationalist view of politics: antagonism and hegemony

In order to challenge the predominance of moderate rationalism in the two dominant paradigms of liberal democratic thought, Mouffe (2005, 2013c) calls for a reconceptualisation of the way we understand politics and the political, emphasising the need for recognition of the irreducibility of conflictuality in politics proper. The economic and moral reasoning behind the aggregative and deliberative models of democratic politics needs to be conceptually redefined so as to acknowledge the dynamism of antagonism, passions and ideological differences in political life. The elimination of power in rationalist accounts of democracy is one of their main shortcomings, Mouffe maintains. We cannot adequately understand the political without recognising and acknowledging that dynamics of power, or antagonism, is an inherent dimension of the pluralism of values (Mouffe 2013a, 201). This leads Mouffe to propose an *agonistic* model of democracy “which places the question of power and antagonism at its very center” (*ibid.*, 202). Other prominent theorists of agonistic democracy include William E. Connolly (1991; 1995) and Bonnie Honig (1993; 2001; 2009). The key ethical-political principles that Connolly premises his theory of agonistic democracy on are agonistic respect and critical responsiveness (see Connolly 1995, xv–xix; Wenman 2013, 109–14). Rather than basing his theory of radical politics on the possibility of a revolution and radically transforming the structures of liberal democracy, Connolly’s approach to agonistic democracy is more micro-political in form. It is concerned with “the disruptive power of enactment as a capacity for innovation that emerges *within* liberal democratic societies” (*ibid.*, 113). Connolly’s politics of pluralisation can be viewed as a micro-level version⁶ of Mouffe’s much more ambitious project of the radicalisation of democracy. Honig’s approach to agonistic democracy is important in emphasising the difference between what she calls the politics of virtue, conflating politics with administration and confining it within juridical and administrative domains, and the politics of *virtù*, the politics of disrupting the established order and institutions in order to “create space of possibility for a new table of values” (Honig 1993, 4). Nevertheless, in her overview of the two authors, while agreeing on the importance of contestation in politics, Mouffe criticises their approaches for failing “to grasp the crucial role of hegemonic articulations” and to attest not only for “challenging what exists but also of constructing new articulations and institutions” (Mouffe 2013c, 11). Mouffe also questions the limits of Connolly’s agonistic respect:

Can all antagonisms be transformed into agonisms and all positions be accepted as legitimate and accommodated within the agonistic struggle? Or are there demands that need to be excluded because they cannot be part of the conflictual consensus that

⁶ For a succinct and brief account of micro-political pluralisation, see Connolly (1995, xix–xxi).

provides the symbolic space in which the opponents recognize themselves as legitimate adversaries? (*ibid.*, 13–4)

Drawing upon Schmitt's critique of liberal thought, Mouffe (Mouffe 2005, 11) points out that "every consensus is [necessarily] based on acts of exclusion" which in turn "reveals the impossibility of a fully inclusive 'rational' consensus". The very presupposition held by deliberative democrats that an inclusive rational consensus can be reached on antagonising matters of fundamental political significance is thus misguided from the very start. Mouffe's alternative understanding of the political in democratic politics is illustrated by the adversarial model, which encompasses the antagonistic dimension of politics. Antagonisms, for Mouffe, represent the limits of the social -- for this reason, society "never manages fully to be society because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 127). A key element of antagonistic politics is the Schmittian "friend/enemy" relation which Mouffe redefines as a "we/they" relation:

Since all forms of political identities entail a we/they distinction, this means that the possibility of emergence of antagonism can never be eliminated. It is therefore an illusion to believe in the advent of a society from which antagonism would have been eradicated. Antagonism, as Schmitt says, is an ever present possibility; the political belongs to our ontological condition. (Mouffe 2005, 16)

Following from this, power should not be understood as "an external relation" between two pre-constituted political identities, but as a medium through which the identities themselves are constituted. Politics as an "expression ... of a specific pattern of power relations", thus, cannot be understood as a mere representation of the interests of pre-constituted subjects, but as a practice "constituting those identities themselves in a precarious and always vulnerable terrain" (Mouffe 2013a, 202). This tenet comes as a direct challenge to the assumption of rational actors having fixed preferences in the aggregative model of democracy. It also disturbs the idea of deliberation happening in a neutral and all-inclusive space, demonstrating the role that power plays in the constitution of participating subjects.

Mouffe (2005, 23) also acknowledges that antagonism can be expressed in sporadic (but not unconditioned, groundless or *ex nihilo*) acts of violence, if there is no other appropriate medium for channelling and articulating dissent. It is here that Mouffe sees one of the key tasks for liberal democratic institutions: they offer a common space for the articulation of conflict and

transformation of "antagonism into agonism" (*ibid.*, 20). The main question for democratic politics, therefore, should not be how to eliminate power, as in the deliberative understanding of democracy, but "how to constitute forms of power more compatible with democratic values" (Mouffe 2013a, 202). It is worth bringing back into discussion the ever present tension between liberalism and democracy when for Mouffe liberal democracy presents "the horizon of possibility for contemporary political struggles" (Wenman 2013, 182). It is the agonistic model, as opposed to the aggregative and deliberative counterparts, that provides an adequate framework for the constant renegotiation of the uneasy relationship between the two paradoxical traditions in the liberal democratic institutional arrangement. This renegotiation takes place by way of successfully subsuming antagonism, which in turn augments the role of liberal democracy as a platform for the confrontation of different political articulations (*ibid.*).

Two problems arise with Mouffe's assumption of liberal democratic institutions acting as a neutral vehicle for the re-articulation of antagonism: (1) the first concerns the way she understands the transformation of antagonism into agonism; and (2) the second has to do with the purported neutrality of liberal democracy in providing the platform for contemporary struggles against neoliberalism. I will deal with the first problem by arguing that taming and managing antagonism is not as easy and straightforward as Mouffe suggests. If antagonism is indeed the elusive and unpredictable expression of the political, then not all conflict in society can be transformed into agonism and articulated through liberal democratic institutions. She acknowledges that herself when discussing Connolly's approach to agonistic democracy (see Mouffe 2013c, 13–4), but does not outline what happens with the antagonisms that do not find their way through the liberal democratic apparatus. The second concern will be assessed through the prism of the Marxist debate on whether the state institutions have any autonomy in capitalism or is the State inescapably capitalist in nature. This discussion will raise some strategic questions that need to be considered in light of the emergence of new Left populist parties in Europe.

Antagonism, if we follow through the institutional transformation process, is not transformed in a neutral manner, but is effectively appropriated and translated into the hegemonic register of meaning, of what counts as reasonable and appropriate for debate, in a formalised institutional setting. In her disposition of this process, it seems the main aim of agonistic democracy for Mouffe is to ensure "order and security against the backdrop of the ever-present possibility of antagonism" (Wenman 2013, 200). Stanley Fish goes even further in his critique and makes a distinction between Mouffe's recognition of antagonism and coming to terms with it. He also says that Mouffe is ultimately interested in taming antagonism (Fish 1999, 236). What is problematic in Mouffe's presupposition is that the simple act of recognising and acknowledging

conflict gives you the ability to pre-empt a conflictuality and establish a mechanism that transforms that conflict, or antagonism, into a form that would be more suitable within the existing set of democratic institutions. Fish explains the point further:

[C]ontingency is precisely what you can't make room for; contingency is what befalls the best laid plans of mice and men – and that includes plans to take it into account or guard against its eruption. And by the same reasoning "the dimension of conflict ... within the political" is not something you can come to terms with. You can only come to terms with something that stays put and remains at a distance from you. (*ibid.*, 237)

Despite Mouffe's pertinent critique of liberal rationalism for its faith in principles of political impartiality and neutrality, she falls into the same trap of the tempting desire to control the uncontrollable, to somehow attempt to reframe and rechannel conflict, so it appears in a "democratically acceptable" form. Fish concludes that the mistake lies in attempts to think of:

... conflict either as a "problem" or as an opportunity. No, conflict is the name of our condition; and, moreover, naming it does nothing to ameliorate it or make it easier to negotiate. The negotiations have to be done one at a time in the context of the urgencies and choice life continually throws in our way. (*ibid.*, 242)

The problem in Mouffe's approach of transforming antagonism into manageable agonism can also be understood in light of her distinction between "politics" and "the political". *The political* signifies the antagonistic dimension of social relations which can take many forms, whereas *politics* represents the ordering set of "practices, discourses and institutions" which seeks to organise human existence "in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of 'the political'" (Mouffe 2013a, 203). For Mouffe, the aim of democratic *politics* is to domesticate hostility and try to defuse "the potential antagonism that exists in human relations". Now, in order to understand this regulative aspect of *politics*, we need to address the second key notion that Mouffe uses in addressing the question of *the political* in democratic politics – the concept of hegemony (Mouffe 2005, 17). In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) make the point that our reality is socially constructed through acts of power. In her more recent work, Mouffe explains:

This implies that any social objectivity is ultimately political and that it has to show the traces of exclusion which governs its constitution. This point of convergence – or rather mutual collapse – between objectivity and power is what we meant by "hegemony". (Mouffe 2013a, 202)

Any political order is an expression of a hegemony, according to Mouffe, which can carry different interpretations of "the common good" and "the ethico-political principles", be it liberal-conservative, social-democratic, neo-liberal or radical-democratic (*ibid.*, 203). These represent different hegemonic articulations competing for a stabilisation of their interpretation of "the common good", for securing the "conflictual consensus", which is a temporary result of a provisional hegemony (*ibid.*, 204). The conflictual consensus, or "organized dissensus" as Lois McNay (2014, 73) calls it, can only be achieved through some form of "an a priori agreement amongst political subjects to abide by the rules of the agonistic game" and Mouffe fails to point out which mechanisms are necessary for "the consensual move from antagonism to agonism" (McNay 2014, 74). Mouffe argues for an agonistic public sphere because that is where she envisions a confrontation between conflicting hegemonic projects (Mouffe 2013b, 231). However, it is not clear from Mouffe's account what happens with antagonisms which cannot be tamed and are as a result eliminated from the recognised agonistic public sphere.

There are two problems in particular that I would like to point out here:

1. One is the question that Mouffe poses to William Connolly to challenge his notion of agonistic respect: "Can all antagonisms be transformed into agonisms and all positions be accepted as legitimate and accommodated within the agonistic struggle" (Mouffe 2013c, 13)? Mouffe admits that the distinction between the legitimate antagonistic demands and those that do not abide by the liberal democratic ethical-political principles is difficult to make and should thus be left to "a political decision based on pragmatic considerations" (Mouffe 2013b, 231).
2. And second, while I do agree that politics needs to provide a point of stabilisation around a certain set of ethico-political principles through competing hegemonic articulations, I wonder whether Mouffe sees liberal democratic institutions as a neutral vehicle for the transformation of antagonism into agonism. Are not liberal democratic institutions themselves an expression of a specific hegemony which presents a more contextual obstacle to "the establishment of a chain of equivalence among democratic demands and the construction of an alternative hegemony" (*ibid.*, 14)?

Mouffe argues that in order to "foster allegiance to its institutions, a democratic system requires the availability of [those] contending forms of citizenship identification"; it is the different hegemonic articulations that provide "the terrain in which passions can be mobilized around democratic objectives and antagonism transformed into agonism" (Mouffe 2013a, 204). What is overlooked in Mouffe's model of agonistic democracy, however, is the ethico-political, or ideological, implication of democratic institutions in the existing dominant hegemonic articulation. I contend that we need to recognise the hegemonic nature of the present politico-social order and, like other social orders in the past, the democratic institutions also need to be understood as "the product of a series of practices attempting to establish order in a context of contingency" (Mouffe 2005, 17). Where the problem lies with Mouffe's account of agonistic pluralism is that it does not take a step further in her critique and extend the application of the concept of hegemony to assume that the liberal democratic institutions are also impregnated by the dominant neoliberal hegemony, perhaps to the point where radicalising politics within the framework of liberal democratic institutions might not be sufficient for the instigation of radical social change. In the next section, I will frame this as the institutional dilemma for the project of radicalising democracy.

The institutional dilemma for radical politics

While Mouffe argues that only a "combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles" can bring about a profound transformation to "institutions through which pluralism is organized", she does not elaborate on what is at fault with these institutions (Mouffe 2013c, 75). This leaves an impression that, for Mouffe, the liberal democratic institutions are a neutral vehicle through which antagonism can be translated into agonism, without accounting for the ideological makeup of representative institutions.

This institutional dilemma is not a new one. It goes back to the Marxist debates in the 1970s and 1980s on whether the state apparatus is inherently an outgrowth of the capitalist modes of production or whether the state does in fact have relative autonomy in relation to civil society and capitalism. The instrumentalist side of the debate, characterised by Ralph Miliband (1969; 1970; 1973; 1983), claims that the state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class. The structuralist side, represented by Nicos Poulantzas (1973; 1978a; 1978b; 1980), argues that the state is capitalist in the sense that it is part of a wider structure, from which it cannot be

extracted.⁷ The main dividing line between the two sides that is most relevant for my inquiry into the purported ideological neutrality of the liberal-democratic institutional arrangement is the one concerning the relative autonomy of the state. It is worth pointing out that Miliband's publication of *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) came as a response to the dominance of the pluralist theory of the state, which maintained that the existence of a ruling, much less a capitalist class, is "empirically meaningless, because corporate power is diffuse and competitive" (Barrow 2002, 15). Miliband argued that the ruling class domination could be determined by "the degree to which members of the capitalist class *control* the state apparatus through interlocking positions in the governmental, administrative, coercive, and other apparatuses" (Barrow 2002, 17). However, by focusing on the interrelationships and social composition of the state elite, Poulantzas argued, Miliband did not give enough attention to the functional structural relations that determine social class and thus overestimated the relative autonomy of the state in relation to the influence of the capitalist class both over politics and economic modes of production (*ibid.*, 23–9).

Ellen Meiksins Wood (1995), a political Marxist, criticises Poulantzas' structuralist approach, however, as too rigidly deterministic and too abstract. She contends that Poulantzas' "structural logic overwhelms historical fact", since his theory of the capitalist state as corresponding to the capitalist modes of production is void of historical specificity (Wood 1995, 56). In Wood's view, liberal democracy "may be the most potent ideological force available to the capitalist class" because "it casts doubt on the very existence of a ruling class" (Wood 1981, 180). To recall, the non-existence of a ruling class is one of the key precepts of the pluralist conception of democracy, which Wood considers a smokescreen for capitalist hegemony. Nonetheless, Wood acknowledges that liberal democracy is "the outcome of long and painful struggles", conferring "genuine benefits on subordinate classes" and giving them "real strengths, new possibilities of organisation and resistance which cannot be abandoned to the enemy as mere sham" (*ibid.*, 181). The counter-hegemonic project to neoliberalism, or in Wood's case capitalist hegemony, would not only require "further extension of popular power" in order to perfect existing liberal democratic institutions, but "a radical transformation of social arrangements in general, in ways that are as yet unknown" (*ibid.*). For liberalism, Wood argues, representative institutions are seen as a solution to the arbitrary usurpation of power, while they are not seen as a problem. Wood contends they should be viewed as a problem as well, since liberalism not only limits "the scope and the arbitrariness of political power", but also alienates power from the concerned

⁷ Many scholars have grappled with and written extensively on the Miliband-Poulantzas debate. For further reference see Alford and Friedland (1985); King (1986); Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987); Jessop (1982; 1990; 2007); Carnoy (1984); Barrow (1993) and Schwarzmantel (1995).

political groups. The counter-hegemonic project would, therefore, need to entail a radicalisation of democracy at all levels of society, while learning from liberalism on the need for “some form of alienated power or representation” in complex societies (*ibid.*, 187). All in all, a counter-hegemonic project would require the study of the historic conditions, which enabled the hegemonisation of liberalism and capitalist hegemony.

The presupposition of the relative autonomy of liberal democratic institutions in relation to capitalism can also be found in Mouffe’s work. It is evident that neoliberal forces are the target of her project of radical democracy. Mouffe claims that only with the transformation of liberal democratic institutions into “a vehicle for the expression of the manifold democratic demands which would extend the principle of equality to as many social relations as possible” and agonistic engagement with the institutions can we build an effective counter-hegemonic challenge to neoliberalism (Mouffe 2013c, 75). But what is missing from her project is a consideration of the liberal democratic institutions being co-opted by the dominant neoliberal hegemony, which Wood points out. As Constantine Tsoukalas observes in his analysis of the changing forms of relative autonomy, the key state functions are increasingly “geared toward ensuring the institutional and ideological conditions of the internationally imposed deregulation of economic and labor relations, as well as to contributing to the general acceptance of the alignment of public policies to the norms of international competitiveness” (Tsoukalas 2002, 233). Moreover, Mouffe offers little explanation as to why the liberal democratic institutions need transforming in the first place. The crisis of legitimacy thesis, which I have outlined earlier in the chapter, can provide an answer to the ideological-institutional puzzle. The depoliticisation of democratic politics has been achieved through the institutional moderation of class struggle. Conflict and antagonism in society are only ever allowed to be expressed within the “political form of the liberal-democratic state... which *limits* the conflict to which it gives rise” (Offe 1984, 163). The increasing alignment of governmental policy-making with economic imperatives and corporate interests resulted in “the imposition of stricter constraints upon those political forces whose uninhibited articulation could do damage to ‘business confidence’ and the ‘investment climate’” (*ibid.*, 166). This depoliticising limitation of institutional channels for the articulation of political conflict is done through para-parliamentary and para-bureaucratic forms of decision-making, as well as through non-public and informal expert networks, all of which are lacking in democratic legitimacy.⁸

In order to go beyond the agent-centred instrumentalist approach in the Miliband-Poulantzas debate on the one hand and the determinism of the structuralist approach on the

⁸ For more, see Offe (1984, 167–70).

other, I will follow Wood's claim for the need to study the historical specificity of the relationship between capitalism and liberalism. I will take on this task by turning to Michel Foucault's genealogy of (neo)liberal governmentality in Chapter 2, which will provide a historical explanation of how liberalism conditions the role of the state in capitalism. I will do this by showing the influence of liberal ideas on the transformation of the state with regards to the market economy and civil society. For the last part of this chapter, I would like to refocus on the thesis which follows Offe and Wolfe in arguing that, as governing elites bypass and limit institutional channels for the articulation of conflict, political groups seek alternative ways for the expression of demands. This ultimately results in declining participation of citizens in the formal rituals of democratic politics, such as voting in periodic elections, and their repoliticisation of issues through alternative forms of organisation.

Repoliticisation and radicalisation of democracy: social movements and populism

The last section of this chapter follows the thesis, developed earlier in the chapter, that a repoliticisation of existing democratic institutions is needed to challenge the depoliticising tendency of (neo)liberalism. My analysis below will subvert Habermas' presupposition that social movements in advanced Western societies no longer give emphasis to conflicts over material inequality, but rather to post-material and cultural concerns. Habermas would maintain that material reproduction is systemically stabilised and regulated via communicative interaction between the lifeworld and the system (Habermas 1987, 347).⁹ The welfare state represents the institutional mechanism which processes the contradictions and anomalies that might arise from the lifeworld/system interaction (Habermas 1976, 37). While in early Habermas we can still find an analysis of the tension between capital accumulation and democratic legitimacy (see Habermas 1976, 37–41; Habermas 1987, 345), the later Habermas imposes a stricter distinction between the realm of politics and economy (see for example his understanding of civil society in Habermas (1996, 366–73)) and shifts focus to a more proceduralist understanding of democratic

⁹ For Habermas, the concept of the lifeworld represents processes of socialisation and cultural reproduction through communicative interactions that take place between members of society (see Habermas 1987, 119–41). The concept of the system signifies the instrumental rationalisation of the lifeworld through institutionalisation and emergence of complex social structures, such as the state, media and economy (see *ibid.*, 153–97).

politics, which ultimately leaves his account of democratic legitimation bereft of an analysis of capitalism. As David A. Borman explains:

In other words, what now forms the opposing pole of this tension is not merely the theoretical significance of constitutional democracy itself, its meaning in principle, but the self-understanding of citizens. The critique of formal democracy and of the functionally necessary interference in processes of socialization, without being rebutted, evaporates into thin air. (Borman, 2011, 106)

Borman argues this represents “Habermas’ retreat from the demand for systematic social transformation” (*ibid.*, 103), which is best exemplified in Habermas’ *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas 1996), where Habermas justifies his “increasing critical modesty” with the “problem of social complexity” (*ibid.*, 103–4). It is also worth noting that, when searching for Habermas’ analysis of capitalism in *Between Facts and Norms*, one looks for it to no avail as the index in the book directs the reader to the word “economy”. For the purpose of maintaining our analytical focus on the structures and processes that propel the depoliticisation of democratic politics, I reject late Habermas’ normative philosophical approach to understanding the tension between (constitutional) liberalism and democratic legitimacy and continue the analysis by following della Porta’s and Wolfe’s diagnosis of the crisis of liberal democracy. While early Habermas’ exposition of the legitimation crisis in the first part of the chapter highlighted the inherent contradictions between capital accumulation and democratic legitimacy, Wolfe’s thesis recognises the limits of legitimation in liberal democracy in terms of the irresolvable “class struggle between the few and the many” (Wolfe 1977, 9). Instead of ascribing depoliticisation solely to the internal logic of advanced capitalism, the way early Habermas does in *Legitimation Crisis*, Wolfe extends the critical analysis of depoliticisation to “the instrumental character of liberalism”, which gives politics an anti-political quality (*ibid.*, 290). Following from this diagnosis is Wolfe’s call for repoliticisation, “the attempt by people to seek genuine politics for themselves outside the formal political arena” (*ibid.*, 344):

The ultimate objective of repoliticization, in my view, should be to resurrect the notion of democracy, which is far too important an ideal to be sacrificed to capitalism. The political contradictions of capitalist society, I have been arguing, grow out of attempts to reconcile the need for accumulation, which has been justified by philosophical liberalism, and the need to legitimate, which has given rise to democracy. (*ibid.*)

Like Wolfe, della Porta also underlines the importance of locating social movements and protests, especially the anti-austerity movement following the financial crisis of 2007–2008, within neoliberal transformation of society and the ensuing crisis of democracy (della Porta 2015a, 3, 214). As della Porta notes:

... those protests react not only to economic crisis (with high unemployment and high numbers of precarious workers) but also to a political situation in which institutions are (and are perceived to be) particularly closed towards citizens' demands, at the same time unwilling and incapable of addressing them in an inclusive way. (*ibid.*, 6)

The emergence of anti-austerity movements and protests is not a mere reaction to the worsening socio-economic conditions following the latest economic crisis, but also an attempt at repoliticising politics by expanding democracy to more inclusive forms of decision-making at different levels of social organisation (see *ibid.*, 135–56). Furthermore, della Porta argues that more than a financial crisis, we should really be talking about “a crisis of democracy” because of the political system’s lack of responsiveness to the demands of the protesters (*ibid.*, 153). Offe argues that this due to “the uncoupling of decisions about the use of state power from the mechanisms of democratic politics”, which happens as a result of the accumulation of capital in the private sector (Offe 1984, 171). How exactly this separation between the state and politics happens, as Offe observes, will be analysed in more detail in the next chapter, but for now my concern remains with identifying the alternative ways in which democracy can be radicalised.

In the literature, we can identify two key strands of analysis dealing with the recent repoliticisation following the 2007–2008 financial crisis: one focusing on the social and protest movements (della Porta 2015a; della Porta and Mattoni 2014; Katsambekis and Kioupkiolis 2014) and the other on the rise of left-wing populism in Europe (Kioupkiolis 2015; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). My intention here is not to provide a thorough overview of the two fields of literature, but to acknowledge and briefly outline the latest theoretical developments in the two academic fields, which will help with my analysis of anti-austerity party-movements in Southern Europe in Chapter 5. Following a call by Gabriel Hetland and Jeff Goodwin (2013) to bring an analysis of capitalism back into social movement studies,¹⁰ della Porta reiterates the point:

¹⁰ This is more of a renewed call, rather than a new one. Similar calls have been in the past, especially as a response to the poststructuralist and postmaterial turn in social studies and philosophy. See for example Wood (1995) and Eagleton (2011).

Changing political conditions are indeed related to some specific developments in capitalism, which are strictly tied to political processes. In order to understand today's movements in times of socioeconomic challenges, we clearly need to bring capitalism back into the analysis. (della Porta 2015a, 6)

It is in her analysis of the anti-austerity movement that della Porta (2015a) recognises the need for Marxist and post-Marxist analytical tools; only this way can we really understand the emergence of new protest movements and political parties on the European left that challenge the neoliberal consensus of ruling elites. Moreover, populism studies offer another route to comprehending the crisis of liberal democracy and the ensuing repoliticisation of democratic politics. Following Ernesto Laclau (2005), Yannis Stavrakakis and Giorgos Katsambekis define populist politics as organised discursively around the nodal point “the people”, which is cast against the establishment or the ruling class in an antagonistic relationship (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014, 123). Benjamin Arditi observes that increasingly populism is no longer seen as a standalone concept, as is usually the case in the more mainstream approaches to populism (Canovan 1999; Canovan 2005; Lukacs 2005; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Kriesi and Pappas 2015), and that its emergence is tightly intertwined with the current post-democratic order of representative politics (Arditi 2007, 58). Populism emerges in response to the elitisation of representative democracy (Taggart 2000; Hayward 1996), it is its symptom, which exposes the contingency of the liberal-democratic arrangement of politics (Arditi 2007, 74; Laclau 2015, 268). Anti-austerity protest movements achieve the same by exposing the ideological underside of the neoliberal orientation of liberal democracy and the lack of democratic legitimacy in the neoliberal agendas of governments.

By challenging the neoliberal elite consensus of established political parties, the anti-austerity and populist movements in Europe are repoliticising the disenfranchised citizens and radicalising the existing representative institutions. Protest movements like the Occupy in New York City and the Indignados in Madrid used a clearly populist discourse by centring their discursive strategies on the nodal point “the people” and drawing an antagonistic distinction between the 1 % and the 99 %, or *la gente* (“the people”) and *la casta* (“the establishment”). Their rejection of the established political parties was initially seen as anti-political, and by some conservative media commentators even as anti-democratic. With their aim of expanding the democratic imaginary by invigorating the body politic through public assemblies and mass street protests, the protest movements rejected the post-democratic monopoly on political decision-

making and brought the discussion of policies into the wider public domain. I will elaborate on the paradox between formal politics and resistance in Chapter 4, and draw out the modes in which power operates. What seems evident though is that these new social movements have exposed the unviability of the elitist and pluralist tenets of democracy and adopted a way of operating more akin to what Chantal Mouffe describes as agonistic politics in the pursuit of radicalising democracy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated what is really at stake in the aftermath of the latest financial crisis: it is not only a crisis of the economic system, but also a crisis of the political system. It is a crisis of liberal democracy in the sense that the liberal underside of the current post-democratic order is overpowering the democratic side of the contingent institutional arrangement. This reality is expressed in the centralisation of political power in the elite-pluralist model of democracy that has taken shape in Western societies, through which the liberal tendencies of consensus politics and depoliticisation are able to stifle the agonistic articulation of democratic demands, coming from outside the political system. As I also hope to have shown, the discourse around the crisis of liberal democracy is not a new one. Conservative and liberal scholars have used the economic troubles and the emergence of new social movements of the 1970s as the reason for pushing forward the “overload thesis”, maintaining that excessive state involvement and the overload of popular demands were causing problems for governability in Western democracies. Sociological and neo-Marxist scholars, on the other hand, argued that the crisis resulted from the irresolvable tension between liberal tendencies of capitalist accumulation and democratic aspirations, and only by repoliticising the class antagonism in advanced capitalist societies could we find an alternative to the crumbling social-democratic consensus. As it will become clearer in the next chapter, the revisionism of liberalism in some intellectual circles opened the way for further liberalisation of economic activity, uncoupling economic power from democratic mechanisms of checks and balances.

Both the aggregative versions of democracy and the deliberative were shown to be depoliticising. While the aggregative model constrains the political decision-making to the control of the elites, the deliberative model fails to recognise the ineradicably political character of differences in society and thus demonstrates its inability to properly engage with antagonistic

relations. The agonistic vision of democracy offers a far more fitting analytical framework for understanding the contestation between different hegemonic articulations that are pulling apart the liberal democratic arrangement. But before we can start building the political project of radicalising democracy, we first need to determine what is at fault with the existing arrangement of democratic institutions. If liberal democracy is simply a neutral vehicle through which we can transform destructive antagonism into democratically legitimate agonistic articulations, then the only task, although no less monumental, for radical left would be to construct an alternative hegemonic articulation in order to compete with the dominant hegemony. However, as such endeavours have shown in the past, from SYRIZA's quest to alter the neoliberal consensus of established political parties to the ideological-institutional obstacles encountered by Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party when trying to transform politics through the parliamentary channels, it becomes clear that a more critical scrutiny of liberal democratic institutions is needed. What are the principles and ideological mechanisms that separate state activity, which is increasingly geared towards accommodating private capital accumulation, from the democratic oversight and control? What drives the uncoupling of economic activity from the wider social context? Why are attempts at repoliticising democratic politics blocked by the dominant political structures, when these very structures are supposed to provide space for a democratic and plural competition between different hegemonic articulations?

In this chapter, my key argument was that the depoliticisation of democratic politics takes place as a result of the liberalisation of capitalist accumulation under advanced capitalism, which in turn stimulates the repoliticisation, through social and populist movements, of matters that have been removed from democratic control. In the next chapter, I will further demonstrate how this depoliticisation shifts the axiom of governing away from serving political communities towards accommodating private capital accumulation. The analysis of the principles that drive the operations of the state under advanced capitalism will give a more nuanced view of liberal democracy and its relationship with capitalist modes of production. The absence of an analysis of capitalism was in fact one of the key omissions from Mouffe's critical engagement with the post-democratic order. Rather than depicting the state as a neutral ground which can be filled by any hegemonic articulation successful enough, or turning to the other extreme, the classical Marxist conception of the state as inherently capitalist, I will turn to Foucault's concept of governmentality in order to make sense of the paradoxical relationship between an expanding capitalist economy and democratic politics. Chapter 2 will situate the crisis of liberal democracy within liberal governmentality, which will help me avoid either abstracting the state from the wider historical-ideological context or seeing the state as the enemy we should not engage with. Foucault's

genealogical approach to the concept of governmentality allows for an understanding of the transformative process of political and economic institutions, practices, discourses and principles which are set in a specific temporal-spatial setting. Following from such a position, the liberal democratic institutions are no longer viewed in abstract terms as merely neutral instruments to be used in a (counter-)hegemonic struggle, but as a product of ideologically conditioned hegemonic practices and discourses. Only with an informed view of the current state of liberal democratic institutions can we have a better understanding of the hurdles that lie in the way of repoliticising counter-hegemonic struggles inside and outside parliamentary contours against neoliberal re-ordering of society. Foucault's analysis of liberal governmentality will be coupled with Karl Polanyi's understanding of the capitalist economy and the notion of the double movement, which will provide a dynamic view of how the liberalisation of economic processes has been challenged in the past.

CHAPTER 2: Understanding Neoliberalism: The Relationship between the Liberal State and Free Market Capitalism

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that continuing liberalisation of capitalist accumulation under advanced capitalism drives the depoliticisation of democratic politics, prompting a systemic crisis of governability, which implicates both representative politics (liberal democracy) and political economy (free market capitalism). In order to understand how this crisis comes about, what is needed is a structural analysis of capitalist processes and the role of state institutions in accommodating ongoing capitalist expansion. Why does the state need to take a *laissez faire* position in relation to the free market economy? Can the *laissez faire* direction of the state be simply understood as the removal and shrinking of the state's role in the expansion of corporate capitalism? And how does a free market economy emerge in the first place and comes to dictate the terms of state governance? For these questions to be properly addressed, a historical analysis of the capitalist institutional framework is required, which combines a critical understanding of its key principles and processes on the one hand and an account of the institutional setting in accommodating market expansion on the other. To this purpose, I will develop a critical political economy approach that sits closely with the tradition of old institutional economics. Primarily, it will draw upon Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* and Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* to demonstrate how liberalism as a governing rationality determines the role of state institutions with regard to the free market economy and the wider society. This analytical task will attempt to achieve the following three things: (1) it will provide an economic-institutional history of the market economy, linking the ideas of economic liberalism with the institutional transformations that led to the present day market economy; (2) it will explain the key points of divergence between liberalism and neoliberalism in the post-war period; and (3) it will identify the underlying social tendencies in this process that lead towards the eruption of crises of governmentality, signalling possibilities of resistance.

In order to sketch out the parameters of what will be a Foucauldian-Polanyian critical political economy approach, let me first make a few methodological points that highlight the two authors' distinctiveness in their economic analysis. In his theorisation of the market economy,

Foucault critiques classical Marxism for defining capitalism as entailing a single logic of capital, which via the historical materialism thesis produces the following analytical observation: “[W]hen you link all the historical figures of capitalism to the logic of capital and its accumulation, the end of capitalism is revealed in the historical impasses it is currently manifesting” (Foucault 2008, 165). Foucault rejects this methodological path, in turn stating that capital “can only have historical reality within an economic-institutional capitalism”. The analytical observation that follows from this alternative premise, which emphasises the institutional setting of capitalism, is that “the historical capitalism we know is not deducible as the only possible and necessary figure of the logic of capital” (*ibid.*). This alternative thesis bears important political implications as it underlines the importance of theoretical debate around “the history of capitalism, around the history of the role of the institution of law, of the rule in capitalism” (*ibid.*), and opens up the possibility of organising the current capitalist order differently. In a similar institutionalist vein, Polanyi criticises the formalism of mainstream economics, by underlining that the economy is not determined by “unchanging natural laws but by social norms and conventions that are malleable over time”. This way, Polanyi’s economic analysis “begins with institutions” and is grounded in careful empirical inquiries that draw upon anthropology, statistics and history (Dale 2010, 14).

By analysing the principles according to which the liberal state conducts itself in relation to the market and civil society, we can understand more clearly the political rationality that guides the operations of governance structures. Using Foucault’s genealogy of the liberal art of government and Polanyi’s dialectical approach to understanding structural change, I will identify the points at which neoliberal mode of governing diverges from the liberal one. With its distinct philosophical dimension to understanding economics, which recognises the broader political character of economic activity, the theoretical framework that I am proposing here sits closely with what is known as institutional political economy (IPE), or old institutional economics. IPE is an inter-disciplinary and heterodox approach to understanding political economy, drawing upon different academic disciplines, including economics, sociology, anthropology and political science. Compared to mainstream economics (namely, the neo-classical and Keynesian economics), an IPE approach provides a dynamic evolutionary perspective to the analysis of institutional change in economic development, emphasising the role of political factors and the interplay between politics and economics in contemporary market economy (Veblen 1904; Hamilton 1919; Elliott 1978; Hodgson 1988, 1993, 2000; Evans 1995; Burlamaqui *et al.* 2000; Chang 2002; Chang 2011). Belonging to the tradition of institutional economics, it differs from the New Institutional Economics approach in that it does not understand institutions only as “constraints on the behaviours of the pre-formed and unchanging individuals, but also as shaping

the individuals themselves” (Chang 2002, 551–2). As opposed to neoclassical economics, an IPE approach also does not treat politics “as something alien and damaging to the market but as an integral part of its construction, operation and change” (*ibid.*, 556). For its methodological inspiration it draws upon the classical works of authors, such as Thorstein Veblen, Joseph Schumpeter, Karl Polanyi and Karl Marx, and this makes it a rich source for analysing questions of structural transformation, the emergence of ideas and the role of institutions in capitalist development.¹¹

At this point, one might ask why not turn to Marxism, which would be the obvious starting point for any kind of study concerned with market principles and capitalist accumulation. Why turn to the two authors who had a rather ambiguous, and sometimes even dismissive, relationship with key Marxist tenets? In a world that has observed a series of periodic economic crises in the last three decades, which exposed in full view the contradictions of advanced capitalism, the question of how this self-destructive system managed to maintain its legitimacy despite negative effects for social cohesion and environmental sustainability still remains to be answered. While those following the Marxist line of analysis would insist on the internal and trans-historical logic of capitalism to explain the continuing expansion of capitalism and its contradictions (Harvey 1982, 2005, 2011, 2014; Brown 2015; and others), Foucault and Polanyi point us in a more Gramscian direction¹² which emphasises the contingency of the political-economic institutional assemblages that enable and accommodate the functioning of capitalism. With regard to Foucault’s non-Marxist – or post-Marxist, as some authors would argue (see Poulantzas 1980; Balibar 1992; Lemke 2002; Fontana and Bertani 2003; Jessop 2007) – methodological approach, Bob Jessop follows Étienne Balibar (1992) in saying that:

if there is an irreducible divergence between Foucault and Marx, it does not lie in the contrast between the microphysics and macrophysics of power (local and global) but in the opposition between the Marxian logic of contradiction (in which the power relation is only a strategic moment) and Foucault’s logical structure of power relations (in which contradiction is but one possible configuration). (Jessop 2004)

¹¹ The influential varieties of capitalism (VoC) approach (Hall and Soskice 2001) in the political economy literature can be seen as an outgrowth from the wider tradition of old institutional economics.

¹² Several authors have written on the convergences between Gramsci and Foucault (Kenway 1990; Smart 1999 and 2002; Daldal 2014; Kreps 2015), as well as Gramsci in relation to Polanyi (Birchfield 1999; Burawoy 2003; Bond 2005; Burawoy 2014).

Foucault's methodological approach can be said to be fundamentally at odds with the Marxist in that it does not take the contradictory logic of capital accumulation "as the principal aspect of all social formations" and allows for the possibility of alternative principles of societalisation (*ibid.*). Yet, as Balibar notes, Foucault repeatedly moves from "a *break* to a tactical *alliance*" with Marxism, "the first involving a global critique of Marxism as a 'theory'; the second a partial usage of Marxist tenets or affirmations compatible with Marxism" (Balibar 1992, 53). And as Foucault's analytical focus increasingly turns to questions of "political economy and the historical constitution of the state from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries" (Jessop 2007, 153–4), his analysis becomes most closely aligned with the Marxist critique of capitalism. Without recognising this "increasing interest in complex and contingent problems of political economy and statecraft" in Foucault's work in the mid- to late 1970s (*ibid.*, 153), Foucault's analysis can indeed seem anti-statist and inadequate for constructing a coherent critique of capitalist economy. Only by acknowledging the significant shift in Foucault's focus, from his earlier writings on "the micro-physics and micro-diversity of power relations" (Jessop 2007, 140) to "their macro-physics and strategic codification through the normalizing, governmentalized state" (*ibid.*), namely in the posthumously published and translated lectures he gave at the Collège de France between 1978 and 1979, we can properly appreciate Foucault's contribution to understanding the key features of capitalist political economy.

With regard to Polanyi's institutional political economy approach, we can also find many similarities with Marxist analysis, but it is his understanding of the relationship between economic liberalism and the market system that I find most pertinent for my thesis. Unlike Marx, Polanyi saw "economic liberalism and the market system appear as inseparable parts of a single whole" (Maucourant and Plociniczak 2013, 516). Whereas for Marx it is the economic relations of production that give rise to an ideology "as a secondary superstructure", for Polanyi the ideology of economic liberalism plays a critical role in the rise of the market economy (*ibid.*). In Polanyi's work, economic liberalism presents "an ideological foundation of the market economy" and a critique of "the one can be extended as a critique of the other" (*ibid.*). Alongside the organising principle of economic liberalism, Polanyi saw another principle, that of social embeddedness, the aim of which was to protect human and natural life against the destructive effects of capitalist commodification. The tension between these two organising principles characterises the dynamics of the 19th century civilisation for Polanyi and it is this irreducible tension that makes structural transformation and the dynamism of social forces the central elements of Polanyi's institutional logic.

The two authors' oeuvres on the subject matter also complement each other in a theoretically illuminating and fruitful way: while Polanyi could be criticised for failing to anticipate that state interventionism can also contribute to the stabilisation of market societies, and for downplaying "the degree to which étatism represented a recharged apparatus of control over exploited groups" (Dale 2010, 248), Foucault's nuanced understanding of liberal governmentality fills in the mosaic with his close attention to the dynamic of empowerment and extension of control in modern societies. On the other hand, while Foucault is often criticised for failing to provide an account of how to fight the structures he is critiquing (Jessop 2007; Brown 2015), Polanyi's analysis provides a dynamic account of "the clashes of class forces and political programmes" (*ibid.*, 249) through his concept of the double movement, signalling forms of resistance that can be adopted.

All in all, the purpose in my methodological decision to turn to Foucault's and Polanyi's is not to dismiss Marxist approaches, but to revise some of the key postulates, especially the one regarding the relationship between the ideology of economic liberalism and the market economy. My critical political economy analysis will not so much address the limitations of Marxism as challenge the failure of conventional economics to duly acknowledge the role of the state in capitalist development and to provide an adequate theory of statecraft. By turning to Foucault and Polanyi, we can better account for the role of the state and the relationship between politics and economy in relation to the key research question in this chapter, which is how liberalism as a political rationality allows for capitalist expansion, while trumping the democratic principles of public control and participation. Both authors directly engage with liberalism in their work and demonstrate how liberal thought is essential in understanding the rise of free market economics and the neoliberal turn in second half of the 20th century. By better accounting for the role of law and political institutions in the persistence of the liberal capitalist order, Foucault and Polanyi point us in a direction which more readily imagines what resistance to neoliberalism would look like in the 21st century. The analytical tools for understanding the relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism, the liberal state and market economy, and the dynamics between market expansion and the counter-movements laid out in this chapter will contribute to the theoretical groundwork for my analysis of the neoliberal governmental response to the 2007–2008 financial crisis in the form of austerity measures and structural reforms, which provoked the emergence of the biggest protest movements against the neoliberal order since the 1999 Seattle WTO protests.

The structure of the present chapter will proceed in the following manner: (1) I will first outline the key theoretical differences and similarities between Foucault's and Polanyi's methodological approaches to political economy in relation to Marxist analysis; (2) I will then

proceed to Foucault's genealogy of the liberal governmentality, which will explain the ideological preconditions for the emergence of a liberal art of government in the 18th century; (3) this will be followed by Polanyi's analysis of the later stages of liberalism in the 19th and 20th century, focusing on the institutional conditions for the establishment of a self-regulating market and how the organised attempts to implement this idea eventually led to a crisis of governmentality; (4) I will then move on to Foucault's account of the revisionism of liberalism and identify the points of rupture between liberal and neoliberal governmentality. At the end, I will demonstrate the contemporary relevance of these theoretical insights and how they can inform our understanding of the crisis of liberal democratic politics today.

Explaining (neo)liberalism and capitalism after Marx

In the following, I will outline the theoretical differences and similarities in Foucault's and Polanyi's approaches to political economy in relation to Marxism. I will carry out the comparative analysis by focusing on the relationship between political institutions and economy, the relationship between liberalism and capitalism, and the notion of class. Through positioning Foucault and Polanyi in relation to Karl Marx's approach to political economy, I will show how Marxism is still relevant for an analysis of capitalist economy under neoliberalism, while arguing that the analysis needs to be extended beyond the limitations of Marx's economic determinism in order to account for the role of institutions and ideas in the neoliberal success of capitalism. At the end of this theoretical exposition, I will outline the main concepts from Foucault's and Polanyi's analysis of (neo)liberalism to inform my critical political economy approach.

In his book *Foucault with Marx* (2016), Jacques Bidet recognises Karl Marx's prescient observation that capitalist expansion would result in a wholesale commodification of "goods and services, of products of knowledge, of 'labour power' itself and all of the things of nature (Bidet 2016, 1). But what Marx could not have foreseen is that despite the internal contradictions of the capitalist model of production, the political economic model would persist in the face of workers' resistance. Bidet argues that, while Marx can provide us with the analytical tools to understand the "instrumentalisation of commercial reason" and "exploitation of labour power", this constitutes only half of the class relationship in modern political economy. While the *market logic* does organise social life, as Marx has shown so well, the *organisation* that is put in place to accommodate and serve this logic, also needs to be given proper attention. Due to the economic

determinism of his critique, Marx failed to give due recognition to the other intelligent social mediation, as Bidet calls it: “This is because both mediations, market and organisation, are, in modern society, structurally, which is to say, enduringly, indissociable and therefore contemporary with one another” (*ibid.*, 9). What is meant by *organisation* here are all the social and cultural institutions that Marx would normally relegate to the domain of the superstructure. It characterises a pole in governance, “in which one exercises *knowledge-power*, a power of leadership linked to a sanctioned knowledge. The dominant, or privileged, class thus bears two poles” (*ibid.*), the other pole being *property-power*, “the means of production and exchange on the capitalist market” (*ibid.*).

We can find a similar emphasis on the institutional setting of capitalist economy in Karl Polanyi’s work. With his thesis that land, labour and money are fictitious commodities, and the concept of embeddedness, Polanyi underlined the importance of ideas and institutions in creating the fiction of a self-regulating market economy (Block 2003; Cangiani 2011). What Polanyi had in mind under the term embeddedness is “the idea that the economy is not autonomous ... but subordinated to politics, religion, and social relations” (Block 2001, xxiii–xxiv). This was an important critical insight which challenged “the entire tradition of modern economic thought” that until then understood “the economy as an interlocking system of markets that automatically adjusts supply and demand through the price mechanism” (*ibid.*, xxiii). If the market was really to self-regulate, Polanyi argued, it would require turning human life and the natural environment into commodities, which would result in the destruction of both (*ibid.*, xxv). In this sense, we can understand the significance of Polanyi’s distinction between real and fictitious commodities and his warning against the disembedding of the economy, an idea firmly engrained in (neo)classical economics. Similar to Bidet in his comparison of Marx and Foucault (Bidet 2016, 13–4), Michele Cangiani (2011, 181–2) sees Polanyi’s work as an expansion of what Marx started in his critique of capitalism. Marx and Polanyi both venture into similar areas of critical political economy: the commodification of goods and services, the dependence of production on the natural world, the distinction between capitalism and preceding societies, the objectification of labour and the rise of consumerist society (Cangiani 2011). Yet, while admitting that Polanyi was writing “in conscious dialogue with both Marxism and the broader socialist tradition”, Fred Block argues that there was a theoretical shift in Polanyi’s work away from the Marxist tradition (Block 2003, 280). Whereas Polanyi’s idea of fictitious commodities can be understood “as a way of deepening Marx’s critique of capitalism” (*ibid.*, 282), with his concept of embeddedness:

... Polanyi is challenging a core presumption of both market liberals and Marxists. Both of these traditions are built on the idea that there is an analytically autonomous economy that is subject to its own internal logic. Polanyi's point is that since actually existing market economies are dependent upon the state to manage the supply and demand for the fictitious commodities, there can be no analytically autonomous economy. (*ibid.*)

This key insight on the part of Polanyi, which is missing from Marx's work, can be ascribed to Polanyi's "distinct advantage of observing the dramatic increases in the state's role in managing market economies", which drove him to construct theoretical concepts that position "the state's role close to the center of analysis" (*ibid.*, 281).

When we compare Foucault's understanding of the functioning of the state with the Marxist interpretation, we notice a marked shift in methodological focus, which, in line with Foucault's scholarly intention, aims to reinvent the way we understand governing, power and politics. Foucault's distinct focus delves into the contingency of familiar concepts, such as state, society and people, endeavouring to avoid historicist reductionism. He criticises Marxism for the latter which consists "precisely in starting from these universals as given and then seeing how history inflects them, or alters them, or finally invalidates them" (Foucault 2008, 3). Instead, Foucault does not use history as a "critical method" to question universals, but starts instead "from the decision that universals do not exist, asking what kind of history we can do" (*ibid.*). If we take the example of the state, Foucault goes beyond the category of class in Marxist understanding of the state as the site of class struggle for power. He effectively challenges and abandons the Marxist (over)emphasis given to the economic determinants and conditions, alternatively reconceptualising the state and society as a set of practices and institutions where no single unit is causally given priority. Along with the relations of production, he also recognises relations of power and signification that mediate and construct our understanding of social reality, and thus the state. Rather than occupying himself with the question which social group will get to fill the space of government, Foucault is more interested in knowing how the rationality that guides and models our conception of the state and society has emerged and under what conditions. All in all, Foucault provides us with a post-Marxist framework "for articulating the materiality of knowledge and 'truth,' one that escapes the aporia of the materialism/ideology opposition in Marxism" (Brown 2008, 76).

If we now consider the relation between capitalism and liberalism in the work of Marx and Foucault, we can find a number of fruitful observations that will be useful for my analysis later on in the chapter. When scholars look for a theory of democracy and liberalism in Marx's work, it is

his early work that they turn to, where his writings are still premised on a more humanist philosophical tradition. Sean Sayers (2007) thus underlines Marx's critique of the liberal concepts of individuality and society, which Marx saw "as products and expressions of the social alienation of free market conditions" (Sayers 2007, 84). William L. Niemi (2011) points out that for Marx the liberal notions of citizenship and individual freedom in civil society amounted to nothing but a "lion's skin" concealing the fact that "the majority lived in subjection to new hierarchies created by the industrial revolution" (Niemi 2011, 42). Yet, as Niemi is quick to emphasise, this does not mean that Marx opposed political democracy, but only that he did not believe that political rights were really meaningful in "the every day lived lives of workers" under capitalist relations of production (*ibid.*, 49). When comparing Foucault's shift in point of reference from the more Marxist object of study, capitalist class domination, to liberalism as a practice of government, Bidet's analysis proves illuminating again. Bidet argues that Foucault preferred to talk of power relations in terms of antagonism instead of the contradiction between capital and labour. By taking this direction in his thinking, Foucault went against the teleological reasoning in Marxism that the internal contradictions of capitalism signal "its [own] ineluctable end" (Bidet 2016, 189). In my analysis, I will take Bidet's contention that while Foucault rejects a general theory of the historical tendencies of the capitalist logic and turns his attention to making intelligible the political rationality of liberalism, reference to "capitalism as an economic system" is still kept in Foucault's work (*ibid.*, 187).

Similarly, Polanyi focuses on the utilitarian logic of economic liberalism to evidence for the role of governance structures in creating the right conditions for the realisation of a self-regulating market economy, which for Polanyi, to reiterate the point again, was a utopian project (Polanyi 2001, 145–6). In this respect, Polanyi puts greater emphasis on state power and liberal ideas which accommodate the social project of free market capitalism, whereas in Marx "[t]he state is in the background" as "the most important relationship is between worker and capitalist at the point of production" (Block 2003, 283). Polanyi's analysis of economic liberalism and its effect on the optimisation of government in accordance with *laissez-faire* principles is strikingly similar to Foucault's genealogy of liberal governmentality. Moreover, Polanyi's diagnosis goes a step further when he identifies the efforts for liberalising the economy in a "double movement" with the emergence of counter-movements that aim to protect social and natural life from the "deleterious action of the market" (Polanyi 2001, 138). Not only human and natural life are in danger of being destroyed by the illusory idea of the self-regulating market, Polanyi contends, but also the organisation of capitalist production itself. The protectionist (or interventionist) movement takes the form of resistance by the landed and working classes, as well as the form of institutions and

law – for example, Polanyi speaks about the role of central banking to manage the monetary system in order to “keep manufacturers and other productive enterprises safe” (*ibid.*).

A type of dynamism that resonates with the Marxist dialectics of the class struggle is thus also found in Polanyi’s idea of the double movement between economic liberalism and social protection – with one key exception. The dynamism of Polanyi’s double movement is not class determinist in nature. While Polanyi does acknowledge “the essential role played by class interests in social change” (*ibid.*, 159), he sees the interests of different social groups shaped not only by economic interests, but also social, which he assigns to one’s standing, rank, status and security in society (*ibid.*, 160). As Polanyi explains: “Precisely because not the economic but the social interests of different cross sections of the population were threatened by the market, persons belonging to various economic strata unconsciously joined forces to meet the danger” (*ibid.*, 162). Polanyi gives the example of the workers’ Chartist movement in mid-19th century England which had to appeal to the middle classes in order to get any constitutional concessions (*ibid.* 180–1). Moreover, Polanyi sees the structure of society as changing, which means a class “may disintegrate and be supplanted overnight by a new class or classes” (*ibid.*, 159). Despite this more fluid understanding of the social category of class, Polanyi speaks of the following class forces advancing and obstructing the market economy of the late 19th and early 20th century: the trading classes and the entrepreneurs represented the capitalist industrialist block, which was spearheading the expansionist movement, while the feudal aristocracy, farmers and “the rising industrial proletariat” represented the obstructionist movement for the defence of the social fabric (*ibid.*, 162). All in all, Polanyi’s concept of the *double movement* will help me to explain how the expansion of the market continued in the neoliberal turn and how new social and populist movements after the 2007–2008 financial crisis started a new protectionist movement in the fight against austerity policies.

In the following sections, I will elaborate on a selection of Foucault’s and Polanyi’s concepts that will help me in outlining a theoretical framework for a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between liberal democracy, capitalist economy and radical politics. These conceptual tools will then be used for the analysis of the anti-austerity movement and new radical left parties in the European periphery in Chapter 5. The case study of the Slovenian United Left will serve as the connecting point of theoretical observations and analysis made in the prior chapters. My analysis will show that both Foucault and Polanyi speak of a great transformation in state governance that follows the utilitarian logic of economic liberalism. They both pay attention to the role of statecraft and the rule of law in making this change. As I have argued above, there is nothing inherent to capital (internal and transhistorical logic of capital) that could explain the

development of advanced capitalism in the last three decades. Instead of deriving the success of neoliberalism from the internal logic of capital, what I want to emphasise is the role of the institutional setting and the principles in maintaining neoliberal governmentality. For this reason, in my analysis of capitalism under the neoliberal turn, I will be more interested in how the state has been a key asset in the liberalisation of the economy. Following on from my analysis in Chapter 1, I will argue that liberal democratic institutions are not ideologically neutral and that instead they need to be contextualised within a particular ideologico-historical setting. My analysis of Foucault's (neo)liberal governmentality will identify the principles and political rationality that drive and guide the current post-democratic order. The principle of self-limitation in Foucault's analysis of liberal governmentality will be used to explain the pervasiveness of depoliticisation as a systemic technique for further extension and optimisation of the (neo)liberal government. As I have argued in Chapter 1, depoliticisation marks the removal of fundamental political issues from the democratic decision-making mechanisms and control. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how through the formalisation of economic theory and the institutional mechanisms following from it, the logic of the competitive market order is increasingly the main organising principle for the management and running of different social spheres (e.g. the stability of prices in markets replaces governmental concerns for full employment and socio-economic equality, the principle of competition replaces reciprocity in social relations, the neutrality of state governance supersedes the normative telos of policy-making). Depoliticisation comes a result of the transformations in the state management of the political economy that increasingly relies on the legal and judicial mechanisms for the adjudication of economic matters. In turn, the politicisation of social life emerges as the direct underside of depoliticisation, as the liberal government becomes more and more concerned with providing for the biological needs of its populace. This contradiction of a self-limiting, yet growing liberal government will be shown to be one of the key driving forces for the ensuing crises of governmentality to the present day.

The emergence of liberal governmentality: self-limitation, political economy and bio-politics

In this section, liberalism will be analysed through Foucault's genealogical analysis of its governmental rationality. As it will become clear through my analysis, a history of liberalism is also a history of neoliberalism: we cannot understand the rationality behind the positioning of

political institutions in relation to the market in neoliberal governmentality without acknowledging that the seeds for the emergence of neoliberalism were already planted by classical liberal thought and indeed started to be implemented under liberal governmentality. The questions of the interplay between liberalism, neoliberalism and governmentality have been approached by scholars in governmentality studies for more than two decades now, by focusing on the liberal governmental technologies and the problem of the state, production of self-governing individuals and democratic empowerment, the shift from the Keynesian welfare state to neoliberal politics, and the rise of entrepreneurial modes of conduct in different spheres of social life (Burchell *et al.* 1991; Rose and Miller 1992; Barry *et al.* 1996; Cruikshank 1999; Ong 2006; Lemke 2007; Flew 2012; Gane 2014; Brännström 2014; Lemm and Vatter 2014; Brown 2015). While there have been articles and book chapters written on the relationship between liberalism and neoliberal capitalist expansion (Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1996; Brown 2003, 2015; Tamás 2011; Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015; Zamora and Behrent 2016), what is lacking in the existing literature is an acknowledgment of the role of liberalism – and here I mean both its political and economic variants – in enabling the expansion of the neoliberal governmental rationality and the concurrent depoliticisation of democratic politics. Wendy Brown notably comes closest to this endeavour in her latest book *Undoing the Demos* (2015), however, her failure to acknowledge the irresolvable tension between the liberal and democratic traditions, and her resolve to salvage the legacy of classical political liberalism (that is, the constitutionalisation of individual rights and freedoms through social contract theory), obstruct her from properly accounting for the significant convergence between economic and political liberal thought (see Brown 2015, 58–9). To suggest so, Brown argues, would neglect “liberalism’s more political aspects and drives”, especially those pertaining to “liberalism’s imbrication with and inflection of a democratic imaginary” (*ibid.*, 59). I argue that Brown’s criticism of Foucault for treating political and economic liberalism in the same vein through his genealogy of the (neo)liberal governmentality demonstrates her lack of consideration of liberalism’s historical antagonism to democratic movements and demands. Polanyi, at numerous points in *The Great Transformation* (2001), evidences how liberalism “in its crudest version... reduces itself to an attack on political democracy, as the alleged mainspring of interventionism” into the liberal project of a self-regulating market (*ibid.*, 151); how “the liberals of the 1840s” abhorred the idea of popular government, advocated by the Chartist movement (*ibid.*, 180); and how militant liberals viewed popular democracy as “a danger to capitalism” (*ibid.*, 234). Rather than ascribing the hard-fought democratic rights and freedoms unilaterally to liberalism, they should be understood as a product of complex dialectics between the liberal project on the one hand and the different radical movements for democratisation on the other.

My own interpretation of Foucault's genealogy of (neo)liberal governmentality, supported by secondary literature, will present liberal governmental rationality as a paradox which involves two different processes: on the one hand, the new governmental rationality that Foucault analyses follows the principle of self-limitation with regards to the new regime of truth – the market. Following Foucault and Polanyi, I will also be arguing that this development is reflected in the emergence of political economy and (neo-)classical economic theory. On the other hand, the self-limiting rationality of liberal governmentality extends its biopolitical reach through governing people's conduct in areas of social life which are not primarily economical. This biopolitical dimension of (neo)liberal governmentality seeks an active role of citizens in their self-betterment and fulfilment of the needs of the capitalist market economy. We cannot properly account for the depoliticisation of democratic politics as one of the key mechanisms of a liberal government without identifying the biopolitical technologies that underpin it.

In his 10 January 1979 lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault set out to establish an alternative reading of government, as opposed to providing another theory of the state, which he saw was best described by the phrase "art of government", or governmentality. This was his methodological attempt to escape falling into the ontological fallacy of "all those universals employed by sociological analysis, historical analysis, and political philosophy", which were considered as given in humanities and social sciences, and instead to start from concrete practices of government to show how these universals "were actually be able to be formed" (Foucault 2008, 2–3). Foucault clarifies the conceptual difference between the state and the art of government in the following passage:

The state is at once that which exists, but which does not yet exist enough. *Raison d'État* is precisely a practice, or rather the rationalization of a practice, which places itself between a state presented as given and a state presented as having to be constructed and built. The art of government must therefore fix its rules and rationalize its way of doing things by taking as its objective the bringing into being of what the state should be (*ibid.*, 4).

Rationalisation here carries at least two meanings: (1) on the one hand it entails making the operations of the state more efficient, the dimension, which will become clearer below in relation to liberalism; and (2) on the other, it implies a particular political rationality or knowledge that acts as a normative blueprint for the rationalisation of state practice. This second point is also supported by Thomas Lemke (2007) when he testifies about the dual role that political knowledge

plays in the emergence of the modern state. Political rationalities that guide the rationalisation of governing “provide cognitive and normative maps that open up spaces of government” through which state institutions “produce and proliferate forms of knowledge that enable them to act upon the governed reality” (*ibid.*, 48). The “analytics of government”, as Lemke (2007) calls Foucault’s approach to governmentality, thus considers both the political and sociological knowledge and the concrete forms of statehood and strategies that make up what we understand more commonly as the state. In the analysis below, my critical economy approach will focus on how economic liberal ideas have informed the rationalisation of state practice under (neo)liberal governmentality, while outlining the key state mechanisms used in the process.

What, then, is the rationality that has guided the art of government in Foucault’s times and still does today? Foucault identifies it in broad terms as liberalism. From the 18th century onwards, “this new type of calculation ... consists in saying and telling government: I accept, wish, plan, and calculate that all this should be left alone” (Foucault 2008, 20). This signifies a key principle of liberal rationality, which has been popularised as “laissez[-nous] faire” and can also be understood as the self-limitation of government. It is in this sense that the rationalisation or optimisation of governmental reason proceeds in transforming the state from “the point of maximum strength” in the 16th and 17th century to the point where it is not governing “too much and too little” (*ibid.*, 19). Rose and Miller (1992, 179) describe this key liberal principle as placing a limit “on the legitimate exercise of power by political authorities”: “The scope of political authority was to be limited, and vigilance was to be exercised over it” (*ibid.*). By adopting “its own internal forms of self-regulation”, liberal governmentality abandoned the governmental rationality which seeks to totalise a sovereign’s exercise of power over a territory (see Rose 1996; Burchell 1991, 1996) and instead worked towards fostering the self-organisation of civil society through the endowment of subjects with a set of civil rights and freedoms, which were not to be interfered with (Rose and Miller 1992, 179). In this way, liberal governmentality restrained itself in relation to civil society and the citizens, while still keeping control over the social spheres of life. In order to achieve this, liberal governmentality did not maintain its control only through the technologies of the rule of law, civil bureaucracy and “surveillance and discipline by an all seeing police” (*ibid.*), but also through less politically apparent means, such as demographic statistics and calculations, and the formalisation of socially valuable professions, e.g. doctors, regulators, planner, hygienists, social workers (Rose 1996, 42). The demarcation of appropriate areas of governmental intervention from the inappropriate ones, namely the civil society, marks the first instance of depoliticisation in liberal governing techniques.

Parallel to the self-limitation of liberal governing reason, Foucault (*ibid.*, 17–18) observes the emergence of a "political economy" from the middle of the 18th century which marks the gradual establishment of "a reasoned, reflected coherence" between practices that were once conceived as "the exercise of sovereign rights, or feudal rights", such as tax levies, manufacture regulations or regulations of grain prices, and were now managed by "intelligible mechanisms which link together these different practices and their effects, and which consequently allow[s] one to judge all these practices as good or bad" according to a new regime of truth (*ibid.*, 18). Lemke explains the significance of the idea of a political economy for the liberal governmentality:

As a consequence, it is no longer important to know whether the prince governs according to divine, natural, or moral laws; rather, it is necessary to investigate the "natural order of things" that defines both the foundations and the limits of governmental action. The new art of government ... no longer seeks to maximize the powers of the state. Instead, it operates through an "economic government" that analyzes governmental action to find out whether it is necessary and useful or superfluous or even harmful. (Lemke 2014, 62)

But what exactly is this new regime of truth that decides between right and wrong, true and false that Foucault emphasises in relation to the emergence of political economy? According to Foucault, the point at which the liberal art of government distinguishes itself from the previous is that "its mechanisms, its effects, and its principle" (*ibid.*, 28) are becoming more intensified and refined around the regulative idea of frugality. The organising principle of frugality means that it is no longer "unlimited regulatory governmentality" that takes over the "site of the formation of truth", but it is increasingly recognised that the market needs to "be left to function with the least possible interventions precisely so that it can both formulate its truth and propose it to governmental practice as rule and norm" (*ibid.*). It is, therefore, this idea of an independent and self-regulating market that replaces the older idea of the market as distributive justice in the site of truth (*ibid.*). The importance of economic theory (*i.e.* expert knowledge) plays a crucial role in the formulation of the market economy as an independent sphere of civil society, which needs to be respected by the state. Karl Polanyi's thesis on the disembeddedness of the market economy in the next section will further illustrate the significance of this shift in the power-knowledge axis of liberal governmentality and the consequences it had for the rest of society.

Political economy emerges as "a distinctive form of knowledge" on the back of economic and juridical theorists, such as Adam Smith, David Hume and Adam Ferguson, and replaces "the moralistic and rigid principles" of the economic protectionism of mercantilism with "the idea of

spontaneous self-regulation of the market on the basis of 'natural' prices" (Lemke 2014, 62). The theorists of the free market "assumed that there exists a nature that is peculiar to governmental practices, and that governments have to respect this nature in their operations" (*ibid.*). According to these theorists, the naturalism of market operations derives from "the internal and intrinsic mechanics of economic processes" (Foucault 2008, 61) and these mechanisms then act as "a standard of truth which enables us to discern which governmental practices are correct and which are erroneous" (*ibid.*, 32). Foucault refers to Adam Smith's invisible hand, for example, which he describes as "a more or less well thought-out economic optimism" (*ibid.*, 278). Under the conditions of "the total transparency of the economic world", maximisation of individual self-interest and ignorance towards the collective outcome of private commercial enterprise, Smith's invisible hand ensures that all the participating economic actors benefit in a market economy, regardless of the impact that economic activity has for the rest of society (*ibid.*, 279). The government under liberal governmentality has to step aside and not interfere with the interplay of individual economic interests of merchants and entrepreneurs. The role of governmental action is "no longer legitimacy or illegitimacy, but success or failure; reflection focuses not on the abuse or arrogance of power but rather on ignorance concerning its use" (Lemke 2014, 62).

To summarise my point, following from the classical economic theory underpinning economic liberalism, the general direction and guidance of the government no longer functions according to the principle of justice, but according to "the truth" of the market (Foucault 2008, 32). This truth is supported by expert theoretical discourses, generated through the professionalisation and standardisation of economics as a science, and the accompanying developments in jurisprudence and the institutions which produce it (for instance, the university, the media, non-governmental organisations) (Foucault 2008, 282; Foucault 1980a, 131). With the natural laws of the market occupying the site of truth of liberal governmentality, the market dictates and prescribes the jurisdictional mechanisms that regulate the milieu of market needs. This development marks the second instance of depoliticisation in liberal governmentality.

The third development that accompanied the emergence of political economy and the self-limiting of governmental practice is the substitution, "or doubling rather", of the subjects of rights who now appear as "a *population* that a government must manage" (Foucault 2008, 22). Foucault argues that liberalism marks the birth of biopolitics, which presents a paradox when liberal governmentality is considered in terms of its self-limitation principle. To explain this paradox, he presents the idea of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as "the very formula of liberal government" (*ibid.*, 67). The government in liberal governmentality "must give way to everything due to natural mechanisms in both behaviour and production" (*ibid.*). In this sense, it is still limited "to the function

of supervision” and can only “intervene when it sees that something is not happening according to the general mechanism of behaviour, exchange, and economic life” (*ibid.*). But to uphold the principle of self-limitation in relation to the market economy, liberal governmentality considerably extends “procedures of control, constraint, and coercion” which act as “the counterpart and counterweights of different freedoms” (*ibid.*). In his analysis of Foucault’s understanding of government, Graham Burchell identifies the latter disciplinary techniques as “technologies of domination”, that is, governmental power exercised over individuals (Burchell 1996, 19). But this *power over* should not be understood in the sense of absolute control. For Foucault’s notion of government in the more general sense also implies “the conduct of conduct”, the acting of government “on the actions of individuals... so as to shape, guide, correct and modify the ways in which they conduct themselves” (*ibid.*). This more nuanced understanding of government as a technology of power also acknowledges “the activity, agency or the freedom of those on whom they are exercised” (*ibid.*, 20). As Burchell points out, government in the Foucauldian sense represents a point of contact between the techniques of domination, as “a simple and direct physical determination of their objects”, and the techniques of the self, where individuals and collectivities act upon themselves through self-subjectification or self-governing (*ibid.*). This point of contact in government is crucial for understanding that the techniques of the self do not operate in exteriority to techniques of domination – as Foucault points out, the techniques of the self might very well be “integrated into structures of coercion” (Foucault 1980b).

I will now explain how the interaction between these two types of techniques in liberal governmentality constitutes what Foucault understands as biopolitics and which I will understand more broadly as the politicisation of social life. Burchell maintains that early liberal thought envisioned the rationalisation of government through “the *natural*, private-interest-motivated conduct of free, market *exchanging* individuals” (Burchell 1996, 23). Only by accommodating this free conduct of self-governing individuals could the market function optimally. But as Burchell makes clear, the economic activity between self-conducting individuals does not happen in isolation, but “within a natural and historical milieu comprising a tissue of proximate passional ties, associations, affiliations, antagonism, enmities and friendships, communitarian bonds and so on, which characterize civil society” (*ibid.*, 24). This clarification is important for understanding that liberal governmentality involves both economic and non-economic domains. In addition, Foucault argues that liberal governmentality involves the conjunction of both types of techniques I mentioned above. While the state in liberal governmentality supervises the market operations, and intervenes into it if deemed necessary for its optimal performance, it also entails the construction of mechanisms which breathe life into, introduce “additional freedom through

additional control and intervention” (Foucault 2008, 67). What Foucault is referring to here are the biopolitical techniques, which “increase, protect, and regulate life” and “they do so by infiltrating the processes of life (instead of suppressing or submitting them) in order to govern or to rule them from the inside” (Muhle 2014, 79). As Maria Muhle explains, the specificity of these biopolitical technologies of domination “lies in the *positive* and not repressive relation to life” (*ibid.*). So, although liberal governmentality sets into motion the depoliticisation of economic policy-making and control over the political economy, as demonstrated above, it also extends and optimises governmental control through the politicisation of biological processes. To paraphrase, Foucault, liberalism does produce freedom, but at a cost of more biopolitical control (Foucault 2008, 65).

Moreover, as Burchell argues, the biopolitical rationalisation of problems that populations were facing at the time – “health, hygiene, birth and death rates, life expectancy, races, etc.” – also posed a challenge to “the framework of a liberal rationalization of government premised on the rights and necessary initiative of *individuals*” (Burchell 1991, 143). For example, Foucault refers to the introduction of “basic Welfare measures” in the aftermath of the Great Depression in the 1930s, which enabled the extension of democratic freedoms, but which could only be guaranteed by economic interventionism, a direct anti-thesis to liberal governmentality (Foucault 2008, 68). Burchell explains this dynamic in the following passage:

Within this milieu a historical dynamic is identified that arises from, on the one hand, the fissiparous tendency of economic egoism that leads exchanging individuals to engage in an abstract form of activity involving relations with others that are indifferent to their membership of any particular society or nation and, on the other hand, the complex interplay of particular localized patterns of sociability, of allegiances and antagonisms. It is on the basis of this natural and historical dynamic of society that there evolve spontaneous relationships of power, authority and subordination or, in other words, forms of the “self-government” of civil society. (Burchell 1996, 24)

As the rationality of liberal governmentality works towards “the optimum performance of the economy at minimum economic *and socio-political cost*” (*ibid.*, 26), following the principles of frugality and self-limitation, another contradiction emerges. While the performance of liberal governmentality can be “rationalized and justified in terms of liberal principles of economic government”, it can be deemed as “failing completely” when the “high socio-political cost” of this optimum economic performance is taken into account (*ibid.*). This contradictory situation brings forth what Foucault calls “crises of governmentality” (Foucault 2008, 68). While Foucault does not

reveal what the cause of these crises are, he makes it clear that crises of liberalism need to be understood in relation to crises of capitalism, the crisis of the 1930s serving as proof (*ibid.*, 69–70). As I have explained in Chapter 1, my argument here is that this paradox can be most adequately addressed in terms of the tension between liberalism and the ascendant democratisation and socialist movements, for example in the later 19th and early 20th century (syndicalism, socialism and anarchism). I will illustrate this further in the next section by using Karl Polanyi's notion of the double movement which recognises the dynamic that Burchell identifies in the self-government of civil society.

To conclude this section, Foucault's analysis of liberalism in terms of an art of government identifies and exposes three key elements: the principle of self-limitation, the emergence of a political economy and government control through biopolitics. In compliance with the principle of self-limitation, liberal governmentality optimises the government of the population through drawing an invisible line of separation between the state and civil society/economy. This abstract separation, which finds support in classical liberal thought, constructs a space for the optimum performance of liberal governmentality through "naturally and spontaneously evolved forms of the self-government of civil society" (Burchell 1996, 25). The delegation of managing economic activity from the domain of the sovereign (feudalism) to the purportedly natural mechanisms of the market demonstrates another tendency of depoliticisation. As the state is limited from directly intervening into the market economy, liberal governmentality develops the appropriate administrative and juridical mechanisms through which it can perform the necessary regulatory functions in order to ensure the running of a self-regulating market economy. As Burchell reminds us, this happens through "early liberal governmental experimentation, such as the legal instrumentalization and enframing by the State of diverse relations of authority-subordination" (*ibid.*). Establishing an institutional order which operates independently from the alleged arbitrariness of political sovereignty and which is able to regulate and arbitrate between rival and conflicting interests of the market becomes one of the key functions of law. In this sense then, liberal governmentality operates through the depoliticisation of governing in relation to the market economy and politicisation of social life by extending its biopolitical reach over the population. In the next section, Polanyi's institutionalist approach to political economy will demonstrate what mechanisms are mobilised by the liberal state in order to bring into existence a self-regulating market. Furthermore, by using Polanyi's notion of the double movement, I will also explain how depoliticisation under liberal governmentality generates a dialectical counter-movement in the form of anti-austerity politics and movements for radicalisation of democracy.

The institutional conditions for a self-regulating market

In the following, I will explain Karl Polanyi's account of the role of the institutional setting in bringing into existence the economic ideas of a free and self-regulating market and the effects this liberal experiment had on the social and natural world. Polanyi argued that "any economic system has to be considered as a whole and as a historically specific social organization" (Cangiani 2011, 177). The emphasis on the historical and socio-political contingency of the market economy "implies a comparative method and a critique of conventional economics" (*ibid.*), which conceptualises economic activity as an interplay of self-interested and rational actors. Conventional economics is also blind to the fact that "the market could not work without a complex institutional framework", diverse kinds of governance at different levels and "various kinds of public interventions" (*ibid.*, 191). Beside Polanyi's institutional outlook in his analysis of the capitalist economy, there is a strong emphasis on exploring "the interrelation between the economic system and other aspects of social life" (*ibid.*, 177), what conventional economics treats as insignificant externalities in light of the *ceteris paribus* assumption. In opposition to conventional economics, Polanyi's analytical concepts of disembeddedness and double movement will demonstrate that a self-regulating market on its own is but an abstraction from classical economic theory. When put into practice through institutional and juridical means, the contradiction of liberal governmentality, as demonstrated in previous section, unleashes a relentless dialectical force toward regaining democratic control of social and economic processes. This section will thus further expand on how crises of modern politics arise as a result of the paradox of liberal governmentality. It will also widen the scope of my critical economy approach by demonstrating the international relevance of Polanyi's institutional analysis of the world economy.

Compared to Foucault's genealogy of liberal governmentality, Polanyi provides us with an economic sociological analysis of the later stages of liberalism from the late 18th and up to the mid-20th century. Like Foucault, Polanyi recognises there "was nothing natural about laissez-faire; free markets could never have come into being merely by allowing things to take their course" (Polanyi 2001, 145). Only through the help of state mechanisms and protections for the national industry was the idea of free market capitalism feasible. Polanyi gives the example of the successful cotton manufacturers in England, "the leading free trade industry", which was only able to thrive with "the help of protective tariffs, export bounties, and indirect wage subsidies" (*ibid.*). The principle of self-limitation in liberal governmentality is further evidenced in Polanyi's dissection of utilitarian economic liberalism:

True, legislation could do nothing directly, except by repealing harmful restrictions. But that did not mean that *government* could do nothing, especially indirectly. On the contrary, the utilitarian liberal saw in government the great agency for achieving happiness... It was the task of the executive to collect statistics and information, to foster science and experiment, as well as to supply the innumerable instruments of final realization in the field of government. Benthamite liberalism meant the replacing of parliamentary action by action through administrative organs. (*ibid.*, 145–6)

The rationalisation of liberal governmentality is again demonstrated here in the form of a self-limitation of governing in relation to the market on the one hand, and further extension of the biopolitical reach of governing mechanisms over the population through statistics, calculating, counting, and so on. This observation in Polanyi's analysis emphasises the argument that the state in liberal governmentality should not be understood as minimal or shrunken, but as an optimised way of governing through the depoliticisation of democratic decision-making and congruent politicisation of the social sphere through biopolitics and self-governing.

The concept that is central to Polanyi's understanding of the liberal transformation of governing is disembeddedness. His anthropological studies have drawn him to contrast the Western project of market liberalism with the history of earlier economic systems, which "were organized either on the principle of reciprocity or redistribution, or house-holding, or some combination of the three" (*ibid.*, 57). Only with the introduction of a market system "the pursuit of individual gain is suddenly elevated to be the fundamental organizing principle of economic life" (Block 2003, 295). Karl Polanyi argues that the shifts from isolated local markets into a market economy and regulated markets into a self-regulating market found ground in orthodox economic theory, "which naïvely imagined that such a development was the natural outcome of the spreading of markets" (Polanyi 2001, 60). What these shifts signify has remarkable consequences for the organisation of society:

Ultimately, that is why the control of the economic system by the market is of overwhelming consequences to the whole organization of society: it means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economy system... For once the economic system is organized in separate institutions, based on specific motives and conferring a

special status, society must be shaped in such a manner as to allow that system to function according to its own laws. (*ibid.*)

Polanyi's passage above reaffirms Foucault's thesis of the market taking over as the site of verification in the emergence of liberal governmentality (see Foucault 2008, 31–2). Like Foucault, Polanyi characterises the market economy as essentially an economic system which is "controlled, regulated and directed by market prices; order in the production and distribution of goods is entrusted to this self-regulation mechanism" (Polanyi 2001, 71). I will elaborate how the stability of prices becomes the primary objective of neoliberal economic governance, superseding previous governmental objectives, such as full employment and tackling socio-economic inequality, in the next section – what is key to underline here is the role of the state and policy in enabling this idea of a self-regulating market to gain any substantive value. The state in liberal governmentality is not to interfere with the price- and income-setting mechanisms of the market: "Neither price, nor supply, nor demand must be fixed or regulated; only such policies and measures are in order which help to ensure the self-regulation of the market by creating conditions which make the market the only organizing power in the economic sphere" (*ibid.*, 72). Moreover, in order to materialise, the idea of a self-regulating market also requires "nothing less than the institutional separation of society into an economic and a political sphere" (*ibid.*, 74). This novel institutional arrangement, even if based on a fallacy, meant that all other spheres of social life needed to be subjugated to the demands of the market.

These revolutionary developments in the organisation of society did not go unchallenged. The fact that a market economy could only exist in a market society required that "all elements of industry, including labor, land, and money" were included in it (*ibid.*, 74). For Polanyi, this increasing commodification started to spell the destruction of the conditions on which market economy was built. To appreciate this point fully, we first need to understand Polanyi's distinction between commodities and fictitious commodities. According to Polanyi, the commodity concept is the mechanism through which the market is able "to control and direct the actual elements of industrial life" (*ibid.*, 75). As soon as an object is produced for sale on the market, it becomes "subject to the supply-and-demand mechanism interacting with the price" (*ibid.*). Now, Polanyi contends that labour, land and money also form part of industry and are as such organised within the market system. However, they are not really commodities, since they are not originally produced for sale:

Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally, is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them is produced for sale. The commodity description of labor, land, and money is entirely fictitious. (*ibid.*, 76)

This fiction plays a vital role in the organisation of the market economy, where labour, land and money are actually organised around markets, a reality which is not to be interfered with for the sake of the idea of a self-regulating market. However, if the market was really the “sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment”, even “of the amount and use of purchasing power”, it would lead to its self-destruction and the destruction of society (*ibid.*, 76). Despite apparent similarities, Block argues that Polanyi’s “formulation is quite distinct from Marx’s analysis of the contradictions of capitalism” (Block 2003, 281). Whereas Marx conceptualises capitalism as “a fully functioning” economic system with internal contradictions, which manifest themselves in periodic crises, Polanyi maintains there is no “pure version of market economy” because the system is built on a lie and as such cannot function the way its proponents want it (*ibid.*). Moreover, Polanyi’s institutionalist approach gives due recognition to the historically and socio-politically contingent forms of capitalism, where the political-judicial mechanisms prime the optimal functioning of markets within specific national contexts (Polanyi 2001, 39–40).

The transformation of society through market capitalism and industrial development produced as a by-product increasing inequality between the rich and the poor. As Polanyi remarks with sarcasm: “Poverty was nature surviving in society; that the limitedness of food and the unlimitedness of men had come to an issue just when the promise of a boundless increase of wealth burst in upon us made the irony only the more bitter” (*ibid.*, 88). In a manner similar to Foucault, Polanyi talks about the discovery of society as political economy becomes the organising principle of liberal governmentality. Although the free labour market “proved financially beneficial to all concerned”, its economic advantages “could not make up for the social destruction wrought by it” (*ibid.*, 81):

Regulation of a new type had to be introduced under which labor was again protected, only this time from the working of the market mechanism itself. Though the new protective institutions, such as trade unions and factory laws, were adapted, as far as possible, to

the requirements of the economic mechanism, they nevertheless interfered with its self-regulation and, ultimately, destroyed the system. (*ibid.*)

The counter protectionist movement that is called into existence as a result of the negative effects of a self-limiting state and a self-regulating market is what Polanyi calls the double movement (*ibid.*, 136). As market economy continuously expanded across lands and nations, a counter-movement was “checking the expansion in definite directions” (*ibid.*). Polanyi describes this counter-movement as “more than the usual defensive behavior of a society faced with change; it was a reaction against a dislocation which attacked the fabric of society, and which would have destroyed the very organization of production that the market had called into being” (*ibid.*). So, in order to protect the workers, factory legislation and social laws needed to be implemented, and to protect the natural resources, land laws and tariffs in agriculture were put in place. As Cangiani points out, the intervention of the counter-movement through the state and other social agencies can have two different results: (1) on the one hand, it works to counter the tendency of the market economy to externalise social costs; (2) on the other hand, “the actual function of interventions may also, or principally, be that of regulating economic and social processes in order to avoid major breakdowns and reinforce the hegemony of the (economic) ruling class” (Cangiani 2011, 192). When these two possible effects of the double movement are taken into account, the tension between the two movements appears to be even more irresolvable.

Because the counter-movement interfered with the self-regulation of the market, argues Polanyi, the crisis of liberal capitalism ensued, which echoes Foucault’s formulation of the crisis of governmentality erupting as a result of the tension between capitalist expansion and demands for social protection. What propels the dynamism between the two movements is “the action of two organizing principles in society, each of them setting itself specific institutional aims, having the support of definite social forces and using its own distinctive methods” (Polanyi 2001, 138). Polanyi describes the first “as the principle of economic liberalism, aiming at the establishment of a self-regulating market” and relying on the support of the trading and business classes, and the second as “the principle of social protection”, which aims at protecting “those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market”, namely the working and the landed classes (*ibid.*). The clash of these two organising principles and the conflict of the social classes, which used “government and business, state and industry, respectively, their strongholds”, resulted in “such a perilous deadlock that in the twentieth century the fascist crisis sprang” (*ibid.*, 140). As Gareth Dale explains:

...the First World War, the rise of fascism, the Great Depression, world-market implosion, and an arms race that pointed towards renewed world war – were not disconnected events but manifestations of an underlying problem, the disruption of social unity, which was rooted in the rise of ‘market society’. The origins of ‘the cataclysm’, as Polanyi put it, ‘lay in the utopian endeavour of economic liberalism to set up a self-regulating market system’.
(Dale 2010, 15–6)

While I have already explained above how the liberal utopia of a self-regulating market relied on the active intervention of the state at the national level, for laissez-faire to work at the international level, it needed an equalising mechanism, which would promote unrestricted flow of goods, labour and capital among different nations, notwithstanding their differences in industrial development. The international monetary regime, premised on the gold standard, was conceived to be such an equalising mechanism: “it assured firms and individuals in one country that the currencies earned by exports and investments abroad would be ‘as good as gold’; its effect was to remove obstacles to global market expansion” (*ibid.*, 64). The determination of money’s purchasing power, *i.e.* the monetary policy, was therefore removed from the influence of governments and political parties by relying on the idea that the self-regulating mechanism of the gold-standard will eventually eliminate macroeconomic imbalances. As Gareth Dale points out, the “natural” stability of the gold standard was accepted by “right-wing liberal such as Ludwig von Mises” and socialists alike – it was “the faith of the age” (*ibid.*, 65). This move marks another stage of depoliticisation of policy-making in liberal governmentality, akin to the function of the modern-day Euro currency and the Maastricht Criteria of the EU, which were adhered to more strictly after the 2007–2008 financial crisis. With rigid stipulations on fiscal responsibility and like the gold standard, the Maastricht criteria are meant to ensure that governments keep low budget and trade deficits and restrict public spending. However, rather than offering a solution to macroeconomic imbalances between free trading nations, strict monetary and fiscal policy can actually exacerbate them: “by precluding currency devaluations in the early 1930s it contributed to the swiftness with which the slump spread internationally” (*ibid.*,65).

In order for laissez faire to work, all of its three tenets, “competitive labor market, automatic gold standard, and international free trade” had to work together to make one whole – “[i]t was everything or nothing” (Polanyi 2001, 144). The ideas of market economy, free trade and the gold standard were all English inventions. Polanyi singles out the economics of David Ricardo as the key source behind industry specialisation, comparative advantage and free trade, which quickly

spread to the rest of the European continent during industrialisation (*ibid.*, 32). As I said, in order to put these ideas into practice, great sacrifices had to be made:

It meant that England would depend for her food supply upon overseas sources; would sacrifice her agriculture, if necessary, and enter on a new form of life under which she would be part and parcel of some vaguely conceived world unity of the future: that this planetary community would have to be a peaceful one, or if not, would have to be made safe for Great Britain by the power of the Navy; and that the English nation would face the prospects of continuous industrial dislocations in the firm belief in its superior inventive and productive ability. (*ibid.*, 144)

Despite a general rise in the cost of living, declining real wages and the doubling of prices between 1790 and 1815, the Ricardian principles “were already so deeply impressed on the minds of politicians and businessmen alike” that the principle of a “sound currency” was nonetheless upheld (*ibid.*). What this meant is that no matter how bad the financial and socio-economic troubles were, no matter how deadly deflation, “fatal monetary stringency” was maintained in order to preserve the “unshakable belief in the automatic steering mechanism of the gold standard” (*ibid.*). The blind faith in economic liberalism eventually brought to end the self-regulating market, after the 1920s “saw the prestige of economic liberalism at its height (*ibid.*, 148):

Hundreds of millions of people had been afflicted by the scourge of inflation; whole social classes, whole nations had been expropriated. Stabilization of currencies became the focal point in the political thought of peoples and governments; the restoration of the gold standard became the supreme aim of all organized effort in the economic field. The repayment of foreign loans and the return to stable currencies were recognized as the touchstone of rationality in politics; and no private suffering, no restriction of sovereignty, was deemed too great a sacrifice for the recovery of monetary integrity. The privations of the unemployed made jobless by deflation; the destitution of public servants dismissed without a pittance; even the relinquishment of national rights and the loss of constitutional liberties were judged a fair price to pay for the fulfilment of the requirement of sound budgets and sound currencies, these *a priori* of economic liberalism. (*ibid.*)

The complete failure of economic liberalism in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the destructive effects it had on societies when it was at its height bears resemblance to the 2007–2008 financial crisis, the most recent episode of crisis in liberal governmentality. Rather than balancing out the macroeconomic imbalances between the EU member states, the strict fiscal rules and austerity measures exacerbated them by paralysing governments in trade deficit countries with high levels of public debt, like Greece and Spain, which further increased unemployment and worsened the socio-economic conditions for the lower and middle classes. I will look at the social unrest and resistance to these policies more closely in Chapter 5.

Polanyi's analysis underlined the apparent destructiveness of a self-regulating market behind economic liberalism, yet, economic liberals, who entered a three-decade long phase of self-reflection and radical revisionism of their economic school, refused to accept the blame for their ideas. Rather than admitting that "the competitive system and the self-regulating market" were responsible for the ills of the Great Depression and its aftermath, they defended themselves by blaming the general protectionist movement, "the interference with that system and interventions with that market" (*ibid.*, 150). The problem, as they saw it, was that there was still too much hindrance to the functioning of the market, whether it was workers' rights and working standards, social insurance, public services, cartels and monopolies, restrictions on capital movements and imports, and so on (*ibid.*). In the next section, I will illustrate what key transformations marked the transition from classical economic liberalism to neoliberalism.

To summarise the key points from my analysis, Polanyi's approach to political economy provides us with an institutional and comparative outlook on how a self-regulating market came into existence and how it operates. Polanyi's study of economic liberalism underlines the role that ideas play in the commodification of non-commodities, such as labour, land and money, and which provides theoretical support for the liberal project of disembedding the market economy from social relations. The establishment of a self-regulating market under a liberal state also demonstrates "an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled interventionism" by administrative means and bureaucratic control – all with the aim of making "Adam Smith's 'simple and natural liberty' compatible with the needs of a human society" (*ibid.*, 14). The expansion of the market logic, however, is not left unchallenged as it brings general misery and impoverishment for the working and landed classes through blind adherence of the liberal state to the principles of free trade and sound budgets. The establishment of a self-regulating market provokes the emergence of a counter-movement which aims to protect human life and society from the destructive effects of liberal economic progress through demands for democratic control of the social and economic processes. The tension between the two forces

becomes so grave that it results in a crisis of liberal governmentality, to return to Foucault's terminology, which propels into motion a need for the revision of liberalism. By turning back to Foucault's genealogy of liberal governmentality, I will demonstrate exactly how this revisionism takes place.

The refinement of liberalism: the emergence of neoliberalism

Neoliberalism marked the point of reinvention of liberal thought in order to first address the limitations of classical liberalism, and second, to respond to the grave political economic questions of the time. After the horrors of the Second World War, the question of neoliberalism called for "the re-elaboration of some of the basic elements of liberal doctrine – not so much in the economic theory of liberalism as in liberalism as an art of government, or if you like, as a doctrine of government" (Foucault 2008, 102). If the key organising principle of liberal governmentality has been the self-limitation of government in relation to the natural laws of a self-regulating market, then neoliberalism marks its complete reversal in a way. The initial formula of liberalism was to establish a space of economic freedom and let it be circumscribed by the state. What neoliberalism does is it turns around this formula and adopts "the free market as organizing and regulating principle of the state" (*ibid.*, 116). It is no longer the market that is supervised by the state, but rather the state under the supervision of the market (*ibid.*).

Foucault identifies the emergence of neoliberalism in "two main forms, with different cornerstones and historical contexts": (1) the German form, which develops in response to the crisis of the Weimer Republic, Nazism and post-war reconstruction; and (2) the American form, which defines itself in reference to the New Deal and the criticism of all the social and economic programmes organised around the post-war expansion of the federal administration (*ibid.*, 78–9). Although the two different forms of neoliberalism found inspiration in different economic schools of thought, they developed theoretically in relation to each other through "a series of person, theories, and books" passing between them (*ibid.*, 79). Foucault thus engages with the Freiburg School of ordoliberalism, as well as the American Chicago School, analysing the work of liberal scholars, such as Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm, Wilhelm Röpke, Alexander Rüstow, Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and Gary Becker. The key difference between the two forms of neoliberalism is in the ambiguity of German ordoliberalism towards framing society in terms of market principles: whereas German ordoliberalism still expresses some moral and

sociological reservations towards applying the principle of competition to the whole of society, American neoliberalism has no such concerns and is much more radical in its “generalization of the economic form of the market” (*ibid.*, 243). In my exposition of the key principles of neoliberalism, I will mostly draw upon Foucault’s analysis of the German form of neoliberalism as that is where Foucault provides most theoretically relevant inquiry with regard to the problem of governmentality.

Against the backdrop of emerging anti-statism, or “state-phobia” (*ibid.*, 78), on the fringes of intellectual currents in the post-war period, coming both from the right (neo-conservatism, neoliberalism) and the left (the Frankfurt School, the May 1968 unrest), Foucault summarises the challenge for liberalism as thus: how can liberalism “bring about its real objective, that is to say, a general formalization of the powers of the state and the organization of society on the basis of the market economy” (*ibid.*, 117)? In other words, how can the overall political framework be modelled on the principles of a market economy? The way neoliberal thinkers achieve this is through “a number of shifts, transformations, and inversions in traditional liberal doctrine” (*ibid.*, 118). In the following, I will outline three such shifts which deal with three different problems identified in the classical liberal doctrine by neoliberal scholars: (1) competition and the problem of monopoly; (2) the problem of permissible and impermissible governmental actions; and (3) the problem of social policy and its “anti-economic” effects. Each shift will also further demonstrate how the depoliticisation of the state is extended through the neoliberal construction of a competitive market society.

First, the neoliberal thinkers uncouple the functioning of the market economy from the political principle of laissez-faire. By putting forward a theory of free and full competition, in which competition is no longer viewed as a “given of nature, something produced spontaneously which the state must respect precisely inasmuch as it is a natural datum”, competition becomes a normative principle for the formalisation of the new relationship between the state and the market economy (*ibid.*, 120). It is normative in that it superimposes market mechanisms onto governmental policy and requires from the government continuous intervention “to produce and reproduce competition, to facilitate and restore it” (Brown 2015, 63). In this sense, neoliberalism no longer follows the classical liberal principle of laissez faire, but is instead in a state of “permanent vigilance, activity, and intervention” (Foucault 2008, 132). “One must govern for the market, rather than because of the market” (*ibid.*, 121). The question of (neo)liberal governmentality is no longer which governmental action is permissible and which is not, which domain can one intervene into and which one cannot, but what style of government most effectively ensures that “the market is what ultimately must be produced in [and through]

government" (*ibid.*) An example of neoliberal state vigilance in ensuring the principle of full and free competition, or at least attempting to, would be competition law or anti-monopoly legislation. Only through the establishment of a complex institutional framework, which prevents "external processes from intervening and creating monopolistic phenomena", can the formal process of competition properly function (*ibid.*, 137). Neoliberalism, therefore, marks further depoliticisation of liberal governmentality in that the market mechanisms are no longer functioning in exteriority to the state economic policy-making, but become infused into the very structure of neoliberal governing. Whereas in classical liberalism the scope of state governance was delimited by the space of the market economy and was thus not part of the formal structure of competition, under neoliberal governmentality competition as the key organising principle of the market determines the conduct of both state and non-state activity.

The second problem for neoliberalism concerns the question of "permissible" and "impermissible" forms of government intervention (Patton 2014, 144). Government intervention is deemed welcome by neoliberal thinkers when intervention is needed for the optimal performance of a competitive market economy. In this sense, neoliberal governmentality is no different from the old liberal regime – under the liberal regime, the market performance also determined which intervention is necessary and which is not, which domain the government should intervene into and which should be left untouched. However, what is different under a neoliberal governmentality is that the government is not supposed "to intervene on the mechanisms of the market economy, but on the conditions of the market" (Foucault 2008, 138). Foucault distinguishes between two types of permissible government intervention: (1) regulatory actions and (2) organising actions. The task for regulatory actions is to take into account what Foucault identifies as three fundamental tendencies in the market:

These three tendencies are: the tendency to the reduction of costs, the tendency to the reduction of the profit of the enterprise, and finally, the provisional, localized tendency to increased profit, either through a decisive and massive reduction in prices, or by an improvement in production.¹³ (*ibid.*)

It is the objective of regulatory actions then to eliminate any temporary frictions in the market economy and enable the free play for these market tendencies. The way this is done primarily is through ensuring price stability. While you would still have price controls on agricultural and

¹³ These tendencies could easily be attributed to Karl Marx's tendency of the rate of profit to fall, but there is no such reference provided by Foucault.

industrial products in the early days of liberal governmentality, under a neoliberal governmentality the main mechanism becomes the control of the rate of inflation. All other objectives which we would normally attribute to economic policy-making, such as the maintenance of purchasing power, the pursuit of full employment and balancing the balance of payments (trade deficit/surplus), become secondary to the objective of ensuring price stability (*ibid.*, 139). Further to this, I would add that after the financial crisis of 2007–2008, strict fiscal discipline becomes another objective of neoliberal governmentality, similar to what the gold standard represented in the early liberal regime. But while the stability of prices would be ensured through the depoliticisation of central banking (establishment of independent central banks) in the late 1990s and early 2000s,¹⁴ the strict reduction of budget deficits (for instance, through austerity measures) would remain in the domain of governments.

While the objective of organising actions is also to intervene on the conditions of the market, its function is to act on the “more fundamental, structural, and general conditions of the market” (*ibid.*). Here, Foucault gives the example of the introduction of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in what was then the European Community. The key idea behind the CAP was to establish a framework through which European agriculture could function within a market economy. The purpose of the CAP was not to “find the economy system that will be able to take account of the basic facts peculiar to European agriculture”, given its state of fragmentation and the structural differences between different member states, but how to modify the given conditions, the facts of the existing framework of European agriculture, so that “the market economy can come into play” (*ibid.*, 141). So while governmental intervention had to be light at the level of economic processes through permissible regulatory actions that I described above, it had to be heavy when it came to “this set of technical, scientific, legal, geographic, [let’s say] broadly social factors which now increasingly become the object of governmental intervention” (*ibid.*). The problem of permissible governmental actions is, therefore, resolved through the establishment of specific regulatory actions, which respond to the needs of the market at the level of economic processes, and the more general structural reforms, the aim of which is to organise society around a competitive market order. Especially the latter have been high on the agenda of European neoliberal governments after the 2007–2008 financial crisis. I will expand on the contemporary relevance of these mechanisms in below.

¹⁴ The establishment of the operational independence of central banking as a depoliticised mechanism for ensuring low inflation has been written about by a number of authors. See Burnham (2001); Clarke and Roberts (2014); and Flinders and Wood (2015).

The third problem that the neoliberal thinkers identified was that of social policy. The main purpose of social policy in a welfare economy was to act as a counter-weight to the negative effects of the market, whether they be labour related (exploitation, redundancy or injury at work) or due to the lack of equal access in collective enjoyment of consumption (public services, cultural life, and so on). What neoliberalism achieved was a fundamental change in the general perception of social policy. Social policy was no longer presented “as compensation for the effects of economics processes” because if it were, it would negate the very efficiency that gives organisational legitimacy to the market economy (*ibid.*, 142). For this reason, it was seen by neoliberals as “destructive in relation to economic policy” and thus anti-economic (*ibid.*, 142–4). This required a major transformation of how social policy is conceptualised and perceived in relation to the market economy. Its key objective was no longer “the socialization of consumption and income”, but privatisation and individualisation:

Society, or rather the economy, will merely be asked to see to it that every individual has sufficient income to be able, either directly and as an individual, or through the collective means of mutual benefit organization, to insure himself against existing risks, or the risks of life, the inevitability of old age and death, on the basis of his own private reserves. (*ibid.*, 144)

In a neoliberal economy, as opposed to a welfare one, social policy no longer needs to provide a cover for risks that are produced by market competition. Instead, it accords “everyone a sort of economic space within which they can take on and confront risks” (*ibid.*). This feature of neoliberal governmentality signals an even further expansion of biopolitical control that I described in the previous sections. Whereas the shaping of the population into an active labour force that could be exploited by economic processes was already in motion in the early stages of liberal governmentality, the government was nonetheless obliged to provide adequate social protection and rights, which were achieved as a result of the class struggle. With the gradual dismantlement of the welfare state, individualisation of responsibility and privatisation of risks, the social policy under neoliberalism no longer functions as “a compensatory mechanism for absorbing or nullifying the possible destructive effects of economic freedom on society” (*ibid.*, 160). Instead, an active form of social interventionism is pursued, so that the formal mechanism of competition can regulate the market economy, and increasingly society as a whole. The neoliberal social policy is thus even more “active, multiple, vigilant, and omnipresent” (*ibid.*) – not in protecting social

cohesion and the general well-being of society, but in enabling the idea of a self-regulating market, no matter how destructive its effects.

These three key transformations that were part of the revisionism of the classical liberal doctrine contributed to the rise of a contemporary neoliberal society that is premised on two major axes: the formalisation of society on the model of the enterprise and the redefinition of law “on the basis of and in terms of the competitive market economy” (*ibid.*, 160). The self-limitation of neoliberal governmentality with regards to permissible and impermissible actions towards the market was also reflected, as shown above, in the elimination of the state’s role as a moral and social shield against the anti-social effects of competition. As Röpke, a German ordoliberal, pointed out: “Competition is a principle of order in the domain of the market economy, but it is not a principle on which it would be possible to erect the whole society. Morally and sociologically, competition is a principle that dissolves more than it unifies” (Röpke in Foucault 2008, 243). The evolution of neoliberal governmentality in the last 25 years demonstrates exactly the making possible of the impossible, with serious repercussions for social cohesion and political stability.

Below, I will give two concrete examples of how the formalisation of society on the entrepreneurial model takes shape in the contemporary period. This way I want to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of the economic institutional analysis of neoliberalism and the challenges facing the counter-movements to neoliberalism today.

The contemporary relevance of economic institutional analysis of neoliberalism

In this section, I will show the contemporary relevance of the operative dimensions (regulatory and operative actions) of neoliberal governmentality, by focusing on the interaction between the self-limitation principle and the effects it has for the organisation of economic activity and the role of the state. I will use two examples of the recent attempts at neoliberalisation of societies in Europe, which will then illustrate the challenges for counter-neoliberalisation movements in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 will take the period after the financial crisis of 2007–2008 as a focal point for exemplifying my main argument in this thesis, namely that our liberal democratic system is facing a new crisis of governability, which comes as a result of the structural deadlock between the continuing neoliberalisation of society and the counter-reaction from protest movements. Through a number of recent attempts, the neoliberal project has demonstrated its contempt for

established democratic procedures and popular sovereignty on the one hand, and the social needs of people on the other. As shown in this chapter, the disembedding of the market economy from social relations and the recalibration of state governance to the market principles of competition and entrepreneurship fundamentally transforms the objective of policy-making under neoliberal governmentality, where the primary aim is no longer the provision of general well-being for the population, but the adjustment of governing according to the needs of the market. The increasing marketisation of society, supported by the dominant elite-pluralist model of institutional politics, goes hand in hand with the process of depoliticisation, which shifts the decision-making power away from democratic institutions to independent and (para)legal bodies. Let me give two examples of such transformative attempts by neoliberal governmentality in recent years, which will show the contemporary form of the regulatory and organising actions taken: (1) austerity measures and structural reforms; and (2) free trade agreements.

The neoliberal politics of austerity and structural reforms, which were endorsed by most centre-right and centre-left governments in Europe after the financial crisis, aptly illustrate two key operative dimensions of neoliberal governmentality, as delineated by my critical political economy approach above. With its focus on cutting governmental spending in different policy areas, such as education, healthcare, social welfare, infrastructure, international cooperation and defence, austerity is a prime example of the self-limitation principle, which characterised liberal governmentality in the 18th century in relation to civil society and the market economy and which is still present in the neoliberal art of government today. By following the principle of self-limitation, neoliberal governments purport to improve the economic efficiency of their operations, regardless of the effects this might have for the social cohesion and the natural environment. Another operative dimension of neoliberal governmentality is to act on the general conditions of society, so that it too is shaped by the dynamic of market competition. For this objective to be realised, austerity measures need to be coupled with governmental actions that will not only transform the state structures, but the society as a whole. This is done through neoliberal structural reforms, such as the flexibilisation and deregulation of labour markets, the privatisation of pension schemes and the introduction of business-friendly taxation. As the structural reforms make society run more like a competitive market, individuals and groups are encouraged to act as mini enterprises, constantly competing amongst each other and creatively working on their self-improvement. The private entrepreneurial initiative as the hallmark of a competitive market society thus takes over in steering economic and development policy, while the government is actively engaged in optimising the general conditions for this private entrepreneurship to take place.

The second example, which illustrates the globalising dimension of the neoliberal restructuring of society, are the new free trade agreements, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which are more far-reaching in their attempt to disembed the market economy from social and environmental regulation than their predecessors. The objective of neoliberal governments behind this initiative is to take down the remaining administrative and regulatory barriers to free trade of goods and services, which would include the marketisation of public healthcare providers, education, infrastructure and cultural services. At the moment, there are different types of protective regulation in place in these areas across the 28 members of the European Union, so the adoption of the proposed trade agreements would mean a decisive step in further restructuring of societies according to the principles of market competition. Their adoption would also signify a further depoliticisation of decision-making on economic, social and trade-related matters by relegating any issues between multinational corporations and national governments to ad-hoc transnational juridical mechanisms, effectively bypassing the democratic regulatory mechanisms and undermining the ability of states to use protectionist measures. Coupled with strict adherence to restrictive fiscal policy, these new free trade agreements would help open up venues for the expansion of market activity into areas, which were until now protected by the state.

The neoliberal policy repertoire of fiscally restrictive austerity measures and structural reforms is an apposite illustration of the self-limitation principle that acts as an operational straightjacket for state activity in a market economy. In order to stimulate private economic activity, the governments then need to relinquish sovereignty over their own resources and services via further liberalisation of economy, so that the market competition can extend and establish itself as the only mechanism of wealth generation. Together with flat taxation, which is in line with neoliberal governmentality's tendency to eliminate any anti-economic effects, the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor is inevitable. As societies become more fragmented through competition and as responsibility for impoverishment becomes individualised/privatised, the prospect of resistance and construction of an alternative governmentality seems bleak. In a neoliberal society of individualism and entrepreneurship, what kind of politics can signal an alternative way forward that does not look like a return to the hierarchised societies of state control and restricted private initiative of the 1970s? How do political and resisting subjectivities even emerge in a system where all mainstream political options are wedded to the neoliberal project and protest is viewed as a useless waste of a citizen's time? These questions present profound

challenges for the radical politics of social movements and the populist left-wing parties that want to challenge neoliberal governmentality through mechanisms of institutional politics.

Conclusion

What Foucault and Polanyi teach us in constructing their critique of liberalism and capitalist political economy is that the economic-institutional history of capitalism matters. Through his critical diagnosis, Polanyi demonstrates the destructiveness of the utopianism of economic liberalism in experimenting with the idea of a self-regulating market as the primary motor for economic development in the 19th century. By scrutinising the classical liberal ideas and their realisation in practice, Polanyi dissects the ideological foundation of the market economy and challenges the myth of a self-regulating market. He shows how, through a reflexive, theory supported process, the state plays an active role in bringing the formal mechanism of market competition into practice, while ensuring that the spontaneity of market activity does not destroy the very foundations of its existence. This is where Polanyi's concept of the double movement is crucial as it provides a dynamic understanding of liberalisation in relation to the counter-movement for social protection. Foucault, on the other hand, formulates a genealogy of political economy and the historical constitution of the liberal state from the 18th to the 20th century, which offers a critical insight into the complex transformation of government with the emergence of a free market economy. Foucault's approach to governmentality pays close attention to the impact of political and sociological knowledge on the evolvement of concrete forms of statehood and governmental strategies. As the role of the state is rationalised in accordance with the principle of self-limitation, liberal governmentality oversees the extension of administrative structures and the rule of law to construct a framework within which the market dynamics can play out. The process of limiting the state in relation to the market thus signals a depoliticisation of decision-making, with the market determining the boundaries of state intervention. At the same time, liberal governmentality extends its biopolitical control through measuring and counting the members of the governed population and ensuring that there is an ample supply of active labour force for the needs of the market activity.

As the liberal tendency of market expansion clashes with counter-movements for the extension of suffrage and social protection, crises of governmentality arise. The socio-political cost of ensuring optimum performance of the market economy at the minimum economic cost brings about a contradiction which a liberal state is unable to resolve, unless it relinquishes the

market as the principle regulator of its activity. This paradox eventually translated into a self-paralysis of the international monetary regime, based on the gold standard, and liberal governments, culminating in a crisis of liberalism in the 1930s. The political developments at the time prompted renewed soul-searching among the liberal scholars, which resulted in a revisionism of liberalism up to the 1970s. In the context of growing anti-statist intellectual work on the margins of accepted economic wisdom of the time, Keynesianism, and poor economic activity, neoliberalism is born first as a form of political-economic knowledge and later as the main political rationality of modern governments. With a reformist agenda of reactivating state institutions and mechanisms to expand market liberalisation, neoliberalism signals the refocusing of neoliberal scholars on a theory of statehood, which can pave the way for a more market-enabling doctrine of government. As a result, neoliberal governmentality marks the imposition of market principles of competition and entrepreneurship onto the governmental rationality of liberal states. Further marketisation of society and the state creates new crises of governmentality as the social and natural casualties of free market capitalism increase, which prompts further social and political instability, yet it also entails the individualisation of political responsibility and a fragmentation of social cohesion, which can dampen the possibility of organised counter-hegemonic resistance to neoliberalism.

The question that remains here is what venues are there to construct a radical political project to counter this neoliberalisation of social life. While the economic institutional analysis of liberalism in this chapter demonstrates how the establishment of a self-regulating market had negative effects for social stability and welfare, propelling into action a dynamic counter-movement for the democratisation of economic and political structures and protection of human and natural life, it does not explain the power dynamics of resistance in relation to established power structures under neoliberal governmentality, nor how exactly resistant subjectivities emerge in a crisis. While the question of the dynamics between resistance and institutional politics will be dealt with in Chapter 4, the question of resistance in times of crisis will be undertaken in the next chapter.

My analysis in the next chapter will suggest that collective resistance can emerge through an alignment of a set of specific circumstances, which create a favourable environment for fostering resistant subjectivities. It will try to understand how resistance can emerge in the context of further marketisation of society under neoliberal governmentality. The concept of crisis will be used as an analytical framework, which will help elucidate both the conceptual conditions for the emergence of resistance, as well as provide the contextual understanding of the structural constraints, which might limit it. The key motivation in the next chapter will be to provide productive

venues for thinking the possibility of rupture with the systemic logic of neoliberal governmentality. I will analyse the concept of crisis through three different conceptual routes: crisis as critique, crisis as temporality and crisis as trauma. In this way, I want to bring forth the transformative potential of crisis for radical politics.

CHAPTER 3: Crisis: Critique, Temporality and Trauma

Introduction

The latest financial and economic crisis presents an opportunity for new strategic openings for resistance against neoliberal governmentality. In the unfolding of the crisis, the field for challenging the dominant political economic order opened up as the old neoliberal practices (financial deregulation, central bank independence, depoliticisation of governance) and the blind faith in the markets came under fire (Wilson 2012). So far in my thesis, I have argued that crises of governmentality arise as a result of contradictory processes between the depoliticisation of governing and the concurrent liberalisation of market activity on the one hand, and the counter-movement on the other, which through resistance and challenge to the depoliticised and restricted venues for political participation repoliticise issues, spaces and discourse, putting forward the conditions for a counter-hegemonic narrative. My argument in this chapter will be that this repoliticisation requires a favourable alignment of circumstances in order to allow for “the process [of] disseminating more broadly generative critiques of neoliberalized capitalism” (Brenner *et al.* 2010, 341). The Global Recession presented one such alignment of conditions, yet, as some authors have pointed out the emergence of counter-movements came with some delay (Hessel 2010; Žižek 2010; Wilson 2014; della Porta 2015a).

This delay in the emergence of mass protests against the elected officials and bailed out banking system can be understood in light of the entrenched depoliticisation of public spaces and democratic politics, which took hold under neoliberal governmentality. As market principles of competition and entrepreneurship sip through the social fabric of communities and reconfigure the modes of conduct of citizens, the possibility for resistance is gravely restricted, despite the favourable temporality of the crisis. The alienation of the masses from developing a critical sense of the structural constraints on their conduct and their class interests has long been subject of discussion in Marxian critique of mass society and culture, spanning from the Frankfurt School and critical theory to cultural studies. Critical theorists, such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, argued that popular culture manipulated the masses into political apathy and passivity by cultivating false psychological needs and deflecting “attention from the systemic sources of life problems” (Dunn 2008, 35). In her book *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt talked of the rise of the social in her critique of the modern age, by which she meant that “society

expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (Arendt 1958, 40). This biopolitical process, which Foucault ascribed to the development of the liberal governmentality, led to the fragmentation of social relations, increasing individualism and glorification of the private life, transforming the political character of public spaces and citizens into consumers of capitalist goods.

In view of this increasing depoliticisation of subjectivities and interpersonal relations under neoliberal governmentality, the delay in the emergence of mass protest movements against neoliberalism in the wake of the global financial crisis should not come as a surprise. The marketisation of societies and individuals complicates the favourable alignment of circumstances for the generation of general critique and the eruption of resistance in moments of crisis. In this chapter, I will use the notion of crisis to explore this very alignment of favourable elements as an analytical venue for thinking the possibility of rupture with neoliberal governmentality. In particular, I will focus on the alignment of critique, trauma and temporality in a crisis. I will first offer a brief analysis of existing conceptions of crisis in different fields of study. With a view to the increasing individualism and fragmentation of social relations in marketised societies, I will proceed to probing the conceptual relation between crisis and critique, inspecting whether the moment of crisis represents a favourable ground for the generation and dissemination of critique of hegemonic practices and whether the alignment of these two elements can lead to the emergence of resistance. I will then examine the ways in which discursive eventualisation and systemic logic separate the crisis from the temporality of everyday life and demarcate it as an eventuality of its own kind. This will explain how the discursive prolongation of the crisis normalised the general material suffering caused by neoliberal responses to the crisis. The last part of the chapter proposes to explore the effects of material suffering by those most affected by austerity measures and neoliberal reforms as a possible third element in the alignment of circumstances for the emergence of resistance. This will be done by using the psychoanalytical notion of trauma as a device for bridging the subjective experience of the crisis with the objective general mood in society.

A brief analysis of conceptions of crisis

The poignancy of the current socio-political context (the aftermath of the financial crisis, stagnating economic growth in the Eurozone, the European migrant crisis and Brexit) brings the

notion of crisis back into the mainstream of social studies. Depending on the scholarly discipline, we can find various levels and degrees of theorisation of the concept. In the discipline of social and organisational management in business studies, intra-institutional crises are the focus of analyses, with the emphasis on the identification and assessment of threats and the devising of strategies to cope with organisational crises. Within this wider field, a subfield of crisis communication and risk management studies developed in the 1980s as a result of a series of largescale crises (Choo and Bontis 2002; Venette 2003; Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger 2010; Gilpin and Murphy 2008). The working definition of a crisis that we can find in a recent publication in crisis management studies reads as follows:

An organizational crisis is a specific, *unexpected*, and *nonroutine* event or series of events that create high levels of *uncertainty* and simultaneously present an organization with both *opportunities* for and *threats* to its *high-priority goals*. (Ulmer *et al.* 2010, 7)

Characteristics, such as "unexpected", "uncertain" and "nonroutine", do point in the right direction – and I will develop these further later on in the chapter – but there must be more to this important concept theoretically than what Ulmer, Sellnow and Seager have to offer. In his discussion of the concept, Heath (2012, 6) categorises crisis communication and management as normative, since "[n]ot only is the question what is the qualitatively best means for communication, but what end of such communication is normatively preferred". He states that the goal of crisis communication is "to prevent harm to others and to be accountable" (*ibid.*), but this formulation loses its benevolent connotation when the rationale behind his theorising is underpinned by other justifications. The managerial logic, and why crisis management has attracted so much attention, is apparently "simple": "Crisis costs money, which offers the incentive to avoid, mitigate, and respond in ways that best protect capital and human resources" (*ibid.*, 1). With regards to the stated question of accountability, Heath sees it as "the willingness and ability of some organization to meet key stakeholder expectation on some matter" (*ibid.*, 4). He mentions problems such as preserving the public image and reputation of a business, maintaining a good quality of their risk management and damage mitigation; the latter, however, only reflect a limited corporate scope of the understanding of crisis. Coombs (2012, 19) proposes to be more reserved in using the concept of crisis and not equating it with every incident that makes it to the front covers of newspapers. He argues the notion of crisis should be reserved for designating only "serious events": "the event has to have the potential to seriously impact the organization" (*ibid.*). By this, he means not only the repercussions that a crisis could have for an organisation, but for its

stakeholders as well.

Besides using a fairly descriptive understanding of a crisis, crisis management studies rely heavily on various rational choice models of decision-making, which are based on a schematic and simplified view of reality (Gilpin and Murphy 2008, 91). In these models, there is an underlying assumption that individuals “possess sufficient information and imagination to evaluate every alternative course of action in every conceivable combination of circumstances” (Congleton 2004, 184–5). Furthermore, the neglect of ignorance and surprise is still prevalent in mainstream economics, which limits the scope of rational choice-based analysis in crisis management studies (Congleton 2011). Given the shortcomings of widely accepted economic rationalist assumptions in crisis management studies, namely about rationality, linearity and factual certainties (Gilpin and Murphy 2008, 97), such an approach to understanding the concept of crisis does not offer much theoretical and conceptual insight into its very ontology for the purposes of my inquiry. What they offer at best is a selection of examples and case studies which serve as an illustration of success and failures in crisis communication and management, lessons learnt and what should be done in such situations. The conception of crisis in communication and management studies is merely operational and technical, encouraging organisations and companies to constantly monitor its risk aversion capability, to gather information and manage their resources properly in order to ensure the realisation of priority targets. From this, we can see that the rationality guiding the scholars and economists of crisis/risk management and communication is overly informed by economic theories of rationality, which are premised on unrealistic assumptions of perfect knowledge, perfect circulation of information and the ability to predict the outcomes of actions.

Another area of studies which deals with the notion of crisis are international relations, where crisis is again viewed as a situation which needs to be averted, managed and solved in order to secure the normal functioning of structures and processes in place (Yakinthou and Wolff 2012). Crisis is seen as a conflict between two or more parties which needs to be resolved or at least managed in a way that will guarantee an institutional arrangement of countering potential violence. This conflict resolution approach also looks at politico-institutional processes and solutions, based on principles such as power-sharing, rule of law and socio-economic stability. As the name of the discipline indicates, "conflict management" mostly focuses on conflict-ridden situations or post-conflict societies. It does not, however, attempt to explore the wider systemic implications and reasons for the crisis. The aim of these studies is to manoeuvre a society in crisis in such a way so that it will nicely fit back into the existing order of power structures.

The concept of "resilience" in human security studies serves a similar goal. Instead of promoting the conventional liberal internationalist tactic of intervening into a crisis from the

outside, the resilience paradigm purports to put "the agency of those most in need of assistance at the centre, stressing a programme of empowerment and capacity-building" (Chandler 2012, 216). David Chandler ascribes the success of the resilience approach to "rescuing the credibility of military campaigns through evading and ameliorating the problems of legal accountability, moral legitimacy and political responsibility" (*ibid.*, 225). Because of this guiding rationality, I group the resilience approach together with the wider field of conflict management where the main aim stays the same: maintaining the existing order of power interests and structures by building "resilience", "risk aversion" and "capacities" to reinforce it. Conveniently conflated with the concept of resistance, the goal of resilience is not to empower endangered groups of people with autonomous agency, but to subject them to "the barest levels of meaning" (Evans and Reid 2014, 6). Resilience strategies, currently advocated by international liberal agencies (for instance, see UNISDR 2015), are not about making "a political claim that demands any form of affirmative thinking; it is a purely reactionary impulse premised upon some survivability instinct that deems the nature of the political itself to be already settled" (*ibid.*). The approach to crisis in international studies and in the resilience literature is still overly managerial and strategic, foreclosing a more conceptual analysis of the notion.

Alongside the above orthodox institutional understandings of crisis, a more complex and heterodox conception can be found in Marxist economics. Whereas mainstream economics explain crises as contingent phenomena, which only arise as a result of external events and temporary disturbances of the equilibrium between supply and demand, Marxist see economic crises as "a normal part of the developmental tendencies of the capitalist mode of production" (Clarke 1994, 4). In Volume III of *Capital*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels state the following:

The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit. (Marx and Engels 1959, 484)

Although the theory of crisis plays a central political and ideological role in the Marxist tradition, "nowhere in his own work does Marx present a systematic and thoroughly worked-out exposition of a theory of crisis" (Clarke 1994, 5). The above quotation and the theoretical observations of the "tendency of the rate of profit to fall, tendencies of overproduction, underconsumption, disproportionality and over-accumulation with respect to labour" in the work of Marx and Engels provide references to a Marxist theory of crisis, but there is no consistently developed theory of

crisis in Marx and Engels' work (*ibid.*). Different Marxist approaches to a theory of crisis prevailed over alternative ones depending on the historical period: the debate between the disproportionality and underconsumptionist theories dominated the 1930s, the 1960s saw the rise to dominance of the falling rate of profit theories as the "disproportionality" and "underconsumption" theses as Keynesian measures were unable to respond to the economic downturns of the time (*ibid.*, 6–7).

A conceptual historian, Reinhart Koselleck (2002, 242) describes classical economic models of crisis as "based on the equilibrium metaphors of the eighteenth century", which he says we can never empirically confirm. The metaphors he has in mind are the economic categories, such as supply and demand, production and consumption, circulation of money and circulation of goods, the balance between which, if disturbed, will lead to a manifestation of perturbations within the system. He sees the paradox of this doctrine in its progress-driven tendency: "a balance can only be preserved or regained when productivity increases steadily" (*ibid.*, 243):

As Molinari, an economic theorist of the nineteenth century, said: "Every small or large progress possesses its crisis." That crises are the generators of progress seems to me to be a semantic model that has been confirmed up until now only in the spheres of economics, natural sciences, technology, and industry. ... Proceeding from the semantic option, the question must be posed as to whether "progress" is the guiding concept for "crisis" or whether the iterative periodising concept of "crisis" is the true guiding concept under which "progress" is also subsumed. (*ibid.*)

Relating this quotation back to the political and ideological underpinnings of Marxism, the distinctiveness of the Marxist approach to a theory of crisis, compared to mainstream economics, is that the contradictory foundations of capitalism can only be resolved through intense class struggle, not reform (Clarke 1994, 7). But as Koselleck's quotation above points out, Marxist understandings of crisis are still based on the general equilibrium theory and the idea of progress, which can only be achieved by the complete overhaul of these contradictions and the transition to socialism.

We can approach the question of whether the contradictory and crisis-driven nature of capitalist production really leads to its inevitable self-destruction by turning to Joseph Schumpeter's concept of capitalist "creative destruction". In his book *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (2010), Schumpeter analyses Marx's understanding of crisis and asserts that, while

Marx used the term like everyone else in the ordinary sense of the word, he also reserved it for envisioning "the ultimate breakdown" (*ibid.*, 35) of capitalist structures, which would be preceded by small-scale "recurrent crises" (*ibid.*) and "a stage of permanent crisis" (*ibid.*, 98) before breaking down. Following a similar line of analysis, Easterling (2003) describes Marx's understanding of capitalism as "inherently crisis-prone". However, contra to Marx's predication of eventual breakdown of capitalism through internal crises, Schumpeter argues that the capitalist order instead "incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one" (Schumpeter 2010, 73). A crisis according to the capitalist rationality is not only an unnecessary disturbance to the normal functioning of the system, but also an opportunity to improve itself by exploring new areas of life where profit accumulation can be extended further. As Marx and Engels saw themselves in the defeat of the revolutionary movements of 1848, the return of prosperity after a period of crisis eroded the conditions for the emergence of the proletariat as an independent political force (Clarke 1994, 96).

When we look at the latest financial crisis of 2007–2008, "[c]an we indeed speak of a crisis of capitalism as such at this point" (Lebowitz 2009, 132)? Lebowitz quotes Marx and Engels (1959, 249) when they speak about the contradiction of capitalist production: "The crises are always but momentary and forcible solutions of the existing contradictions. They are violent eruptions which for a time restore the disturbed equilibrium." When we compare the current financial "crisis" with this description, it does not seem to fit the "momentary" temporal element that a crisis is said to have. Yet, we can observe a familiarity in the point that the current crisis erupted unexpectedly and violently and that it managed to restore "the disturbed equilibrium", for the time being at least. Are we therefore talking about just another crisis in capitalism or a crisis of capitalism, and more importantly, does it even matter? Regardless of whether we take the orthodox Marxist view on general cataclysmic crises or "the permanently contradictory and crisis ridden character of capitalist accumulation" (Clarke 1994, 285–6) as our basis for a Marxist theory of crisis, the last few decades and the latest financial crisis have shown the persistent survival of capitalism and thus undermined the teleological trajectory envisioned by Marxist accounts of the implosion of capitalism as a result of its internal contradictions. Following my economic-institutional approach in Chapter 2, which draws upon a Foucauldian-Polanyian critique of political, I reject the view of a single logic of capital and its accumulation as the main "determinant in the history of capitalism" (Foucault 2008, 164). By understanding the emergence of neoliberal governmentality as a product of "institutional and consequently economic transformations", we still have "a capitalism with its singularity" historically speaking, yet with the emphasis on the role

of institutions and ideas in shaping capitalism, “a field of possibilities opens up”, which allows imaging resistance to neoliberalism in novel ways (*ibid.*).

Instead of basing my analysis on whether the crisis we are currently facing is that of capitalism or just another temporary disturbance in capitalist production, I am more interested in exploring what possibilities a crisis represents for radical politics. Above, I outlined the limitations that the conflict management and international crisis approaches pose for my analysis. Their narrow focus on the continued existence of a (corporate) institution in crisis, while avoiding to look for deeper socio-political causes, makes them inadequate in answering the ontological question of crisis. The Marxist conceptions offer a more complex picture of the socio-political landscape when in crisis, some of which provide a detailed analysis of the material conditions that provoke the political apathy of citizens in marketised societies and explain the social alienation of workers in post-Fordist forms of employment. Yet, the general direction in Marxist analysis still tends to be too economically deterministic and preoccupied with classical Marxist categorisations, disregarding the role of non-proletarian subjects and the possibility of transformation through political institutions in a system that is believed to see its end through internal crises.

I will now proceed with my conceptual analysis of the crisis by examining whether the alignment of critique and crisis represents a sufficient condition for the emergence of resistance in times of crisis.

Crisis and critique

In her essay “The Crisis in Education” first published in 1958, Arendt (2006, 170) identifies a “general crisis that has overtaken the modern world” and that “manifests itself differently in each country”. The general crisis that Arendt has in mind is the rise of mass society, the biopolitical extension of control over life as I put it in Chapter 2, which she analyses extensively in *The Human Condition* (1958). In the mentioned essay, where Arendt focuses on the crisis in education in the United States, she describes crisis as “the opportunity ... to explore and inquire into whatever has been laid bare of the essence of the matter” (*ibid.*, 171). This very opportunity presents itself in the tearing away of “façades” and obliterating the “prejudices” (*ibid.*) that have hitherto constructed our sense of reality. The time of crisis is the time for questions – we are forced to ask questions and provide “new or old answers, but in any case direct judgements”. If and when crisis turns into a disaster, Arendt continues, it is when we do not pause and think about our past practices and ways of thinking, but continue (re)acting with “preformed judgements” (*ibid.*). By

asking new questions, the construction of critique begins through the laying bare of essence and the tearing away of the façades of the conventional. This exercise marks the moment of a suspension of the old and of the before-taken-for-granted, and it is in this state of suspension that the temporality of crisis and the effect of critique reveal significant conceptual commonality. After all, crisis and critique share the same etymological root in the Ancient Greek term *krinô*, meaning "to separate, to choose, cut, to decide, to judge" (Roitman 2009): "Crisis is at the basis of social and critical theory insofar as it signifies the dissonance between morality and progress, knowledge and interests, and the limits of intelligibility" (*ibid.*).¹⁵ Like the effect of crisis, critique is "precisely a practice that not only suspends judgment ..., but offers a new practice of values based on that very suspension" (Butler 2001).

The suspension of judgement, however, appears to be a point of contention when comparing Arendt's conception of crisis with that of Butler's. Here we need to ask how exactly a judgement is suspended in critique: are the very forms of intelligibility in need of reformulating, as in requiring alternative ways of thinking, or is the capacity of making a judgment, using the same old forms of intelligibility, (just) momentarily suspended? Here, Butler follows Foucault when he tries to think "the problem of freedom and, indeed, ethics in general, beyond judgement" by way of critical thinking or critique (*ibid.*). Does this then mean that the very capacity of making judgements is suspended in critique? Turning to Theodor Adorno, Butler explains that "the very operation of judgment serves to separate the critic from the social world at hand, a move which deratifies the results of its own operation" (*ibid.*). The following seems to suggest that judgement for Adorno and Butler signifies the old patterns of thinking, sticking to the old conventional knowledge that guided our thinking: "Judgments operate as ways to subsume a particular under an already constituted category, whereas critique asks after the occlusive constitution of the field of categories themselves" (*ibid.*). Such a formulation of critique juxtaposes judgment making in a binary opposition to critique, as if from some pure and non-judgmental position. It also suggests that critique involves a certain performative gesture of drawing a line or a distance between oneself as a critic and the social reality that is being evaluated. Butler, indeed, acknowledges that in this gesture there is a danger that the critic makes a claim to a more profound knowledge of the object. However, formulating the performance of a critical gesture as removed from judgment-making is misleading. I would modify Butler's formulation and maintain that the drawing of a

¹⁵ Similar recognition of the shared ontology between crisis and critique and the importance of this relationship for social theory can be found in the works of authors, such as Seyla Benhabib (1986); Jürgen Habermas (1990; 2001b) and Rodrigo Cordero (2014). Other authors maintain that the analytical utility of the concept of crisis has become either weakened or obsolete in the age of postmodernity; see e.g. Ulrich Beck and Cristoph Lau (2005), Jean Baudrillard (1993; 1994) and Bruno Latour (2004).

distance between the critic and the object is only conceptual, a performative-reflective gesture as the critic cannot remove herself from her situated position and from the forms of intelligibility available to her. Instead, I will contend that it is more beneficial to formulate critique as a paradoxical performative gesture: it purports to remove the critic conceptually at a distance from the object while operating with and using the same (old) judgment capacities.

To take this point further, in his essay *What is Critique?*, Foucault (1997, 24–5) formulates the critical attitude/critique as virtue by exposing the general characterisation of this concept: "the art of not being governed quite so much" (*ibid.*, 29). His logic reveals itself more clearly in the following passage:

And if governmentalization is indeed this movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth, well, then! I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and questions power on its discourses of truth. Well, then!: critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we would call, in a word, the politics of truth. (*ibid.*, 32)

We could, therefore, argue that critique is a movement, a sustained gesture that challenges and questions the "discourse of truth" in confrontation with established authorities and normalities. Critique also implies the awareness of one's own knowledge and its limitations – this nourishes a certain kind of critical autonomy that allows the critic to decide what or who they will obey (*ibid.*, 35–6). Such conception of critique stems from what Foucault saw as Immanuel Kant's "two great critical traditions which divide modern philosophy" (*ibid.*, 99). Foucault maintained that Kant operated in both of these traditions. He posited the two sides as two forms of the question Kant used to ask about his own actuality: "What is *Aufklärung*?" and "What is Revolution?" (*ibid.*, 97–8). The first one, the "analytic of truth" as Foucault (*ibid.*, 99) termed it, is transcendental in that it is concerned with: (1) the search for formal structures that have universal value; (2) the goal of making a metaphysics possible (*ibid.*, 125); and (3) developing the autonomy and the authority of knowledge through different forms of rationality and techniques. The other critical tradition is preoccupied with ruptures, upheavals in history, our actuality and "the present field of possible experiences" (*ibid.*, 99–100). The basis for the latter form of critical thought, Foucault (*ibid.*, 100) argues, lies in the philosophy stretching "from Hegel to the Frankfurt School, through Nietzsche and Max Weber", which also informed his own work.

It is no mystery that Foucault was more dedicated to the second critical tradition, to the question of the "ontology of ourselves, an ontology of the present" (*ibid.*). Despite having pursued what appears to be a diametric path of the critical tradition, Foucault maintains that what criticism comes down to is "analyzing and reflecting upon limits" and in that sense it still premised in the Kantian traditions of critique (*ibid.*, 24). Yet, there is a point in his essay on *What is Enlightenment?* where Foucault distinguishes his critical work from that of his intellectual predecessor:

But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression (*ibid.*, 124–5).

This demonstrates how Foucault saw his work as a continuation of Kant's understanding of criticism, despite what Christina Hendricks (2008, 6), a scholar of Foucault's work, sees as Foucault's "unorthodox" and "at times questionable" reading of Kant. She sums up the difference between the two critical traditions as: "Whereas the first kind of critique works to establish universal limits to knowledge and ethical action, the second reveals the possibility of transgressing limits by determining what in them may be historically contingent" (*ibid.*, 7).

In my thesis, I am more favourable towards the second, Foucault's "philosophical choice" (Foucault 1997, 100) of pursuing a practical critique that opens up the possibility of transgression. The same way Foucault's transgressive form of critique follows "a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and organise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (*ibid.*, 125), it is my aim in this chapter and the rest of the thesis to situate the ideological processes underneath the dominant notions that occupy the minds of the present, such as liberal democracy, politics, crisis and neoliberalism, within their politically contingent historical setting. Therefore, I will understand critique as a practice that requires a desire to "not be governed like that", a desire for autonomous operating in contravention to the established authorities if need be. Could we also not take this key premise of Foucault's critique, as not being governed just like that, as a prerequisite for resistance to neoliberalism and the construction of radical social change? How else can we imagine a break from the passive and apolitical consumer in neoliberal market societies? Furthermore, Foucault (*ibid.*, 25) maintained that "critique only exists in relation to something other than itself". As such, it represents "a certain

way of thinking, speaking and acting, a certain relationship to what exists, to what one knows, to what one does, a relationship to society" that is distinguished from all other types of critiquing – he called this "critical attitude as virtue in general" (*ibid.*, 24–5). The politics that follows from such an understanding of critique is fundamentally anarchist and transgressive in relation to the dominant social systems of conduct and behaviour. To give two concrete examples of what such a politics looks like, the 2011 England Riots or the Occupy movement both fit within the transgressive model of critique that Foucault proposes, as both rejected the established ways of being governed.

Now, in order to understand more fully what Foucault meant by this critical *attitude*, and whether the critique attitude necessarily entails a reflective component, I turn back to Butler's reading of Foucault (and Raymond Williams). Butler maintains that "'critique' is precisely a practice that not only suspends judgement for him [Foucault], but offers a new practice of values based on that very suspension", a position which she finds in Williams' work as well. Although I am using a different edition of his book *Keywords* (Williams 1983), and with that a different translation, the point that Butler (2001) singles out in Williams' writing is that critique envelops a kind of a "specificity of the response, which is not an abstract 'judgement' but ... a definite practice, in active and complex relations with its whole situation and context" (Williams 1983, 86). In the edition that Butler was using,¹⁶ Williams' wording is, however, less precise: "what always needs to be understood is the specificity of the response, which is not a judgement, but a practice". This leads Butler to state that critique marks a suspension of judgement in Foucault and Williams. But when you turn to the 1983 edition of Williams' book, it seems that Williams has a more specific notion of "judgement" in mind. He contests the notion of critique (or criticism) as an *abstract* judgement which is formulated on the basis of *objective* methodologies (*ibid.*). Yet, this does not entail judgement-making in all its conceptions, therefore I would disagree with Butler (2001) when she states that "for Williams, the practice of critique is not reducible to arriving at judgements (and expressing them)", and that by implication critique marks a suspension of judgement *per se*.

Going back to Arendt (2006), we will notice that she makes a distinction between *old* and *new* judgements, which could illuminate Butler's understanding of judgements. In contrast to Butler's disapproving view of judgements, Arendt does not dismiss them or talk about them in an unfavourable manner. In a time of crisis, it is clear that, for Arendt, we are required to make "direct judgements", either in the form of "new or old answers" (*ibid.*, 171). Old answers, in Arendt's language, are "preformed judgements" or "prejudices", which, if they constitute our response to

¹⁶ Williams, Raymond. 1976. *Keywords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 75–6.

the crisis in question, can lead to "a disaster" (*ibid.*):

One of the reasons for the power and danger of prejudices lies in the fact that something of the past is always hidden within them. Upon closer examination, we realize that a genuine prejudice always conceals some previously formed judgement which originally had its own appropriate and legitimate experiential basis, and which evolved into a prejudice only because it was dragged through time without its ever being reexamined or revised. (Arendt 2005, 101)

We could argue that when Butler speaks of judgements, she means the old, preformed judgements, which are tightly knit into "prevailing constellations of power" (Adorno in Butler 2001). The "rush to 'judgement'", Butler (2001) maintains, impedes our critical capacities from exposing those constellations of power. In other words, judgement-making, for Butler, is nothing other than fitting "a particular" situation, event or occurrence into "an already constituted category". It is like using "old answers" in a new (critical, in our case) situation. What is especially peculiar in Butler's understanding of judgement, and the way she separates it from the "praxis" of critique, is the non-performative view of it. Even when we rush to judgements, this practice does not only entail using and (statically) repeating closed up formulations/sets of signifiers, I believe. In this gesture, there is also the unpredictability of performing this rushing to judgements, the potentiality of judgements being dislocated or misplaced in the very act of *rushing* to them. Formulation of judgements involves an act of decision making, which implies a point of certain closure or certainty. What is suspended, thus, in a time of crisis, are not judgements or judgement-making, but the signifiers or categories that make up those judgements. The hierarchy or positioning among them is disrupted, dislocated, and the role of the critical attitude, or the virtuous practice of critique, is to perceive and find these points of dislocation. To return to my two examples of transgressive critique above, the taking of streets during the riots in London and other major cities signified such a moment of suspension of judgement and a state of anarchy, of not being governed as such. However, when compared to the Occupy movement, the critical attitude in the riots remained in its transgressive stage and failed to move over to a reflective stage of critique, which uses the moment of suspension of old judgements as the basis for the establishing anew the sets of values and norms that govern our conduct.

The point about the performative aspect of judgement-making above can be further explicated by turning to Derrida's understanding of "a performative utterance" (Derrida 1988, 17). Derrida poses the following question: "Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation

did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as *conforming* with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a 'citation'?" (*ibid.*, 18). In the performative gesture of judgement making, although we do appeal to "a coded or iterable" model, conforming the content of judgement to a recognisable form of what judgement is, there is always something new in the old performative gesture, something that eschews the sedimented boundaries of the (already) known or spoken, either by hazard or (the unintended intentionality of) playfulness. However, I think Butler's formulation of critical practice could also be understood as implying that there is something else at play in maintaining a critical attitude: that something is reflexivity which translates into a discursive practice. This becomes clearer in the following quotation from Butler:

The critical practice does not well up from the innate freedom of the soul, but is formed instead in the crucible of a particular exchange between a set of rules or precepts (which are already there) and a stylization of acts (which extends and reformulates that prior set of rules and precepts). This stylization of the self in relation to the rules comes to count as a "practice." (Butler 2001)

This gives us a more nuanced view of critique from Butler. There is "a set of rules or precepts" which comes to fruition through judgement-making and there is "a stylization of acts", which does have a more performative, practical twist to the understanding of critique. Following from this, we could say that a judgement inevitably follows some general logic of iterability. Iterability does not imply a simple repetition of the existing postulates, but a potentiality of something being displaced in the proclamation of a judgement. This potential displacement is conditioned by its contingent reception in the dominant order of meaning, but also by an element of the unexpected, a surprise which I will develop on a bit more later in the chapter.

Butler (2001) also talks about the implication of an "act of consent" as "a reflexive movement by which validity is attributed to or withdrawn from authority" (*ibid.*). Similarly to Foucault's formulation of critical attitude as virtue (Foucault 1997, 25), for Butler (2001), critique signifies "a moment of ethical questioning which requires that we break the habits of judgement in favor of a riskier practice that seeks to yield artistry from constraint". It is clear, however, that for Butler the word "judgement" nonetheless signifies an impediment to this ethical practice of questioning the dominant order, made up of social norms and closed up "truths". How then can we conceive of the place for "virtue" and the "ethical practice" that Foucault and Butler situate within their conceptions of critique? Janet Roitman, the author of *Anti-Crisis* (2013) offers an

opposite point when she formulates the role of critique as working through a paradox, that is, "through the commitment to obstinately demonstrate the paradox of power, or the necessary exclusions (the Other, non-sovereigns) that expose the foundations of power to be contingent suppositions" (Roitman 2009). What is interesting in Roitman's exposition of the paradox is the way it illuminates the distinction between old and new judgements discussed above. To illustrate the concept of paradox, she interestingly cites an analytic philosopher of science and logic, W. V. Quine, stating that a paradox is an antinomy that "produces a selfcontradiction by accepted ways of reasoning. It establishes that some tacit and trusted pattern of reasoning must be made explicit and henceforward be avoided or revised" (Quine 1966, 7). These self-contradictions in turn represent points of "crises in thought" (*ibid.*) which "are seen to be the bases for critique" (Roitman 2009). Following from this, we can argue that it is our critical attitude that cuts through the accepted ways of reasoning or old judgements and which exposes the contradictions laying underneath – this consequently opens up "the formal possibility of crisis" (*ibid.*) which "drives dialectical methods typical to social science narrative" (*ibid.*).

In her analysis of Immanuel Kant's understanding of critique, Kimberly Hutchings (1996, 26) also identifies an inherent paradox in the idea of critique. She observes in Kant's work a distinction between two types of judgement: *determinate* and *reflective*. Determinate judgment is concerned with subsuming particular instances under a general rule, whereas reflective judgment signifies an exploration of a particular in which there is no given rule, since reflective judgment does not rely on anything outside itself and as such "legislates for itself" (*ibid.*, 23). Moreover, Hutchings reminds us that Kant's critique of reason had the purpose of avoiding "twin dangers", unfounded dogmatism on the one hand, and scepticism towards the ability of attaining certainty, on the other (Hutchings 1996, 12). The reflective type of critique can be related back to Foucault's view of critique as not being governed as such, where the critical practice signifies a performative gesture of suspending old forms of judgement. In order to challenge the dominant systems and rationalities of thought and practices, scepticism towards established forms of knowledge is welcome faculty in times of social crisis. There comes a point in crisis, however, when determinate claims need to be set to ground the foundations of new systems of thinking. So, while on the one hand crisis marks a suspension of "accepted ways" of reasoning, critique as a faculty of judging eventually needs to cut through these at some point. The practice of critique in times of crisis thus necessitates a transition from reflective judgment to determining judgment. There is something decisive going on in this critical act of cutting through old systems of thinking, something that intermits the suspension provoked by the crisis.

The suspension marks what Aletta J. Norval (2004) terms "the undecidable terrain" and

the urgency of a situation, which the designation of a crisis represents, eventually demands a decision. If we follow Jacques Derrida, the *suspens-ion* is the very condition of a decision: "Without the opening of an absolutely undetermined possible, without the radical abeyance and suspense marking a *perhaps*, there would never be either event or decision" (Derrida 2005b, 67). Especially in critical moments, "nothing takes place and nothing is ever decided without suspending the *perhaps* while keeping its living possibility in living memory" (*ibid.*). And it is perhaps the prolonged indulgence in the *perhaps* in the Occupy movement and other horizontal practices of radical activist projects that is keeping the radical Left away from making critical decisions, when in fact the conditions of the situation urgently demand us to be decisive. The notion of "judgement" is often associated with rationality, reason, being rational, but when put against Derrida's theorising of "decision", that decision "cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, conclusion, or explicitation" (Derrida 1995, 77). The rationalist conception of judgement becomes distorted; a decision, or a judgement for that matter, "structurally breaches knowledge" (*ibid.*). To explicate the point further, for Derrida (2005b, 69),

the decisive or deciding moment of responsibility supposes a leap by which an act takes off, ceasing in that instant to follow the consequence of what is – that is, of that which can be determined by science or consciousness - and thereby *frees itself* (this is what is called freedom), by the act of its act, of what is therefore heterogeneous to it, that is knowledge. *In sum, a decision is unconscious* – insane as that may seem, it involves the unconscious and nevertheless remains responsible.

A similar moment can be identified in Carl Schmitt's work where he theorises juristic decisions. Schmitt talks of "a moment of indifference" and "the circumstance that requires a decision" as "an independently determining moment" (Schmitt 1985, 30) – "the decision emanates from nothingness" (*ibid.*, 32). Schmitt's decisionism, however, is resolutely opposed by Derrida, who maintains that the subjectivity of the subject cannot pretend to fully control the performing of a decision. The very conditions of suspension and undecidability make a decision proper – in other words, we could say there is nothing sovereign in/about a decision. In Schmitt's theory of exception and sovereignty, there is still this "classic, free, and wilful subject, therefore a subject to whom nothing can happen" (Derrida 2005b, 68). This unconditional permanence of the subject's identity, even against the singularity of the "event for which he [the subject] believes to have taken and kept the initiative" (*ibid.*), is what Derrida thoroughly refutes. As Miyazaki (2011,

150) succinctly summarizes: "... the decision is precisely an event that goes beyond the possibilities determined by my intension [*sic.*] or anticipation". If my decision simply followed what Derrida (1992, 25) calls the "subjectal axiomatic", "the egological assumption that pretends to subjectively control the fundamental eventuality" (Miyazaki 2011, 150), its operative uneventuality would not deserve the name "decision". In making a decision, one takes a leap outside of oneself, of what constitutes one's subjectivity. Jack Reynolds (2004b, 84) sees this moment as "an undecidable leap beyond all prior preparations" and "rational calculations" (Reynolds 2004a, 50). In the above quotation, Derrida also brings in the notion of responsibility, which adds another element to the theorising of the moment of decision. Being decisive also means being courageous, having the courage to take a decision. And the courage shines in the very moment of the "undecidable leap" and "the unconscious" of decision-making. We could say a decision is not truly genuine if it is (attempted to be) entirely based on rational calculating, weighing of pros and cons. A decision "can never be wholly justified" (*ibid.*) and hence it invokes "that which is outside of the subject's control (Reynolds 2004b, 85). The moment of suspense is also a moment of surprise:

Certainly the decision makes the event, but it also neutralizes this happening that must surprise both the freedom and the will of every subject – surprise, in a word, the very subjectivity of the subject, affecting it wherever the subject is exposed, sensitive, receptive, vulnerable and fundamentally passive, before and beyond any decision – indeed, before any subjectivation or objectivation. (Derrida 1997, 68)

Such an understanding of decision- or judgement-making is clearly in contravention with the dominant liberal conception of the fully conscientious, autonomous/sovereign¹⁷ and rational decision-maker, which can have gratifying ramifications for the way we think decision-making in politics, especially in the current times of crisis. Let me end this part with Derrida's quote which will flow nicely into the following discussion of crisis as temporality: "not only must the person taking the decision not know everything... the decision, if there is to be one, must advance towards a future which is not known, which cannot be anticipated" (Derrida 2002, 231). Crisis is

¹⁷ Schmittian "decisionism", a word which he himself coins, naturally comes to mind when concepts such as decision and sovereignty appear next to each other. It is worth pointing out that in *Political Theology* Schmitt formulates decisionism as one type of juristic scientific thought (Schmitt 1985, 33) in order to critique the second, the "abstract scientific orientation" (*ibid.*, 34), which idealises and formalises "the juristic form", emphasising "the a priori emptiness of the transcendental form" and its "technical precision" (*ibid.*, 35). Schmitt endorses the subjectivism of decision-making in juridical settings as opposed to the legal(istic) idea of "the objectively valid norm" (*ibid.*, 29).

the marker that represents the field of the undecidable and only a critical practice of questioning authority and those governing can remodel the trajectory of reordering following a crisis. Judgement-making is an inseparable process of that, but it rests to be seen whether old answers are applied to newly resurfaced old problems, what Arendt was cautioning against, or a riskier practice of seeking new answers ensues. In the spirit of Horace's and Kant's call to *sapere aude*, "dare to know" (Hutchings 1996, 51), one's self-liberation can only be achieved through courage to use one's own critical faculties, to challenge and transgress the boundaries of accepted ways of thinking in the dominant governmental rationality.

The above discussion demonstrated how a crisis in the system on its own does not necessarily, nor automatically, provoke resistance and pose a challenge to the dominant social order. The moment of suspension and undecidability that a crisis marks calls for a critical rethinking of the world as we know it. It demands courage and audacity to critically interrogate old ways of thinking in order to respond to the urgency of a crisis. In my analysis, I threaded carefully between recognising the need for undecidable performative space and time in order for critical attitudes to the dominant order in crisis to mature, and emphasising that, due to the urgency of the crisis, the moment of undecidability needs to be interrupted at some point and an alternative systemic intelligibility constructed. In the next section, I will clarify the strategic reasons for the viability of such a position. By identifying the ways in which a crisis is symbolically and discursively eventualised, I will expose the dynamics of the semantic struggle for power between competing political forces and demonstrate how the very use of crisis narrative can serve as a way for reaffirming the old systemic logic.

Crisis as an event and temporality

In this section, I am interested in exploring the question of what makes a crisis a marked eventuality in our imaginary and understanding of socio-political reality, how crisis is different from other events, and what intelligible mechanisms enable the discursive formation of a crisis. The relation between the reflective/undecidable moment of suspension in a crisis and the moment of determination will be further explored to understand more fully the challenge for resistant practices to the hegemonic order. In order to answer these questions, I will need to establish what distinguishes an event, a marked occurrence amongst many others, from a "non-event". Is there a set of objectives, commonly agreed criteria which demarcates a crisis from the normality of daily

social life? What are the characteristics that make a crisis so distinctly exhilarating and, at the same time, frightening? I will look at two different theorists who have theorised crisis and the notion of event in their work: (1) Michel Foucault's archaeological method will demonstrate how an event comes into being with his concept of eventualisation; and (2) Jacques Derrida's critique of the established narratives of the September 11 terrorist attacks will show how discursive eventualisation constructs a crisis through the dynamics of discursive eventualisation and systemic logic. From the proposed trajectory of my analysis in the present section, I will present the eventuality of an event in terms of the discursive formulation and the implications that it might have for the emergence of resistance. The example of the 2007–2008 financial crisis will be used to illustrate the practical application of the theoretical observations.

In order to understand how crisis becomes a *meaningful* temporal category (as opposed to a "non-event", an event that occurs but does not register as meaningful in the dominant collective imaginary), I will start with a discussion Foucault's notion of eventualisation (*événementialisation*). By "this horrible word" (Foucault 1997, 59), Foucault understood "making visible a *singularity* at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness which imposes itself uniformly on all" (Foucault 1991, 76). The purpose of this gesture of "a breach of self-evidence" (*ibid.*) is to expose the contingent and constructed underpinnings of things that appear obvious, normal and self-evident. The methodology behind eventualisation is what Foucault calls the "procedure of causal multiplication". This procedure starts by "rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, [and] strategies" which "at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary" (*ibid.*). In other words, eventualisation singles out a specific peculiarity out of apparent normality, both of which are constructed through discursive formation according to the principle of its articulation and the operators by "which the events are transcribed into statements" (Foucault 1972, 167). However, what I am doing in this section on the concept of crisis is to attempt to understand how an event becomes an event out of this normality, the "historical constant" or "obviousness" of a given situation. So, what I will be interested in for the purpose of my aim in this chapter is the "reverse" of what Foucault means by eventualisation, while the same archaeological practice is at work. What archaeology, in Foucault's terminology, is concerned with after all, in contrast with the history of political thought, is to identify discontinuities, ruptures, gaps and sudden redistributions in the linear continuity of history (*ibid.*, 169). Following from this, we can understand crisis as one such discursive de-formation and our role is to uncover the relations of power and knowledge that characterise its temporality. I will now explore further the conceptual uses archaeology can offer

for understanding the discursive formation of crisis as an event. In pursuing the archaeological spirit of Foucault's method of analysis, what will concern me in particular is how one event or fact appears as significant rather than another, and according to what rules and operating principles.

In his discussion of the 11 September terrorist attacks with Giovanna Borradori, Derrida undertakes the above enterprise of uncovering the selectivity and arbitrariness of an event as a discursive formulation, although in his own idiosyncratic fashion, while challenging the "apparent" immediacy of a marking event (Derrida in Borradori 2003, 86). He maintains that the feeling of immediacy in an event is "less spontaneous than it appears" (*ibid.*). That is because the event is always already "conditioned, constituted, if not actually constructed, circulated at any rate" (*ibid.*) by and through the channels of dominant structures of communication/representation. For an event to be marked, "something" needs to happen "for the first and last time" (*ibid.*). Derrida talks of "something" since the event, marked by and registered as a date, is that which we cannot grasp (fully) yet, something that we are trying to understand, to recognise and rationalise – in any case, it remains something that is "from here on in unforgettable: an ineffaceable event in the shared archive of a universal calendar, that is, a *supposedly* universal calendar" (*ibid.*). Ungraspable from the outset, yet still unforgettable, the event leaves an "impression" on us and we cannot think this impression without "all the affects, interpretations, and rhetoric that have at once reflected, communicated, and 'globalized' it" (*ibid.*, 88). In addition to the impression that an event leaves on us, Derrida also identifies an experience of trauma in the unravelling of an event: "any event worthy of this name, even if it is a 'happy' event, has within it something that is traumatizing" (*ibid.*, 97). This traumatic experience arises from the disturbance in the anticipated proceeding of the everyday which "inflicts a wound" in our being and sense of the world around us; I will return to this traumatic aspect of an event in the next section of the chapter. What Derrida found most problematic about the established conceptualisations of the 9/11 is the politicisation of this "major event" by the "predominant system" for geopolitical and strategic reasons, which was done through "an organized information machine (language, communication rhetoric, image, media, and so on)" (*ibid.*, 88–9). This way "the impression" of 9/11, with its "affects, interpretations, and rhetoric" became globalised and established as an event with a "properly global effect" (*ibid.*, 88). Derrida's problematisation of the 9/11 hegemonic representation demonstrates the discursive (the use of language and rhetoric following a particular politico-strategic rationality) utilisation of the affective (the impression left and trauma in/after the event) in line with particular geopolitical objectives. Furthermore, archaeological questioning of the 9/11's eventualisation as a major event challenges its "obviousness" and reveals the discursive (and affective) conditions for its formation.

What about the occurrences that are not deemed worthy of being marked as an "event"? The occurrences that do not leave any impression behind or at least not on a significant enough scale to become unforgettable? And how are some events more eventful than others? First of all, Derrida cautions us about the dominant registering of events as significant occurrences, somehow more important than others that are for some reason left out. Whatever way the timeframe of analytical focus is set, talking about impactful events brings with it exclusions, exclusions of "so many things": "it excludes whatever does not belong to the public, political, historical realms", Derrida (*ibid.*, 74) notes. By implication, anything that goes beyond the gaze of the observer is also excluded, anything that "has its own rhythm", as Derrida (*ibid.*) puts it. Furthermore, Derrida argues that an event is "what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend comprehension" (*ibid.*, 89). Some occurrences surprise us, manage to surprise us, and others do not. In an age of the oversaturation of information and images, at least in those places of the globe which are inter-connected through the internet, smart phones and other technologies, it is not surprising that some events go unnoticed, whereas others, with a more domineering publicity apparatus, get more prominent coverage. Those occurrences which do not have "the visible outline, the theatrical form, or the official title of what people call *events*", the occurrences "which could be, or must have been, talked about" (*ibid.*, 74) pass us by without being noticed. The generation of the theatrical effect is thus crucial for the eventuality of an event; without it, an event does not enter the mode of being appropriated, comprehended, recognised, described, determined, interpreted (*ibid.*, 89), and is not called an event altogether. These non-eventualised occurrences that Derrida talks about happen in the shadows of registered events, "*coups de théâtre*"; they are either:

nonevents (for example the massive immobility in Eastern Europe or in Latin America, that which does not budge or gets worse in South Africa, etc.) or things that *come to pass without passing* onto the stage, without going through the filter of information or the codes of political discourse, without appearing under the title of "event" (*ibid.*, 75)

Derrida's distinction between events and nonevents¹⁸ exposes the selective and political nature of eventualisation which comes to represent what we know as recorded human history from the viewpoint of the West. In addition, for there to be an event, "it must never be something that is

¹⁸ Derrida contrasts these "nonevents" with registered "great moments", in the timeframe between 1964 and 1984, as set by his interviewer, such as the May 1968 events, the moon landing, and the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia.

predicted or planned, or even really decided upon" (Derrida 2007, 441). In this sense, the 2007–2008 crisis exhibited two out of the three key characteristics of what Derrida identifies as an event: "surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable (*ibid.*). The criterion of the unanticipatable in the latest financial crisis can be disputed as a number of critical economists have predicted the imminent end of the flagrant financial engineering and speculation that shook the global markets (Baker 2002; Beams 2004, 2007; Uco 2005; Foster and Magdoff 2009). Nonetheless, the financial crisis did come as a surprise to the general public and gained public exposure across the globe.

To continue with the examination of its eventualisation, the next difficulty that arises is with determining the beginning of the financial crisis as an event. Who, what authority, or what criteria determined its beginning: Was it the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008?¹⁹ Or even before, the BNP Paribas decision and the resulting liquidity crunch in the summer of 2007?²⁰ *The Guardian's* economics editor Larry Elliott hints towards the validity of the latter:

Back then, though, there were few who imagined that 9 August 2007 would prove to be such a milestone in financial history. The Guardian carried the story on page 29 because there seemed no reason to believe this was different from previous bouts of jitters in the markets. It took a few days to work out what the bankers had been up to, because the "masters of the universe" had their own esoteric language. Talk of mortgage-backed securities, credit default swaps and over-the-counter derivatives was the equivalent of 12th century monks writing bibles in medieval Latin for peasants who only spoke English. Stripped of the jargon, it is now quite easy to see what happened. (Elliott 2012)

Or did the crisis really begin after the dominant surveillance authority over the international monetary and financial system, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), decided to announce the beginning of a global recession in 2009?²¹ Bob Davis, senior editor at *the Wall Street Journal*, explains that depending on who the IMF's chief economist is at a given time determines the criteria for the defining what marks a global recession. Only in 2009, apparently, did the IMF economists set down a more precise measurement for global recessions, which is still very broad: a decline in real per-capita world GDP, backed up by global macroeconomic indicators, such as industrial

¹⁹ BBC News. 2008. *Lehman Bros files for bankruptcy*, 16 September. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7615931.stm> (31 March 2014).

²⁰ Elliott, Larry. 2012. Three myths that sustain the economic crisis. *The Guardian*, 5 August. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2012/aug/05/economic-crisis-myths-sustain> (31 March 2014).

²¹ Davis, Bob. 2009. What's a Global Recession? *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 April. Available at: <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2009/04/22/whats-a-global-recession/> (31 March 2014).

production, trade, capital flows, oil consumption and unemployment (Davis 2009). Regardless of the different interpretations and opinions about the starting point of the crisis, as there are so many, what is important to keep in mind when using the concept of crisis is the implied meaning in its conceptual structure, that a crisis is only "provisional, accidental" (Derrida 2002, 71) and thus a crisis is normally understood only as an exception, an exception to the order of things until the very moment the crisis erupts:

It disturbs rules, laws, norms, but only *for a time*. One must suspect that this disorder affects what is essential (it is an essential accident!), but there must also be a reassuring belief in *rhythm*: "One can't do anything about it (you can't do anything about it!), but it's only a crisis. It's very serious but it will pass." (*ibid.*)

This is a key insight that Derrida provides us with: a crisis is provisional and accidental, but only in relation to an order, an already existing order which for a moment at least, is perturbed by the unintelligibility of the crisis. Now, as I have already emphasised above, the surprise of a crisis sets into motion the process of its eventualisation, in other words, a discursive and effective representation of the event by the dominant structures of meaning, and with respect to the latest financial crisis, these would be the financial markets and institutions, the governments, the experts. This is done through theatre-staging and use of rhetoric, Derrida argues. As in the example above about the beginning of the financial crisis, it is worth interrogating who exactly is interested in representing the crisis, who is talking about it, and in view of what interests, "[b]y playing on what 'representations'" (*ibid.*). Derrida emphasises there is always at least one purpose behind the representation of crisis:

to determine, so as to limit it, a more serious and more formless threat, one which is, in fact, faceless and normless. A monstrous threat but one that holds some desire in suspense: a threat to desire. By determining it as crisis, one tames it, domesticates it, neutralizes it – in short, one *economizes* it... [T]he unthinkable becomes the unknown to be known, one begins to give it form, one begins to inform, master, calculate, program. One cancels out a future. (*ibid.*)

It is in this sense that a crisis is unintelligible in relation to a dominant order. That order, following the surprise effect, will try to determine the crisis, limit the threat to desire that the suspense of the crisis opens its way to. In doing so, it closes the field of experimental, unpredictable

suspension that prompts alternative ways of representing the crisis and thus cancels the possibility of another future. This poses a challenge for imagining the possibility of resistance to neoliberalism and blocks the construction of possible alternatives. The automation of the hegemonic logic of neoliberal governmentality also means that the time-frame for using the suspension of old ways of conduct as the mobilising factor for critique is limited. In this sense, the discussion from the previous section on crisis as the moment of critique comes full circle. As I have argued in the previous section: at one instance a crisis represents a moment of suspension, of undecidability, of impossibility, but at another, this very suspension prompts our critical capacities to judge, to understand and to make a decision. As Derrida (*ibid.*, 71–2) describes the binary situation:

To be sure, decision is impossible here, but impossibility and powerlessness derive their critical sense only from the horizon of some awaited decision. *Krisis*: judgment, choice, decision. Crisis: a moment in which the *krisis* appears (is or is said to be) impossible, but in regard to an awaited *krisis*, to a necessary judgment, choice and decision between two terms. The crisis is not just any form of the incalculable; it is the incalculable as a *moment* of calculation, the undecidable that is still determined as the relation of a voluntary subject to a possible decision.

The very use of the term crisis presupposes the will, or a voluntarism, on part of a subject to calculate the incalculable, to decide on the terrain of the undecidable. There would be no sense to speak of a crisis in a world where there is no "[c]ompetence, voluntarism, knowledge and know-how, mastery of a subject over present objects" (*ibid.*, 72) – this demonstrates the double nature of the discourse of crisis: in one sense it represents an accident to the dominant order, but in another it represents a strategic opportunity to control and programme a way out of it. In the dominant discourse of Western democracies, if the crisis is not in our heads, Derrida remarks, then it is economic in its analysis. Initially, at the outset of a crisis, there is an "essential powerlessness or incompetence" that prevents us from "overcoming it for the moment", but after the disturbance "a powerful movement of auto-regulation of world capitalism" sets in motion which induces "all the measures taken 'to get out of the crisis'" (*ibid.*, 73). This auto-regulation, or the economy of the benefits of the crisis, as Derrida puts it, can explain the prolonged temporality of the latest financial crisis, which has over-stretched its conceptual condition of exceptionality and being temporally limited. As the hegemonic logic of neoliberal governmentality works to overcome the hurdles of momentary systemic disturbance and master the crisis, the window of opportunity

for counter-resistance and the general dissemination of anti-systemic critique is vanishing. This struggle between the extra-institutional resistance and the organisational logic of the dominant order merits its own discussion and will be expounded upon in the next chapter.

If the crisis is still ongoing, what will mark the eventual exit from it? When looking over the past dominant policy responses that have been used by governments and politicians to solve the financial crisis, they can be generally categorised as geared towards saving the banking system through public bank bailouts and as fiscally conservative in terms of limiting the governmental spending for the provision of public goods and services, for instance, through austerity measures to balance budget deficits and public spending, and structural reforms, to remodelled societies along the market principles of competition (for more see Joseph Stiglitz (2010; 2013) and Paul Krugman (2008; 2013; 2015)). The financial and economic operators of representation are the ones that calculate and programme the dominant response to the current financial crisis. As a temporal category that is discursively constructed and proliferated, crisis presumes an eventual end to it. The duration of the current crisis has stretched out this concept so far that it has now become normalised and, we could say, lost its original meaning along the way. As was demonstrated above with different interpretations as to when the crisis began, the very act of naming/announcing a crisis is politically conditioned and articulated in order to serve the interests of the financial power structures. The narrative of crisis will be prolonged for as long as it will take to reorder society in such a way as to restore confidence in the rule of the elites (Wolf 2014). Marx and Engels made a similar point when they established that the return of prosperity after a period of crisis erodes the conditions for the emergence of the proletariat as an independent political force. But before this point of restored perception of economic stability is reached, for example, through recovered economic growth and increasing employment figures, is there still not an opening for change on the subjective level? As I showed in Chapter 2 in my economic institutional analysis of (neo)liberal governmentality, the liberalisation of the market activity provokes a counter-movement by those affected by the socially destructive policies of market liberalisation. Cannot the trauma that affects the ordinary people in a time of crisis act as an opening for the cultivation of critical and resisting subjectivities?

A time of crisis represents a wakeup call, and like Arendt nicely put it, a time to ask questions, to question the existing order that is suddenly in crisis. This leads me to the next section where I will be interested in the potentiality of change stimulated by a traumatic experience that a crisis can provoke. As it became clear through the discussion of Foucault's eventualisation and Derrida's understanding of the event, crisis as a temporal category entails an element of surprise and unpredictability. It is an event that is not foreseen in advance, but which strikes as if out of

the blue. It leaves a mark, an impression which has traumatic implications for the subjects witnessing it. There is a complex process at hand where dominant modes of representation are trying to make sense out of the traumatic experience that a crisis marks and to articulate a "sensible" narrative that will fit back into the normal order of things. This internal struggle between the elusive and untamed traumatic experience on the one hand and our attempts at rationalising the unexpected occurrence represents the ground of possibility for change and resistance. Unless we throw more light on this antagonism between the prickling trauma and subjectivity, we cannot fully understand if and how resistant subjectivities can be born out of crisis.

Crisis as trauma and the possibility of resistance

Going back to Derrida's words, an event "always inflicts a wound in the everyday course of history, in the ordinary repetition and anticipation of all experience" (Derrida in Borradori 2003, 96). I will explore more closely this infliction of the wound that an event such as a crisis leaves behind. As I have already mentioned, there is an element of surprise and the unexpected in the event of a crisis which distorts our anterior understanding of and coping with reality. Drawing a line of analysis between the concepts of crisis and trauma will expand our understanding of crisis, especially in terms of the effects it has for the subjects involved in a crisis. We need to understand what this traumatic wound does to/for a subject in crisis and what the possibilities are, if any, for the cultivation of critical practices and resistance.

In his book *The Lacanian Left*, Yannis Stavrakakis (2007, 69–70) describes the moment of crisis as a resurgence of the political: "[a] moment which takes the form of rupture, crisis, dislocation and leads to new attempts at discursive stabilisation, to new discursive constructions, ideologies, political discourses, social movements and practices." The political, as for many other contemporary political theorists (Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jean Luc-Nancy, Slavoj Žižek, Jacques Rancière amongst others), here represents a rupture or an intervention into the dominant political order. Stavrakakis likens the moment of the political to a *real* or the negative in psychoanalytical theory. The unrepresentability of the real dislocates our positive subjective and objective realities which are dominated by the *symbolic* field of configuration. The symbolic, or what we understand as our socio-political reality, tries to master this real, reduce it, neutralise it, calculate it and programme it into its dominant register of discursive construction of reality. In this sense, a crisis represents a moment of the political, disturbing our sense of identity and reality, whereas the symbolic signifies attempts at representing the unanticipated moment of crisis,

similar to how I described Derrida's understanding of eventualisation of crisis above. Drawing upon the formulation of the occurrence of a crisis as an infliction of a wound, this section of the chapter will use the notion of trauma as an analytical device to understand the connection between the subjective level of experiencing a crisis and the social experience, while keeping in mind the underlying research question of this chapter, namely, how critical resistance is born out of a crisis. Following a Žižekian re-reading of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, Stavrakakis notes that two "distinct orders of the phenomena" are taking place in the dialectics of the political and socio-symbolic reality: one is the subjective level where our identities are destabilised by the real, the other is the objective level, with the existing social order being displaced and reconfigured (*ibid.*, 70). Following from this, two important questions need to be addressed in more depth for the purpose of this chapter: (1) the first is whether a traumatic experience is wholly destructive, leaving behind nothing but a destroyed subject(ivity) and narrative construction, or is trauma also a potential opening for the construction of something productive; (2) the second concerns the possibility of extrapolating the psychoanalytical analysis of trauma to the level of society.

The word "trauma" comes from Greek, and it literally means a "wound". The etymology of the word originates from the verb *titrosko*, "to pierce" (Malabou 2012, 6). Catherine Malabou, whose approach is to combine the studies of the psyche and physiology in the discipline of neuropsychanalysis, underlines that trauma can result both from a physical injury or a psychical one. Acknowledging the organic/neurological element of trauma is the key point of departure (or rather a shift) for Malabou from the "properly psychoanalytic concept of trauma", which finds its origin in Freudian psychoanalysis (*ibid.*). The latter maintains that the "incidence of an organic lesion is incompatible with the development of a neurosis" because it is only secondary to the true endogenous cause of psychic trouble, which arises as a result of "a conflict between the ego and the sexual drives which it repudiates" (*ibid.*). Malabou rejects the primary ascription of external events, such as train accidents and war conflicts, to a sexual causality in Freud and underlines that in exogenous causes of trauma "the same *impact of the event* is at work, the same *economy of the accident*, the same relation between the psyche and catastrophe" (*ibid.*, 11). Slavoj Žižek identifies the same problem with Freud's understanding of trauma:

when confronted with such cases, he succumbs to the temptation to look for meaning: he is not ready to accept the direct destructive power of external shocks – they can destroy the psyche of the victim (or, at least, wound it in an irremediable way) without resonating with any inner traumatic truth. (Žižek 2012, 293)

Malabou and Žižek both agree that external shocks need not touch on some "pre-existing traumatic 'psychic reality'" (*ibid.*, 293) to be the "efficient" cause of psychic trouble:

[F]or Freud (and Lacan), every external trauma is "sublated," internalized, owing its impact to the way a pre-existing Real of "psychic reality" is aroused through it. Even the most violent intrusions of the external real ... owe their traumatic effect to the resonance they find in perverse masochism, in the death drive, in unconscious guilt-feelings, and so on. Today, however, our socio-political reality itself imposes multiple versions of external intrusions, traumas, which are just that, brutal but meaningless interruptions that destroy the symbolic texture of the subject's identity. (*ibid.*, 292)

The effects of trauma are radical and unforeseen, which adds to the intensity of a traumatic experience. Trauma disrupts the seemingly coherent narrative of our own subjectivity and provokes a crisis of our personal identity. Žižek names different types of traumatic interventions: from external physical violence, such as armed conflicts, street violence and natural catastrophes, leaving damage to "the cerebral economy of the affects that hold together body and mind" (Malabou 2012, 9), to borrow Malabou's formulation, to "the destructive effects of socio-symbolic violence (such as social exclusion)" (Žižek 2012, 292).²² For the rest of the chapter, my main concern is with psychic disorganisation in situations of socio-symbolic or socio-political trauma.

As Malabou emphasises, "there is never a simple relation between the 'normal' interior of the psyche and the violent irruption of an unpredictable exterior" (Malabou 2012, 11). That is because socio-political trauma "never occurs entirely by chance" and because every event "always derives, in one way or another, from an indivisible intimacy between the outside and the inside" (*ibid.*). The notion of trauma in this way offers a productive device to grasp the combined experience of the outside and the inside. After all, whether an experience is traumatic is determined by "the subjective interpretation of the events rather than its objective reality" (Quiros and Berger 2015, 152). Subjective experiences of systemic socio-political violence are often "not included in what is defined as trauma because the victims are typically oppressed groups and their voices are silenced by the universality of the White, middle-class, and heterosexual experience that dominates the treatment and research literature" (*ibid.*). So, whereas in the occurrence of a natural catastrophe there are commonly agreed upon criteria for determining the

²² For literature on witnessing and the memory of trauma experienced in war settings and arms struggles, see Jenny Edkins (2003); for literature on narratives of encountering and dealing with traumatic experience outside of war settings, see Cathy Caruth (2014).

severity of its traumatic implications, systemic violence like poverty and social deprivation are not treated as seriously or urgently. The normality of socio-economic inequality and its traumatic implications for the oppressed groups can be explained by the interplay of material forces and political strategies that Foucault's archaeological method is targeted at and that construct these social injustices as normal.

Having established the link between external events and their effects on the psyche of affected subjects, I will now explore the question of the severity of a traumatic experience on a subject's sense of self and the reality around them. Does a traumatic experience annihilate the whole of the before-existing subjectivity, or is there something that remains, "something on the order of a secret core of identity that resists the ordeal of trauma" (Malabou 2012, 69)? Quoting Freud, Malabou (*ibid.*, 70) maintains that "no matter the extent of 'psychic modification,' the metamorphosis of identity is never total; or that every modification is, in fact, 'a change involving the same material and occurring in the same locality'". Following from this, trauma should be regarded as a trace which is imprinted on our psyche "like a heavy crypt" (*ibid.*). On the one hand, a traumatic experience produces a new subject, a stranger, but on the other:

When Malabou insists that the subject who emerges after a traumatic wound is not a transformation of the old subject, but literally a new one, she is well aware that the identity of this new subject does not arise from a *tabula rasa*: many traces of the old subject's life-narrative survive, but they are totally restructured, torn out of their previous horizon of meaning and inscribed into a new context. (Žižek 2012, 308)

A post-traumatic subjectivity thus should not be viewed as an empty canvas that needs to be painted anew. A post-traumatic subject represents an embodiment of both the old sense of self and the new post-traumatic reality. To explain this paradox between the old and the new of the subject further, Malabou's concept of plasticity can be useful for comprehending the "flexibility" of our psyche/brain in a traumatic experience. For Malabou (2012, 58), plasticity is "a form's ability to be deformed without dissolving and thereby to persist throughout its various mutations, to resist modification, and to be always liable to emerge anew in its initial state". In the new post-traumatized subject, therefore, something of the old will always remain, which, for Malabou, demonstrates that there must be "a plastic relation, a supple link" between the creative and the destructive tendencies of neuronal plasticity (*ibid.*, 69–70). The metamorphosis of identity in a traumatic experience is thus never total. External events, such as socio-political violence and the resulting trauma, have the power to alter the oppressed subject's conduct and emotions with

serious repercussions, but there is always a remnant of the old subjectivity left after trauma. The plastic relation between the old and the new, the creative and destructive effects of trauma can in situations of socio-political violence instigate transformative change of identity. The question remains whether this change is amenable towards survivalist (self-)paralysis of the subject or self-reflected resistance against the conditions of socio-political oppression.

Echoing Žižek, can we not extrapolate the effects of trauma on the metamorphosis of identity onto the level of our socio-political reality to better understand moments of "radical historical breaks" (Žižek 2012, 308)? First, we need to acknowledge that for Lacanian psychoanalysis, reality is not "some kind of pre-social given" and "nothing more than a montage of the symbolic and the imaginary ..., an articulation of signifiers which are invested with imaginary – fantasmatic – coherence and unity" (Stavrakakis 2007, 42). Reality is, therefore, a human construct endowed with discursive articulations and symbolic meaning – for this reason, when thinking about the implications of psychoanalytic insights for our society, we cannot and should not view the individual, the subject, as separate from what surrounds her, "the external". I have already mentioned Malabou's concept of neuronal plasticity, which, together with the initial or primordial state of our psyche, gives the subject a degree of personal autonomy. Greek psychoanalyst Cornelius Castoriadis understands this primordial state as "a monadic core, a unitary and self-enclosed subjective circuit pre-existing socialisation". Stavrakakis, however, rejects this view as characteristic of "a romantic and vitalist Cartesianism" because it fails to recognise "the dialectics of desire" that are propelled by the lack inherent in the construction of the self and reality (*ibid.*, 50–3). This lack is revealed when a dislocation appears in the social construction of identity/reality: "What Lacan would call an encounter with the real, what one could interpret as the moment of the political, takes in Castoriadis the form of a 'shock'" (*ibid.*, 55). For the purposes of this chapter, this encounter with the real is interpreted in terms of a socio-political trauma, or a crisis. Whereas Castoriadis would endorse a vitalist and immanent account of "the ontological moment of social construction" (*ibid.*, 57), Stavrakakis situates this moment in "encounters with the political, ... the moment of social dislocation and subjective alienation and lack" (*ibid.*):

such a rearticulation becomes possible through the contingent dislocation of a pre-existing discursive order, through a certain resurfacing of the traumatic real which shows the limits of the social; the moment of the political creates a lack in the discursive structure and only thus can it stimulate the *desire* for a new articulation. (*ibid.*, 59; emphasis my own)

In discourse analysis, this process can be translated into the language of a disarticulation and re-articulation of the traumatised subject's sense of identity and reality around them. If the trauma in the traumatised subject is a trace of the real in the subject's psyche, then attempts at reconstructing one's identity and a sense of reality should be viewed as a practice pertaining to the domain of the symbolic or discursive. However, disarticulation here needs to be understood not only as an active discursive strategy of dismantling a dominant socio-symbolic representation of reality, but also as a consequence of a traumatic experience, therefore as an effect of the real.

What interests me here is what kind of subject emerges from a traumatic experience as a consequence of a socio-political crisis. A destructive event, whether it be "of biological or sociopolitical origin", can provoke "a radical metamorphosis of identity" and it represents an ever-present possibility of change (Malabou 2012, 213). "Today's violence consists in cutting the subject away from its accumulated memories" (*ibid.*), Malabou maintains, and, through destructive plasticity, our psyche proceeds to restructuring our sense of reality, reallocating it, all the while attempting to make it meaningful again, or at least comprehensible. This attempt at subjective restoration can be a productive process of subjectification, altering the subject's view of their identity, as well *possibly* reformulating the sense of their place in a community. Why possibly? Because the *desire* to reformulate one's place in community after a post-traumatic restructuring of a subject's identity is not a self-evident and predestined trajectory. How does a responsive subject in a disrupted discursive order start desiring a new discursive re-articulation of the social order? As I have already said above, psychoanalysis stipulates that a lack stimulates a longing, a desire to replace this lack with something meaningful, only if just momentarily. Yet, how do we know that the subject in that situation of lack(ing) will desire to reconfigure the existing set of power relations in a way that is radically different? Would it not just be easier for this post-traumatic subject to take recourse to the old ways and discursive articulations to deal with such a situation?

At this point we come back to the same question that I raised in the first section of this chapter on critique and crisis. It is difficult to determine what is required for such a critical subjectivity to arise from a socio-symbolic traumatic experience. When the traumatic experience is prolonged, the desire to resist the supposed cause of trauma grows stronger and ever-imminent. What happens more often though is that in the prolonged aftermath of socio-political trauma the new experience is not necessarily a fulfilling or transformative one in the positive sense, for example, when the subject finds themselves in a situation of constant stress and social hardship (Berger 2015). While the post-traumatic experience can be productive in the sense of building personal resilience to "a stressor event, traumatic exposure, or crisis in a constructive

way" (*ibid.*, 13), this does not mean that the resilient subject will also be resisting against the structures of socio-political violence in order to transform them. Especially in times of crisis, what tends to prevail over our desire to resist the oppressors is our ontological precariousness. The latter represents the general anthropological condition and can be understood in terms of our social interdependencies and vulnerability (in both the existential and emotional sense) to others (Butler 2009; Lorey 2011). Under the current dominant regime of (neo)liberal governmentality that I discussed in the previous chapter, this ontological precariousness that unites all those hit hardest by neoliberal marketisation of society is more and more conditioned by the biopolitical reach of the governing power structures, be it through the state or market mechanisms. As we are increasingly subjected to socially insecure and precarious forms of employment, the question is whether "the uncertain, unpredictable condition of precarity can operate as an empirical object of thought and practice" (Neilson and Rossiter 2005). Put differently, can "common resources (political organisation) be found within individual and collective experiences of permanent insecurity" (*ibid.*)? Can subjects traumatised by socio-political violence who are under constant pressure of stress and insecurity foster critical reflexivity and resist ontological precariousness under (neo)liberal governmentality? In her analysis of governmental precarisation, Lorey reiterates an important point that Foucault made:

What distinguishes modern liberal forms of governmentality is that the governability of each and every individual of a population is always also made possible by the way that he or she governs *themselves*. The art of governing, according to Foucault, consists in conducting conducts. The power of governing is not one that is executed solely repressively from above. Instead, liberal governmental governing means actively operating on the conduct of others, the "possible actions". (Lorey 2011)

The biopolitics of (neo)liberal governing is not only exercised from the top, but also from the bottom, through our own self-governing and self-conducting through and within the prescribed modes of conduct. As I have explained in Chapter 2, the neoliberal social policy involves the process of individualising and privatising responsibility for precarity, which is created by the remodelling of societies according to market principles. Through this responsabilisation, the (neo)liberal governmentality is supposedly freeing us from the hierarchical and oppressive structures of the state and Fordist modes of employment. If we take an everyday example, we are encouraged by the dominant institutions to act as obedient consumers. By taking advantage of the benefits on offer, such as discounted products in a supermarket, credit card perks or

buying the latest electronic devices, we give our consent to the way the system works through our actions. We conduct ourselves in a way that is expected of us, that is prescribed. However, when a crisis disrupts, it disrupts the old sense of self and reality around us. Our ontological precariousness is aggravated as a result of poor socio-economic conditions and the continuing neoliberalisation of societies. This deepens the traumatic experience of the precariat and opens up the potentiality of resistance. But resistance has a better chance of emerging under the alignment of crisis, critique and trauma. Dissatisfaction with the existing social order drives individuals to resist against and question the established authorities – in other words, critique is employed as a way of response, a critical consciousness is garnered.

By understanding the crisis in terms of the traumatic experience that leaves a trace on our sense of self and reality, the possibility of resistance can be given a fresh start. Before the 2007–2008 financial crisis, there were already many social movements and activist groups fighting against the injustice of neoliberal governmentality and the transnational structures supporting it, for instance, the Global Justice Movement, the World Social Forum, Attac and Friends of the Earth. However, these struggles were mostly localised, fragmented and made up of networks of dedicated activists, while failing to mobilise the very social groups whose interests they were standing up for. The activist networks never materialised into a counter-hegemonic project against neoliberalism. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on one of the key weakness of these horizontal movements: the failure to engage with the existing political institutions. I will argue that it is the autonomist and anarchist traditions pervading the operative methods and the philosophy of these movements that prevented them from engaging with power. What I was attempting to understand in the present section is what activates subjectivities into resistance at the individual level and how can that be translated into a mobilising factor to form a bigger social movement. At the subjective level, a traumatic experience reflects the effect that the loss of a sense of self within the changed social reality a crisis signifies. By taking the notion of trauma outside its more conventional medical usage, I demonstrated how the internal effects at the psychological level relate to the changed social reality, caused by external events. In this sense, I politicised the term and took it to mean a potential opening into the emergence of resistant subjectivities.

Conclusion

This brings us to the completion of the analytical cycle between the different sections of this

chapter. I started off with mapping out the etymological similarity between the concepts of crisis and critique, how the two interrelate and what political possibilities can arise when both are actualised. Through the analysis of Foucault, Butler and Derrida, I threaded carefully between recognising the importance of the undecidable performative moment in the suspension of a crisis, which allows for the maturation and dissemination of critical attitudes to the dominant order, and emphasising that, due to the urgency of the crisis, the moment of undecidability needs to be interrupted at some point and an alternative systemic intelligibility constructed. This philosophical approach to understanding the crisis is missing in the corporate and economist conceptions of crisis that I reviewed at the beginning of the chapter. Questioning the very rationality of the way a business is conducted would mean imminent destabilising of the institution's position in the market which is not in the interest of capital. The Marxist approach to understanding the relation between crisis and critique is more theoretically developed and encouraging. Dedicated and meticulous socio-economic critique of capitalism is what marks out Marxist theory from other more orthodox economic approaches and makes it relevant to this day. Its disregard of the political in understanding systemic crises of capitalism, however, made the Marxist approach inadequate for my inquiry.

I then proceeded to answering the question, what makes a crisis a distinct temporal category. This meant addressing two sub-questions: how a crisis is conceptually different from other events and what demarcates a crisis as an event apart from the ordinary temporality of time? Here, I turned to two authors in particular – Foucault and Derrida – and argued that, while the material forces and the systemic logic of the dominant order are at work, the crisis represents an opportunity, or an obstacle, in the discursive (re)configuration of power relations. Foucault's eventualisation explained the construction of an event through the mechanisms of knowledge and power discourses, while Derrida revealed the unravelling of the element of surprise in remarkable events, such as a crisis, and its capacity to leave a wounding impression on those involved. It is this second part of the analysis that I found missing in the conventional approaches to understanding crisis in business studies or Marxist approaches. The ontological questions can only be asked through a philosophical interrogation of the concept, while avoiding the trajectory of its established definitions. Only this way are we able to uncover the under-theorised elements that are present, but for some reason overlooked. The second part of the chapter, therefore, established that while a crisis marks an unanticipated moment of suspension in relation to the dominant order, it prompts our critical capacities of judgement to make sense of and manage the crisis. In this sense a crisis represents both an opportunity and an obstacle to the emergence of resistance. As I have argued, the automation of the hegemonic logic of neoliberal governmentality

means that the possibility for using the suspension of old ways of conduct as the mobilising factor for critique is limited.

This brings me to the third part of my analysis which interrogates the element of trauma in a crisis and the possibility of resistance to the dominant order. I was especially interested in thinking what the potential is in a crisis for the birth of critical practices and resistances. The effect of trauma on a subject can be so austere that it shakes up completely our sense of who we are and our relation with the environment. But, as I demonstrated through my analysis of neuronal plasticity, the restructuring of a subject's identity can take various unforeseen paths, so the generation of critical subjectivities in the aftermath of socio-political trauma is not guaranteed, despite opening up a possibility for it. When we also take into account the ontological precariousness of subjects under neoliberal governmentality, the question whether the shaken subject will resort to new ways of dealing with reality or go back to the "old" ones remains open. This demonstrated the double effect of trauma on a subject: it can either acts as a disabling or enabling agent for resistance, for desiring an alternative socio-symbolic articulation.

The three lines of analysis that were undertaken in this chapter in tandem with one another introduce an alternative and inter-disciplinary approach to understanding crisis when compared to the mainstream corporate and international studies conceptions. Drawing upon political theory, discourse analysis and psychoanalysis, my aim was not to provide a solution to manage and control the crisis in a way that reverts back to business as usual. Instead the aim of my approach was to understand how a crisis comes into being, how it is constructed, and whether socio-political trauma can transform subjects into resisting subjectivities. In the following chapter, I will reconfigure the relationship between extra-institutional radical politics and institutional politics by bridging the power/resistance conceptual binary in the mainstream political science and sociology. Does resistance need to take place outside the established structures of power or is engagement with the system a necessary prerequisite for effectiveness of counter-hegemonic resistance? Or perhaps this problem of radical politics is misleadingly formulated all together. What if the ontology of resistance is such that one cannot escape being involved in the questions and relations of power, leaving the engagement with existing power structures as an inevitable part of radical politics? These are some of the research questions that will inform my analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: Politics and Resistance as Power

Introduction

Resistance is one of the most revered words in the vocabulary of critical minds, from Vladimir Lenin, Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon, who identify resistant practices and subjectivities as inseparable from violence for the attainment of political goals, to figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, having inspired the Indian and South-African non-violent anti-colonial struggles, and Martin Luther King in the American civil rights movement. Yet, as Howard Caygill (2013) notes in his most recent book, despite being "one of the most important and enduring expressions of twentieth-century political imagination and action" (*ibid.*, 6), resistance as a concept remains largely under-theorised. Resistance designates the courage, as well as the perseverance and resolve, to fight against established authorities in perpetrating social injustice and oppression. The established system is often equated with power or the order of politics, whether it be religious or secular. When the position of resistance is taken, the relation that is directed towards another subject of power is by default a conflictual or an antagonistic encounter. According to this view, our position is subjectively constructed as a positive one, and the one we are resisting is consequently marked as the negative opposition. The power we are resisting is thus characterised as negative and our resistance as a positive endeavour. Perhaps this *a priori* normative marking has made resistance such a glorified and powerful idea in revolutionary politics and autonomist movements. Then there is the question of whether in the pursuit of radical politics resistance should always take place from the outside of the system and established political structures, or should radical politics also extend to established structures of power in a counter-hegemonic struggle. In any case, treating resistance as a singular and extra-institutional phenomenon has pushed onto the fringes the study of how resistance and politics interrelate on the ontological level. The opening of some academic disciplines to a more favourable treatment of extra-intuitional resistance in the aftermath of the social upheavals in the 1960s and 1970s is evidently a welcoming development, notably in sociology with the study of social movements and contentious politics (Tilly *et al.* 1975; Tilly 1978; Barnes and Kaase 1979; Tarrow 1989; Kriesi *et al.* 1995), but a similar analytical scrutiny of protest movements and resistance was missing in political science, where the focus was still predominantly on the institutions and procedures of conventional politics.

I argue that this lack of inquiry into the relationship between resistance and politics, until recently (Goldstone 2003; Kriesi 2015), can be ascribed to two significant limitations in both the academic study of politics, as well as in the practice of social movements and activists: (1) the influential conceptual separation of formal/inside conventional politics from the informal/outside radical politics; and (2) the repressive conception of power amongst both scholars of institutional politics and power (Dahl 2005; Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Lukes 2005) and radical politics (Baudrillard 1993, 1994; Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004, 2009) alike. The repressive view of power that was common both in mainstream political science, as well as in critical theory, is challenged by Hannah Arendt (1958, 2005) and Michel Foucault (1978, 1982, 2009) as their works gain traction in the 1970s. In their own idiosyncratic styles, they shed an alternative light to the way we understand power in society and its relationship with resistance. In the following, I will first distinguish between the divergent trajectories that the study of politics and of power took in academic literature and then outline the contributions of Arendt's and Foucault's notions of power to conceptualising the relationship between politics, power and resistance.

The study of politics traditionally developed in the field of political philosophy, primarily concerned with the question of the political community (be it the city-state, religious community, the nation-state) and the duties/rights of its members in relation to it. It goes back to classical antiquity, with Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, medieval political philosophy in Europe and the works of Thomas Aquinas, European Renaissance and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince*, to social contract theory (Thomas Hobbes (1651), John Locke (1689), Montesquieu (1748) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762)) during the Enlightenment period and to Marxist political thought in the age of industrialisation. Only after the World War II did the study of politics as a social science become more refined, following the behaviourist revolution in the United States, and later in other parts of the West, through the establishment of political science. Political science formalised the study of politics by developing a set of experimental models, delineating the "noteworthy" areas of study for political scientists and drawing clear lines of division with other disciplines in the humanities. As part of the wider social science, political science took primacy over the study of politics and reserved it to the domain of state institutions, electoral behaviour and analysis of gathered data to make predictions. Despite these disciplinary walls being erected, the study of the political was still present in other disciplines, such as cultural studies, literature, history and philosophy, where the concept, by way of either unintentional diversions or critique, was explored in broader terms and through alternative perspectives. These non-typically political fields have kept the vigorous exploration of the concept alive at a time when its theorisation laid dormant in the field of political science.

The modern genealogy of the study of power follows a similar chronological path, although it is more obscure and less coherent. Its origins can also be found in political philosophy, with writers such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1903; Holler 2009, 343–5) and Thomas Hobbes (1651, 53–4), but the concept itself does not undergo any paradigmatic theoretical modifications until the second half of the 20th century. The most well-known and replicated definition of power was put forward by Max Weber (1978, 53): "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". Robert A. Dahl (2005, 330), who in 1961 lamented the lack of analytical scrutiny to "make widely used notions of power or influence more precise", used Weber's definition of power and applied it to a set of observable situations where power imbalances could be directly observed in relations between given subjects A and B. Keeping with the behaviouralist pluralist methodology, Dahl restricted his analysis of power only to what he saw as "observable" and "open" conflicts in institutionalised voting procedures and settings. Later, after coming under criticism from his fellow (neo)pluralists (Bachrach and Baratz 1962), Dahl broadened the application of his definition of power to "the wider economic and educational context which shapes people's ability to articulate their interests" (Haugaard 2002, 7). Building upon Dahl's work and Bachrach and Baratz's two-dimensional view of power, Steven Lukes (2005) proposed a three dimensional framework ("three faces of power"), which extended the study of power outside the framework of institutions to the whole of society, also accounting for conflicts, which were not directly observable by empirical analysis.

Despite this renewed interest into the theoretical elaboration of the concept of power in political science and sociology, the definition of power had still not changed much in terms of understanding its ontology. It was still principally classical, understood as a relational exertion of influence on another subject in order to achieve a concrete aim. Moreover, the exercise of power was primarily understood in negative terms, as "power over" as opposed to "power to", putting too much emphasis on the view of power as exercising disproportionate influence or coercion over another, less powerful subject. The classical conception of power thus presupposes the existence of powerful subjects who are sovereign over their actions and are in possession of power (see Brown 2008). This limited intentionalist understanding of power is further exemplified by Lukes' distinction (*ibid.*, 27–9) between one's subjective interests (shaped by dominant structures of power) and objective interests (what the subject's real interests are), privileging the negative view of power as a relation between a powerful subject's exercise of power (A) over the ideologically manipulated (B). Only with the publication of Michel Foucault's work and that of

Hannah Arendt, the notion of power is desubjectified and its study refocused on the potentiality and actuality of power.

Peter Digeser (1992, 977–8) recognised the novelty of Foucault's theory of power and integrated it into the existing debate in mainstream political science (Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz, and Lukes) by formulating it as "the fourth face of power". The main purpose of Digeser's engagement with Foucault was to translate his radically different vocabulary and make it speak to political scientists in more familiar terms. Besides the inevitable methodological problems that Digeser's project entails in adding Foucault's conception of power into an existing debate that is already flawed in terms of how it conceptualises power, Digeser remains devoted to preserving an intentionalist account of agency and exercising power, and even suggests that "a notion of agency that exceeds power" might be necessary to account for "certain kinds of success that it may have" (*ibid.*, 1003). In this sense, Digeser's contribution does not depart from the analytical assumptions already set by his predecessors in the faces of power debate. Moreover, despite the clear and critical engagement with Foucault's understanding of resistance, Digeser fails to explore its ontological relation to power, further reifying the binary of opposites between the two terms.

What I propose to do in this chapter is to rethink the relationship between institutional politics and extra-institutional resistance through the notion of power. The main aim of the chapter will be to bridge the conceptual gap between formal politics and the radical politics of resistance, which pervades both mainstream political science, as well as the practice of many protest movements on the radical left. Especially with regards to the latter and with view of the post-2008 protest movements, radical left politics and social movements need to abandon the limited view of power as a repressive force, which should not be reckoned with. The radical left needs to step outside the comfortable position of political purity and engage with existing formal political institutions, if it is to effect any long-term historical change to the current political economic order. To this end, I will argue against the treatment of institutional politics and resistant practices (protest, social movements, radical politics) as two separate phenomenon and objects of study. Resistance will not be understood as the opposite and in externality to the notion of politics, but as a structural part of it. Therefore, resistance will not be viewed as anti-political, despite its antagonistic relationship with institutional politics. The notion of power will play a key role here to reshape the conventional binary opposition between the two concepts and to demonstrate their shared ontology. My aim will be to move away from the negative normative content assigned to the concept of power in traditional approaches and to illustrate the interplay between the different manifestations of power, collapsing the binary between "power over" (as negative) and "power to" (as positive). By drawing upon Arendt and Foucault, I will present a poststructuralist approach to

studying power, which will challenge the liberal conception of political agency that presupposes the presence of an autonomous sovereign subject with a clear intention of exercising power over someone else. This will allow me to move the analytical focus away from the descriptive work of identifying who or what institutions hold power and instead centre my analysis on the conceptual relationship between power, resistance and politics. I will also show how power, through the dynamism of its manifestations, either in the form of institutional politics or extra-institutional resistance, can be a useful analytical device for radical left politics in constructing a counter-hegemonic challenge to neoliberal governmentality.²³

I will first analyse and contrast Arendt's and Foucault's understanding of politics and power, and then through the use of Foucault's concept of counter-conduct expose the aporetic structure of politics/resistance. I will argue that, although politics and resistance are two opposing modalities, they are sharing the same ontology of power. The concept of counter-conduct will enable me to uncover the conducting power common to both formal political structures, as well as its supposed opposites, resistant counter-forces. This will dispel the conventional perception of resistance as somehow located at a remove from relations of power, rule and domination. The critical analysis of Jacques Derrida's and Walter Benjamin's concepts of law-making violence and counter-violence, Jacques Rancière's distinction between the police order and politics, and Antonio Gramsci's understanding of political passion and pragmatism will demonstrate precisely that we cannot ignore the shared ontology of conducting power in both institutionalised politics as well as in mass protest movements. Throughout my analysis, backed up by historical and contemporary examples of political parties and movements, I will argue for the necessity of institutionalising protest movements in radical politics, if the left is to achieve effective political change, while keeping in mind the dangers that such a political position brings with it.

What is politics: between Arendt and Foucault

In her never completed book *Introduction into Politics*, Arendt (2005, 93) defines politics as "the coexistence and association of *different* men." Arendt rejected the claim that humans are

²³ An endeavour to capture the multifarious nature of power dynamics, accounting for both its more visible and insidious forms, as a way of going beyond the conventional views of power as domination or power as an unequally distributed resource, has been a matter of great interest in feminist theory (Allen 1998, 2013; Caputi 2013). Drawing upon Foucault's work and using concepts, such as genealogy, the subject, the politics of the body, amongst others, Judith Butler's feminist theory stands out in particular (Butler 1990, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 2015).

somehow essentially political beings, that their political nature comes from within, by which she was critiquing the individualistic focus on human beings as autonomous sovereign entities in classical political philosophy as opposed to conceiving politics relationally, as something that happens *between* humans. For there to be politics, the plurality of differences between humans and their coexistence through established relationships are its essential components (*ibid.*, 94–5). For Arendt, politics is fundamentally about the physical interactions of human beings in public spaces, where unconstrained deliberation can take place between equals on matters of worldly concern. In another snub to the classical approach to understanding politics, Arendt does not look for politics in the study of governmental structures and bureaucracies, which she saw as potentially despotic in the event, where such rule widens the gap between the rulers and the ruled. In fact, Arendt objected to defining politics in the conventional sense of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. She identified political agency in the material presence of bodies in spaces, where opinions and views can be contrasted and discussed. Only through acting and speaking together in public spaces is politics actualised, which, for Arendt, bears witness to the fragility and ephemerality of the political moment. Without human interaction in public spaces, action and speech acts would have no witness and possibility of being registered and remembered. The importance of public spaces in Arendt's political theory cannot be understood without taking account of the stark division she drew between the public and private spheres of life. This distinction between the public sphere, where political action and deliberation happen, and the private sphere, the economic realm of biological needs and consumption, is rooted in the ancient Greek differentiation of political and fulfilled life (*bios*) from bare life (*zoe*). It is on the basis of this distinction that Arendt underlines the need for public spaces, as opposed to politics taking place in the private:

Following Aristotle, Arendt passionately asserts that the essence of politics is action. Laws and institutions, which to the liberal mind are the stuff of politics, for Arendt supply the framework for action. The activities of debate, deliberation, and participation in decision making come to occupy center stage. (Villa 1996, 4)

For Arendt, politics is not a thing of necessity, which by implication belongs to the private domain, but about freedom and the possibility of starting new beginnings. Politics is also not a foreclosed process with limited viable options to choose from, whether it be choosing between only two political parties or limited outcomes ("there is no alternative" mentality); for her, politics is unpredictable and about infinite possibilities, which can only be realised in a political community,

based on diversity and plurality of everyone. Action, therefore, holds a central position in Arendt's understanding of politics. It is with the coming together and interaction of people that the public realm comes into existence (Arendt 1958, 199). In this sense, Arendt's conception of politics can be said to be performative in its essence. Moreover, when reading Arendt, one notices that it is impossible to discuss Arendt's conception of politics without also talking about power. For Arendt, the two are inextricably linked. In her words:

What keeps people together after the fleeting moment of action has passed (what we today call "organization") and what, at the same time, they keep alive through remaining together is power. And whoever, for whatever reasons, isolates himself and does not partake in such being together, forfeits power and becomes impotent, no matter how great his strength and how valid his reasons. (Arendt 1958, 201)

The public realm, where politics materialises through power, can be described as "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be" (*ibid.*, 198). To fully appreciate Arendt's understanding of politics, the notion of power is key. For Arendt, power is always a potentiality to something, but because this potentiality depends on the contingency of human relations, it is not "an unchangeable, measurable, and reliable entity" (*ibid.*, 200). Power "springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse" and like all potentialities it "can only be actualized but never fully materialized" (*ibid.*). What is material in the constitution of power, however, is the presence and being together of bodies without which we could not talk about politics.

Foucault's conception of politics, like Arendt's, is also difficult to discuss without closely addressing the notion of power at the same time. In one sense, Foucault shares a conventional understanding of politics when he likens it to "the art of the weaver" (Foucault 2009, 145). The essence is to

join together, as the weaver joins the warp and the weft. The politician will bind the elements together, ... he will bind together the virtues in their different forms, which are distinct from and sometimes opposed to each other; he will weave and bind together different contrasting temperaments, such as, for example, spirited and moderate men; and he will weave them together thanks to the shuttle of a shared common opinion. (*ibid.*, 146)

This view of politics can be characterised as pluralist or liberal, in the sense that it emphasises the conciliation of different, opposing interests. Yet, as one might expect, Foucault does not stop there. He goes on to elaborate the complex ontology of politics in the proceeding passages, focusing on the genealogy and the development of the *raison d'État* as it undergoes different transformative stages from the Middle Ages to the 18th century. When the term politics first appeared in usage, Foucault maintains, it did not designate a particular domain or type of practice. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the term was used negatively to name the politicians (*les politiques*), those "who share a particular way of thinking, a way of analyzing, reasoning, calculating, and conceiving of what a government must do and on what form of rationality it can rest" (*ibid.*, 245–6). Only in the middle of the seventeenth century, a different understanding of politics emerges, politics as "a domain or type of action" (*ibid.*, 246):

Politics ceases being a way of thinking or particular way of reasoning peculiar to some individuals. It really has become a domain, and one that is positively valued insofar as it is fully integrated at the level of institutions, practices, and ways of doing things within the system of sovereignty of the French absolute monarchy. (*ibid.*)

While still locked in the conciliatory relationship with the "absolute monarchy of the Church" in the 17th century, the expending *raison d'État* carried the seeds for the reversal of the religious pastoral power. Through the emergence of political economy, statistics, biopolitics and the management of the population, *raison d'État* transitions from signifying a relationship of the state to God, then "a relationship of the state to itself", and only later in the second half of the 18th century, to a relationship of the state to the population (*ibid.*, 277–8).

This brings me to the passage where Foucault elaborates on the connection between politics and necessity. Like politics, *raison d'État*, or governmental rationality, is also concerned with "[t]his fundamental law of necessity", Foucault argues (Foucault 2009, 263). Only that it is not really a law, as for Foucault, necessity "goes beyond all natural law, positive law, and even the law of God's commandments" (*ibid.*). *Raison d'État*, therefore, cannot be equated with the rule of law and the legal system, as *raison d'État* "does not have to abide by the laws" because it is "exceptional" in relation to them. It only respects them "insofar as ... it posits them as an element of its own game" (*ibid.*, 262). Foucault makes a similar observation with regards to politics: "Politics ... is not something that has to fall within a form of legality or a system of laws..., although at times, when it needs them, it uses laws as an instrument" (*ibid.*, 263). Following from this, we can state that politics, for Foucault, is closely related with governing or the governmental

rationality, which in turn is predicated around the notion of necessity (*ibid.*). It is the necessity of the preservation of the state that is of central concern to politics. To fully understand the complexity of Foucault's conception of politics, we need to look at how he brings into discussion the seeming opposite of *raison d'État* – that is *coup d'État*.

I will focus on two specific characteristics of *coup d'État* that Foucault discusses: (1) one that emphasises the relation with its supposed opposite, *raison d'État*; (2) and the other on the element of violence that it implies. This exposition will open the ground for further theorisation of the concept of politics later in the chapter, especially in relation to resistance. First of all, Foucault quickly points out that by *coup d'État* he does not mean "someone's seizure of the state at the cost of those who had previously held it", in the contemporary sense of the phrase. At the start of the seventeenth century, *coup d'État* stood for "a suspension of, a temporary departure from, laws and legality" (*ibid.*, 261). It marked "an action retaining no order or form of justice", at least not in the legalist sense. Moreover, *coup d'État*'s externality in relation to law does not mean that it is ontologically alien to *raison d'État*. That is because, for Foucault, "*raison d'État* and a system of legality or legitimacy are not in any way homogeneous" (*ibid.*):

So, the *coup d'État* does not break with *raison d'État*. It is an element, an event, a way of doing things that, as something that breaches the laws, or at any rate does not submit to the laws, falls entirely within the general horizon, the general form of *raison d'État*. (*ibid.*, 262)

The supposed opposites, therefore, share a common ontology. They are fundamentally made of the same stuff, but present in different forms of the "[n]ecessity, urgency, the need to save the state itself" (*ibid.*). The main difference between the two phenomena is in the immediacy, unruliness and theatricality of *coup d'État* (*ibid.*, 264). It is in the violent character of *coup d'État* that Foucault identifies the transition between *raison d'État*, which habitually "avails itself of laws as its framework and form" (*ibid.*, 263), and *coup d'État*. In other words, "*coup d'État* is nothing other than the manifestation of *raison d'État*". Through this theoretical elucidation, Foucault establishes that we should not see the politics of reason and of violence as incongruent or antithetical. They merely represent different modalities of the same ontology.

When compared to Arendt's understanding of politics, Foucault's conception captures both the reasonable character of conciliation and its violent side. For Arendt, violence is clearly, almost in all cases, deemed to be an antipolitical force and can thus not be described as one of the modalities of politics. For this reason, her view is limited in the sense that it fails to account

for the events of violent political upheaval or reversal. Arendt's understanding of politics, although conceptually nuanced and contingent due to the indeterminacy and unpredictability of action, underlines a more positive aspect of politics as a practice, in which everyone needs to partake in – it encapsulates "the power of stabilization inherent in the faculty of making promises" (Arendt 1958, 243) and the creation of a public space, where deliberation and political action can take place. Foucault, on the other hand, takes down the antinomic barrier between resistance and politics and illustrates their interconnectedness and how they play out in relation to each other. As Digeser notes, Foucault offers little systematic discussion of the relationship between politics as traditionally understood" and the analytics of power (Digeser 1992, 995–6). Drawing a comparison between classical political thought and Foucault, Digeser underlines the key conceptual difference:

For Hobbes, the central problem of politics is how to provide order and (more importantly) authority in a world where a state of war of all against all is an ever-present possibility. In contrast, a Foucauldian politics seems to be one in which the central problem of modernity is how to provide enough space for difference in a world where the will to order and normalize is omnipresent. Hence a Foucauldian politics will celebrate such terms as resistance, unsettlement, and agonism as opposed to obligation, consolidation, or harmony. (*ibid.*, 997–8)

Foucault's emphasis on resistance, dislocation and antagonistic aspect of politics will become clearer as the analysis proceeds to the centrality of power in the accounts of Foucault and Arendt. What makes it topical to discuss Arendt and Foucault together is their innovative take on the notion of power and it is here that their different conceptions of politics become more intelligible when read jointly.

How to think power differently: Foucault and Arendt

While Arendt studies power through its relation with politics, Foucault proposes an alternative method. Instead of starting from the perspective of the exercise of power, his approach takes "forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point" (Foucault 1982, 210–1). This distinction in the methodological focus of the two authors' approaches will shed light on the different aspects and manifestations of power, which is why such a joint critical analysis can

produce a more nuanced view of this elusive, yet ever-present phenomenon in human relations.

Although Foucault is not as rigorous and meticulous in analysing the technologies of resistance in his idiosyncratic genealogical fashion, at least not as explicitly as he is in analysing the technologies of domination (Best and Kellner 1991), in the lectures that he gave at the Collège de France and which were only translated more recently, he constructs an interesting genealogy of resistances to the pastoral power of the Church in the Middle Ages. By focusing on particular points of resistant practices and ways of (self-)governing, Foucault (2009, 194–201) coins a new term "counter-conduct" to describe the resistances that challenged the dominant pastoral authority by late Middle Ages and expressed a desire to be governed differently. I will centre my analysis of Foucault's conception of power around this peculiar concept of counter-conduct through which, in my view, Foucault not only offers a genealogy of resistances in a particular historical epoch, but also provides us with a critical insight into resistance's relation with political power and how the two share a common ontology. Such a conceptual and analytical gesture forms a key part in overcoming the antipolitical view of resistance in the conventional usage of the term. The approach Foucault uses in documenting these counter-conducts could be described as a "genealogy of reversals". Arendt's starting point is more philosophically classical – she turns to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and accordingly draws clear lines between what she deems political and anti-political. Her approach is to develop a conception of power in constant relation to her understanding of politics. It is inherently performative as it emphasises the potentiality and actualisation of deeds and words in public spaces – in this way, power is not understood in the conventional sense as a repressive force, despite its ontological relation with politics, but as a potential empowerment of political communities.

In his March lecture of 1979, Foucault (2008, 186) states, "[t]he term itself, power, does no more than designate a [domain] of relations which are entirely still to be analyzed, and what I have proposed to call governmentality, that is to say, the way in which one conducts the conduct of men, is no more than a proposed analytical grid for these relations of power". Foucault (1982, 216) acknowledges the fact that the term power has attained the status of "a mysterious substance" due to it not being interrogated enough. What the conventional scholars of power would focus on is describing the effects of power "without ever relating those effects either to causes or to a basic nature" of power (*ibid.*). Such a mystification of the term power leads to is "a kind of fatalism" (*ibid.*). He, thus, proceeds his analysis within the framework of two questions in order to work towards the demystification of the term and to uncover its origin, basic nature and manifestations: (1) By what means is power exercised; and (2) "[w]hat happens when individuals exert (as they say) power over others" (*ibid.*)?

The classical structures of power, in the forms of the state, rule of law and institutional domination, have dominated the traditional approaches to studying power. Although Foucault also talks about the structures and mechanisms of power in his work, he is more interested in the relational aspect of power and how power conditions these very structures that the conventional approaches see as already constituted. For this reason, Foucault understands power structures more in the sense of "the terminal forms power takes" (Foucault 1978, 92), where the state apparatus represents the "general design or institutional crystalization" of relations of power (*ibid.*, 93). By reformulating power in this way, Foucault adds dynamic vitalism to the interrelationality of power. Digeser offers a similar description of Foucault's conception of power as directing the inquiry "toward the formation and transformation of norms, practices, and self-understanding which compose politics" (Digeser 1992, 990). Foucault's genealogical take on power:

... shifts the object of theoretical inquiry away from describing or clarifying current political practices and toward describing the mundane, violent, or fabulous beginnings and dynamic character of those practices. Not only does the idea of power direct our attention to what sustains ordinary political practices, but it has also been used to study how governmental policies and actions forge and change the norms of other practices (e.g., the law, psychology, education, and sexuality). (*ibid.*)

Moreover, power is not fixed, as previously presumed, in "superstructural positions", but has a "directly productive role" (Foucault 1978, 94). For Foucault, power is not something you possess, an understanding which is common in the classical Dahlian conception, but consists of relationships between individuals or groups. Power also does not come from the top, but from below: "that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations", there is "no such duality" which would extend from the top down "to the very depths of the social body" (*ibid.*, 94). This seemingly naive statement – how can there be no such duality or binary between the ruling class and the ruled when abuses of established power are part of everyday political life – will make more sense when we welcome into our analysis Arendt's conception of power.

As Brown points out, Foucault is well-known for insisting on the omnipresence of power, but this insistence should not be understood as "a claim that power equally and indiscriminately touches all elements of the social fabric or that power belongs equally to everyone" (Brown 2008, 67). This is demonstrated by another key concept in Foucault's analytics of power: governmentality. Government, for Foucault, is "not merely a symptom that signals the extension

of the analysis of power from the microphysical to the macropolitical or that corrects possible misunderstandings of an earlier use of the word power” (Burchell 1996, 20). It provides the framework for bringing together “a set of practices, strategies, governmental projects and modes of calculation, that operate on something called the state” (Jessop 2006, 37). To fully understand Foucault’s concept of power then, it is not enough to only recognise the locality and instability of the constantly moving substrate of force relations (the microphysics of power), but to situate them within the wider genealogy of “the historical constitution of different state forms in and through changing practices of government without assuming that the state has a universal or general essence” (*ibid.*). In approaching Foucault’s conception of power in this way, the idea of governmentality serves “as a strategic codification of power relations”, which provides a bridge between the microphysics of power and “the macro-necessity in power relations” (*ibid.*, 39).

The key feature of power that is underlined by Foucault in addressing the “how of power” is not to looking to power itself, but at power relations. We do not need to look for a central and primary source of power, from which secondary manifestations of power emerge, but at the very dynamics of these manifestations. This is what makes Foucault’s approach to the question of power paradigmatically different to the classical conception:

[S]omething called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action, even if, of course, it is integrated into a disparate field of possibilities brought to bear upon permanent structures. (*ibid.*, 219)

To emphasise again, power is not a possession, but a potentiality through action. Power relations can also act as a restriction, a limitation to our capability of acting. For Foucault, the exercise of power:

is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. (*ibid.*, 220)

This brings me to Arendt who also underlines the centrality of action in her understanding of power. Like Foucault, Arendt was not satisfied with the conventional understanding of power as necessarily negative in terms of constraint or violence. She was saddened at the state of political

science in the 1960s when she realised that academic literature did not distinguish among "such keywords as 'power,' 'strength,' 'force,' 'authority,' and, finally, 'violence'" (Arendt 1969, 142). Behind what she saw as the apparent confusion was "a firm conviction" that these distinctions became insignificant in light of the seemingly "most crucial political issue" that preoccupied political science at the time – who rules whom? (*ibid.*):

Power, strength, force, authority, violence – these are but words to indicate the means by which man rules over man; they are held to be synonyms because they have the same function. It is only after one ceases to reduce public affairs to the business of dominion that the original data in the realm of human affairs will appear, or rather, reappear, in their authentic diversity. (*ibid.*, 142–3)

In her book *The Human Condition*, Arendt challenges the traditional understanding of power when she argues that "nothing in our history has been so short-lived as trust in power", and in the modern age, nothing "more common than the conviction that "power corrupts" (Arendt 1958, 203–4). Her innovative conceptualisation of power, closely knit around her understanding of politics, was clearly aimed at dissuading from taking a negative view of power. She successfully accomplishes that by constructing a performative account of the actualisation of power, which diminishes as soon as the materiality of bodies in spaces of appearance disperses. For Arendt, power is a potentiality which can only be kept alive by the exchange of "word and deed" (*ibid.*, 200). It is on the basis of this relational aspect of power that Arendt distinguishes between collective power, power in concert, and strength, which, for Arendt, "unequivocally designates something in the singular, an individual entity" (Arendt 1969, 143). The collective power of the masses becomes evident in moments of great social upheaval, when the established power of ruling elites is suddenly compromised by the mobilisation of power in the anti-establishment popular forces. Such popular power, however, exists only so long as the political movements persist in public spaces and stay united under a common cause.

Here, Foucault's assertion that power does not travel vertically through the binary opposition between the rulers and ruled is further reinforced by Arendt's understanding of power. However, whereas Foucault's point was to challenge the classical understanding of power as emanating from a central source, the sovereign or the rulers, Arendt's contention with the notion of rule expresses not only how the actualisation of power is masked by the distinction between rulers and ruled, but extends into a rejection of rule itself. Basing her notion of politics on the idealised version of the Greek polis, Arendt believed that politics can only happen in a public

space between equals. To be equal also meant to be free, and to be free “meant both not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another *and* not to be in command oneself. It meant neither to rule nor to be ruled” (Arendt 1958, 32). In light of the horrors happening under totalitarian and authoritarian regimes in Arendt’s time, Arendt was very much aware of how the notion of rule in the public realm can quickly turn into despotism (see Arendt 1954). The notions of rule, domination and mastery over others that are also present in more liberal political regimes, such as the modern day democracy with its epithet of popular self-rule, is what Arendt was trying so hard to get rid of in her reconceptualisation of politics. I will come back to the paradox of rule later on when I will discuss Jacques Rancière’s idea of radical equality in politics/democracy. For now, I would like to end the section of this chapter by underlining that the point where Arendt’s and Foucault’s understanding of power and politics is exactly the question of rule or governing.

Although Arendt rejects the notion of rule in her conception of politics, she is more ambiguous when it comes to the question of government. In the *Human Condition*, she uses the term when speaking of different forms of government. She also discusses the role of government in modern political and economic theory, which sees the government as the necessary protector of the entrepreneurial spirit of businessmen and the continuing accumulation of wealth (Arendt 1958, 71–2). Modern economists, Arendt maintains, consider the whole sphere of government “at best... a ‘necessary evil’ and a ‘reflection on human nature,’ at worst a parasite on the otherwise healthy life of society” (*ibid.*, 110). Arendt, however, suggests that the role of the government should be the protection of intimacy of its citizens against the intrusion of mass society. By implication, Arendt also wanted to see the public realm protected, so that economic rationality of consumption and wealth accumulation would not overtake and trivialise the place where, for Arendt, politics happens. Anyhow, what I would like to point out is that while Arendt is opposed to the notion of rule in politics, she clearly sees some use for the government’s place in a political community. I think this contradiction is interesting and can be fruitful in illustrating the position of many social movements and anarchist groups on the left, which view power negatively because they associate it exclusively with rule and domination in institutional politics. I argue that this position is both naïve and untenable, if these groups are ever to effectively challenge neoliberal governmentality. It is naïve because it ignores the inherently antagonistic nature of social relations, a point that I already made in Chapter 1. This means that although power in the Arendtian sense does empower political communities and democratises the field of politics, where action and deliberation can lead to the prefiguration of alternative forms of social organisation, it fails to see the Foucauldian point that one cannot escape power and its ambiguous nature. As I will show through my analysis in the rest of the chapter, power in social movements and practices

of collective resistance always already involve some form of rule or governing, even if on small-scale level. Ignoring the elements of rule and government in radical politics is also untenable in face of the urgency that the current crisis of liberal democracy presents. As I attempted to show in Chapter 3, the window of opportunity for critique and the reconfiguration of the field of politics is limited and needs to be taken advantage of before the systemic logic of neoliberal governmentality closes it, or other conservative forces occupy it.

To continue with my endeavour of rethinking power, and by this also reconceptualising the parameters of our understanding of politics, I will follow the methodological path proposed by Foucault, that is by taking resistance as the starting point of my analysis. My aim will be to overcome the conventional binary of power between politics and resistance and demonstrate how radical politics is always already implicated in the double-bind of power, which includes relations of rule and government. I will do this by turning to Foucault's concept of counter-conduct. Foucault proposes the term in his genealogy of resistances to the pastorate in the sixteenth and end of the seventeenth century, by which he wants to exploit the ambiguous meaning of the word "conduct" (*(se) conduire* in French). The term conduct can mean to lead others, but it can also signify "a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities" (Foucault 1982, 220–1). Conducting the conduct or actions of others and conducting yourself, therefore, fall within the same modality of governing. Foucault does not see government only in its narrower present day sense of "the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection"; for him, governing also means "to structure the possible field of actions of others". Like the double meaning of "*(se) conduire*" in French suggests, governing does not imply just to act upon the possibilities of action of other people, but also to act upon your own mode of conduct, to self-govern or self-rule. It is the dynamics between conducting others and counter-conducting yourself that I will be interested in for the purposes of my analysis. To further illustrate the historical semantic ambiguity of the term governing:

Before it acquires its specifically political meaning in the sixteenth century, we can see that "to govern," covers a very wide semantic domain in which it refers to movement in space, material subsistence, diet, the care given to an individual and the health one can assure him, and also to the exercise of command, of a constant, zealous, active, and always benevolent prescriptive activity. It refers to the control one may exercise over oneself and others, over someone's body, soul, and behavior. And finally it refers to an intercourse, to a circular process or process of exchange between one individual and another. (Foucault 2009, 122)

Foucault's use of the term becomes especially ingenious when he outlines the counter-conducting aspect of governing as a possibility of conducting oneself in disaccord with the dominant models of what is deemed accepted or proper behaviour. This is where he finds use of the term counter-conduct, to characterise what he identifies as the revolts of conduct and counter-movements against the dominant conduct of the Church. Their objective is to practice "a different form of conduct", "to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself" (*ibid.*, 195). Although Foucault (*ibid.*, 196) maintains that, for him, counter-conducts are ontologically distinct from "political revolts against power exercised by a form of sovereignty" and from "economic revolts against power" in their form and objective, I would tend to disagree here and contend that the specificity of "revolts of conduct" pertains in no ontologically or conceptually specific way to "the historical singularity of the pastorate". I understand that the reason for Foucault's delineation of counter-conducts as specific to revolts against the dominant Christian pastorate is to provide temporal-spatial clarity in his genealogical analysis. Yet, when their forms of manifestation are examined together with Foucault's contention that they are not separate or isolated from each other and other conflicts and problems (see *ibid.*), it becomes apparent they can be treated as any type of resistance against an established authority.

At one point in his discussion of the concept of counter-conduct, Foucault raises the following question: "Just as there have been forms of resistance to power as the exercise of political sovereignty, and just as there have been other, equally intentional forms of resistance or refusal that were directed at power in the form of economic exploitation, have there not been forms of resistance to power as conducting?" (*ibid.*: 195). This rhetorical question suggests that, similar to political and economic resistances that Foucault sees as ontologically distinct from counter-conducting practices, conducting power is also exercised in counter-conducts. In the following section, I will contend that all forms of resistance to established power are conducting in the sense of foreshadowing a form of conduct or governing in their operation. What will concern me in particular is the transition and the interplay between extra-institutional resistance and institutional politics: How is counter-yet-conducting resistance political and why is the institutionalisation of resistance a necessary operational component of radical politics?

Thinking the relationship between counter-conduct and conducting power through institutionalisation

The question of the interplay between counter-conduct and conducting power, and why the transmutation from one to the other is necessary, has been tackled by scholars and practitioners of radical politics in different ways. This question has been of particular concern to thinkers of radical politics and democracy, especially after the financial crisis of 2007–2008. Chantal Mouffe (2005; 2013) with her project of agonistic democracy maintains that social movements need to engage with the existing democratic institutions in order to radicalise and pluralise them further, if they are to be effective and succeed in articulating a counter-hegemonic alternative. In her study of the Occupy movement, Jodi Dean (2012) similarly argues that the spontaneity and ephemerality of the Occupy experience cannot develop into a revolution without constituting itself as a party. Organisation with a clear political vision, as opposed to the spontaneity of the masses, is thus crucial for a radical political project. It is in light of this observation of our times that Slavoj Žižek poses the question, what comes after the revolution, the morning after the popular uprising. It is the realisation and awareness that politically transformative moments need to be followed by "the prosaic work of social reconstruction" that sets apart "libertarian outbursts" from "true revolutionary upheavals" (Žižek 2009, 196). In other words, if counter-conducting resistances do not enter into a more organised and institutionalised form, their forceful energy is bound to dissipate in face of the mechanisations of the dominant order. All three thinkers, committed to a radicalisation of politics in one form or another, whether it be through radicalising existing liberal democratic institutions, or through the establishment of a communist party in the coming of a revolution, agree on the importance of representational organisation of counter-conducting resistances to avoid failure in attaining their aims. We can frame the above positions in terms of vertical radical politics, where the emphasis of political struggles is on the (eventual) engagement with and taking over statist forms.

The above position in radical political theory and practice is opposed by the other side of the debate, which is represented by the advocates of horizontal and autonomous ways of organising. While proponents of autonomous political thought also strive for a radical overhaul of societal organisation, their aim is to go further in eradicating centralised systems of decision-making and hierarchical authority structures. Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzellini (2014, 24–5) underline horizontal social relations and practices in radical political projects as "a break with the logic of representation and vertical ways of organising". This does not mean that structures do not emerge in counter-conducting mass movements, they stress, but the structures that do emerge in general assemblies and other types of autonomous modes of operation are "non-representational" and "non-hierarchical" (*ibid.*, 25). Similarly, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt emphasise the need for the resisting multitude to banish sovereignty from politics since the

"autonomy of the multitude and its capacities for economic, political, and social self-organisation take away any role for sovereignty" (Hardt and Negri 2004, 340). Nevertheless, they underline that the organised destruction of vertical centralised structures needs to be accompanied by "the constitution of new democratic institutional structures" (*ibid.*, 354). The key point of contention with the above vertical position therefore is not that the autonomists reject the need for organisation and the role of institutions in political struggles, but in the ideological and practical rejection of representation in politics. Autonomists believe in the "self-administration" (Sitrin and Azzellini 2014, 40) and self-rule (Hardt and Negri 2004, 340) of counter-conducting resistances from a position of externality to the established representative structures of power. The latter are viewed as part of the old regime (or Empire), which needs to be abandoned in the collective pursuit of "new institutional moments" (Sitrin and Azzellini 2014, 70–1) and "a new project of democracy" (Hardt and Negri 2004, xvi–xvii).²⁴

Although both positions strive for a radical transformation of the contemporary capitalist-liberal-democratic society, the autonomist position is fundamentally lacking in its understanding of rule and power, and thus it is not able to grasp the dynamism between counter-conducts and conducting power. While the critique of the tendency of liberal democracy towards oligarchy, the crisis of representation and the institutional accommodation of private capital interests in the current political party system are in line with my argumentation in the thesis, the autonomist position on rejecting participation in and engagement with existing institutional structures of power is problematic both theoretically and in terms of political strategy. Theoretically, it idealises autonomist struggles as an example of politics, which is immune to the hierarchical social relations of domination and is thus able to transcend vertical structures of rule and organisation. As I will demonstrate below through my critical discussion of Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Rancière, the paradox of (self-)rule is an ever present condition of political projects and cannot be done away with by simply imaging "a world beyond sovereignty, beyond authority, beyond every tyranny" (Hardt and Negri 2004, 354). The absolute democracy that Hardt and Negri are advocating for is but an idea to come, an idea which we may or may not attain. However, when moments of mass counter-conducts take place, the time for organised and effective action is limited. This brings me to the question of political strategy. Strategically speaking, the autonomist position is in danger of forfeiting the opportunity of constructing a radical political alternative by limiting the scope of

²⁴ The debate on the relationship between vertical and horizontal forms of radical politics can also be framed in terms of the opposition between the politics of hegemony on one side and horizontal multitude on the other. Katsambekis and Kioupiolis (2014) see the first camp as represented by political theorists, such as Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, and the latter by Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Richard Day, John Holloway, Saul Newman and Manuel Castels.

counter-conducts to spaces outside structures of power where binding decisions and laws are made. In the discussion that follows, I will follow the line of argument that emphasises vertical ways of organising and the need for the institutionalisation of political struggles and their engagement with existing structures of established power, while further exploring the dynamic relationship between counter-conduct and conductive power, extra-institutional resistance/horizontality and institutional politics/verticality.

When looking at the legacy of the Occupy movement, which swept the world in 2011, we can identify the failure of the movement to institutionalise its activities along vertical lines of organisation as critical. Without this transmutation taking place, the mobilisation power of the counter-conducting/resisting movements dissipate, as the numbers of the protesters start to dwindle. The power of a movement persists only for so long as it has its followers backing it, giving it support, especially in material terms as bodies coming together, as Arendt emphasised. To maintain the force of such a movement it needs to undergo a process of institutionalisation, otherwise the movement's following scatters away and its force diminishes. When making this point, I need to be clear that I am not saying that movements, which do not enter the phase of institutionalisation, cannot have any demonstrable effect on the wider social consciousness in terms of what Antonio Gramsci called "cultural hegemony". Following Gramsci, any type of social relation can be described as an educational relationship, existing "throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals" (Gramsci 1971, 350). An educational relationship is an active one in the sense that it represents an exchange of values, between the old and the new generation, absorbing each other's experiences and maturing through them (*ibid.*). That relationship becomes political for Gramsci "through the activity of transforming and consciously directing other men" (*ibid.*, 360). This is the role of cultural hegemony, which can have transformative material effects and consequences, if it manages to construct what Gramsci calls a "historical bloc".

Through the discussion of Benedetto Croce's conception of passion in politics, Gramsci acknowledges the necessity of transition from the ephemerality of mass protest movements to their routinised form of institutions. In his reading of Croce, Gramsci notes that passion cannot be organised permanently without becoming something else, that is "rationality and deliberate reflection". Crocean "passion as a moment of politics" comes into difficulty when explaining the permanent formations of politics, such as political parties and state structures. Gramsci resolves this paradox of the ephemerality of political passion by situating it within the terrain of economy:

Politics becomes permanent action and gives birth to permanent organisations precisely

in so far as it identifies itself with economics. But it is also distinct from it, which is why one may speak separately of economics and politics, and speak of "political passion" as of an immediate impulse to action which is born on the "permanent and organic" terrain of economic life but which transcends it, bringing into play emotions and aspirations in whose incandescent atmosphere even calculations involving the individual human life itself obey different laws from those of individual profit, etc. (Gramsci 1971, 139–40)

The economics that Gramsci talks about seems to be about pragmatism and rationalising calculations, which is somehow opposed to the fleetingness of political passion. Yet the terrain of economic life is both "permanent and organic", the fluctuations of which offer a fertile ground for the generation of emotions and aspirations. We could say that, for Gramsci, it is the socio-economic structures that exemplify the institutionalisation of the political passion, and it is through these structures that the ephemerality of counter-conducting resistance transitions into a more permanent organisation of institutions. So, in the case of the Occupy movement, its gravest (strategical) weakness was the unwillingness to engage with the system, to infiltrate the already existing set of dominant political structures, where the formal and binding decisions are made. Of course, it is easy for me to make this blunt assertion in retrospect. At the time, everything associated with the mainstream and dominant system would have been viewed as being compromised by it and as thwarting the purity of the emerging protest movement that purported to represent the disenfranchised. With the luxury of hindsight, perhaps, it can now be said that this very concern with the authentic purity and divergence from what was seen as corrupt and pejorative, namely power and politics, was the very reason for its inevitable dispersion. What the Occupy movement failed to see is that by opening up critical questions of the systemic social injustices and by resisting the dominant forms of politics, they were already actively engaged in shifting the coordinates of power relations. The next vital step would need to take responsibility and enter into institutional politics by forming a political party that could have acted as a challenger to the disreputed political party establishment. This way the political passion, to use the Crocean formulation, that the Occupy movement generated would have had the possibility of being sustained.

Jacques Rancière's pivotal distinction between *police* and *politics* can offer another way for thinking the relationship between institutional politics and radical political moments. He defines the order of *police* as what we would generally understand under the term of politics: "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution"

(Rancière 1999, 28). The prime function of the police, for Rancière, is not so much concerned with the control of bodies in a political community, but more with determining who appears as visible within this very order, and who does not, as well as what demands are legible by the police and which ones are not. The police, therefore, represents the configuration of the perceptible and the sayable (*ibid.*, 29). Now, *politics*, on the other hand, is reserved for "an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing" (*ibid.*). According to Rancière, whatever or whoever does not fit into the police configuration of the perceptible are "the part of those who have no part" (*ibid.*, 30). Politics is then precisely that activity, which reconfigures one's place in the police configuration of the perceptible/sayable, the activity that "makes visible what had no business being seen" and the activity that "makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise" (*ibid.*, 30).

Many authors who have taken up Rancière's distinction between the police and politics have privileged the latter as the site of radical equality and the basis of radical politics, while ignoring the more complex relationship that Rancière theorised between the two (Chambers 2013, 68). As Samuel Chambers notes, most accounts of Rancière's understanding of politics in the English-speaking political theory focus too much on the agonistic aspect of his political theory, while forgetting the more mundane and orderly part which characterises the order of the police, without which politics, the "rare and beautiful political moments" (*ibid.*, 69), would have no sense. Taking into account the general misunderstanding about his politics/police distinction, Rancière writes:

This distinction has often been taken as a new version of well-known oppositions: spontaneity and organization, or instituting act and instituted order. The response thus made is that such pure acts are doomed either to remain in their splendid isolation, or to disappear in the instituted order and forthwith to inscribe the nostalgia of the instituting act. (Rancière 2010, 205)

For Rancière, the police and politics do not represent "an opposition between two modes of life", but refer "instead to two distributions of the sensible, to two ways of framing a sensory space, of seeing or not seeing common objects in it" (Rancière 2010, 92). Although one might see Rancière's conception of politics as purist, he himself argued when coining the concept of police that he understands the term in a "broader sense that is also 'neutral', nonperojative" (Rancière 1999, 29). Moreover, police is not restricted to the structures and mechanisms of the state apparatus, as it is often believed – the police "stems as much from the assumed spontaneity of social relations as from the rigidity of state functions" (*ibid.*). The relationship between police and

politics and the difference between the two pertains to a meeting of two different logics (*ibid.*, 32). This, for Rancière, signifies the appearance of a political moment – when the egalitarian logic of politics and the police logic confront each other. Rancière goes further in explaining the relation between the two logics:

The distinction between politics and police takes effect in a reality that always retains a part of indistinction. It is a way of thinking through the mixture. There is no world of pure politics that exists apart from a world of mixture. There is one distribution and a re-distribution. (Rancière 2010, 207)

Rancière's account of police and politics can be helpful for illustrating the simultaneous processes taking place when there is a confrontation of different police and egalitarian logics meeting in moments of political conflict and social upheaval. It rejects the simple binary that establishes an ontological divide between policing and politics, and demonises the first while romanticising the latter. However, Rancière's approach to understanding politics has two important limitations: (1) he does not account for power in his conceptualisation of the relation between police and politics (see Rancière 1999, 32); and (2) as a result of failing to account for the complex nature of power, his conception of politics takes on a pure form, a conceptualisation that he tried to avoid in the first place. These two limitations can be explained by Rancière's cynical understanding of rule, *arkhê*:

What makes possible the *metexis* proper to politics is a break with all the logics that allocate parts according to the exercise of the *arkhê*. The 'liberty' of the people, which constitutes the axiom of democracy, has as its real content a break with the axiom of domination, that is, any sort of correlation between a capacity for ruling and a capacity for being ruled. (Rancière 2010, 32)

In Rancière's political theory, politics, or democracy, is precisely about disrupting any rule or power of the self and breaking "the circularity of the *arkhê*" (Rancière 2010, 53). However, as Alain Badiou remarks, Rancière never really tells us what comes to replace the circularity of the *arkhê* "in the order of real politics" (Badiou 2005, 110). The egalitarian logic, or logic of equality, which is the main axiom of Rancière's idea of politics and democracy, Badiou argues, is "held together under a pure empty mark of mastery, whose vertical absence provides the foundation for the horizontal bond", the *demos*, which in Rancière's theory represents nothing other than "the

idea of a shared mastery", without being in a position of mastery (*ibid.*). Rancière (2010, 54) defends such a formulation of the foundation of the political as *dissensual* in structure rather than *aporetic* (which is Derrida's position; we will come to that later). Yet, in making this justificatory gesture, Rancière still does not fully come to terms with the aporia of (self-)rule, of conduct and counter-conduct. Furthermore, Rancière's suspicion of rule in the traditional understanding of politics extends more broadly to the conceptualisation of political philosophy, which he sees as an oxymoron: "the anodyne expression 'political philosophy' is the violent encounter between philosophy and the exception to the law of *arkhê* proper to politics, not to mention philosophy's own effort to reconstitute politics under the auspices of this law" (*ibid.*, 40). As a result, Rancière's critique of "a return to a 'pure' form of politics" (*ibid.*, 27–8), which he identifies in Aristotelian texts and their interpretations, for example that of Hannah Arendt, comes across as arbitrary when he allows himself to conduct an "interrogation into what is 'proper' to politics" (*ibid.*, 27). He will tell us what politics must not be and what it should be, but he does not say what politics is in the order of parliamentary democracy and institutional politics, and how to incorporate the element of conducting power/governing/rule in his vision of disruptive politics.

By failing to account for the double-bind nature of power in his police/politics distinction, I argue that Rancière forgoes a crucial part in his theorisation of politics – explaining what takes place after the disruptive reconfiguration of the police order takes place. The notion of power is key here because it manages to keep in view the connection between politics and police that Rancière explicitly refuses to do. For this reason, Foucault's notion of counter-conduct is crucial for our analysis as it incorporates the reinvented way of thinking about governing within the concept of governmentality. Despite maintaining that police and politics are heterogeneous to each other, Rancière still maintains that the first is "always bounds up with the latter" (Rancière 1999, 31). The rarity and ephemerality of politics with respect to the police distribution of the sensible, the very interplay between the two different logics remains under-theorised in Rancière's work. I will, therefore, stick to Foucault's terminology and continue to explore the interplay between the counter-conduct and conduct, political passion and institutional politics. My argument is still the same: the two opposing terms share something common in their very ontology and yet there is clearly a certain distinction between the two. In his theory of politics, Rancière follows in the footsteps of autonomist thinkers and excludes the notion of rule from his analysis. While the distinction between politics and the police is helpful in distinguishing the governing aspect of politics from the ephemeral disruptive moments, the relation between the two and what is common to both logics needs to be explored further. By turning to Jacques Derrida and Walter Benjamin, I will explain further the interaction between counter-conduct and conducting power through the

authors' use of the violence of law as the nodal point between institutional politics and extra-institutional resistance.

Interplay between politics and resistance as a vicious circle

Jacques Derrida's essay "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundations of Authority'" and Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence", which Derrida draws upon, can further illuminate the structural commonality between counter-conduct and conduct, highlighting the constitutive character of the first and the constituent form of the latter. The two essays provide a particularly fruitful route to proceed with the analysis since they do not position the two forces as binary opposites, but as interrelated and part of the same ontology. The violence of law is what joins institutional politics and radical political moments together. Derrida begins the inquiry by addressing the conventional phrase in English, "to enforce law", which alludes to the force that accompanies the law (Derrida 1992, 5). This force of law, or "mythic violence" (*ibid.*, 31), as Derrida also calls it, can take two forms: (1) the constituent law-preserving violence, the aim of which is to maintain, reiterate, confirm and reinstate itself in order to conserve the order of the things; and (2) the constitutive law-making violence, which through its performative nature captures the moment law originates, founds and inaugurates itself (*ibid.*, 13). What Derrida observes in the interplay between the forms of mythical violence is not merely a transition, which is actually not a transition, or at least not a marked and discernible crossing from one stage to another, but it seems there is "a more intrinsic structure" (*ibid.*) at play. In the performativity of counter-conduct, there is also conducting power and within conducting power a performative potentiality for counter-conduct. This antagonism between the two modalities of the same structure, seemingly juxtaposed against each other, but still one and the same, can be explored by reading the following words by Derrida in a passage on the performative ontology of language and what he calls "the mystical":

Here a silence is walled up in the violent structure of the founding act. Walled up, walled in because silence is not exterior to language. It is in this sense that I would be tempted to interpret, beyond simple commentary, what Montaigne and Pascal call the mystical foundation of authority. One can always turn what I am doing or saying here back onto – or against – the very thing that I am saying is happening thus at the origin of every institution. (*ibid.*, 14)

The aporetic structure of the constitutive and constituent forms of mythical violence is "mystical". There is something about it that evades our interpretative, rationalising capabilities, in its very performative power. Its force is at times "uninterpretable or indecipherable", but it is "certainly legible, indeed intelligible since it is not alien to law" (*ibid.*, 35–6). I am going to allow myself to offer another citation from Derrida that attempts to grasp the aporia of the law-making violence:

But it is, in *droit*, what suspends *droit*. It interrupts the established *droit* to found another. This moment of suspense, this *épokhè*, this founding or revolutionary moment of law is, in law, an instance of non-law. But it is also the whole history of law. *This moment always takes place and never takes place in a presence*. It is the moment in which the foundation of law remains suspended in the void or over the abyss, suspended by a pure performative act that would not have to answer to or before anyone. The supposed subject of this pure performative would no longer be before the law, or rather he would be before a law not yet determined, before the law as before a law not yet existing, a law yet to come, *encore devant et devant venir*. (*ibid.*, 36)

It is in the sense of a performative act, which Derrida describes above, that we can understand the structuredness of (counter-)conducts. There is no need for ontologically separating the two as they both share the same dynamic performative force, once to conserve, once to interrupt and found anew. In *The History of Sexuality*, as pinpointed by the editor (Senellart in Foucault 2009, 217) of Foucault's 1977–78 lecture notes at the Collège de France, Foucault utters the famous words, "Where there is power, there is resistance", and continues: "and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, 95). Resistances are neither only "passive" or reactionary, nor are they simply "a promise that is of necessity betrayed"; rather, they "are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite" (*ibid.*, 96). To further accentuate the ontological relatedness of politics and resistance/conduct and counter-conduct, one should read Foucault's words from his manuscript pages, cited in one of the footnotes in the chapter on counter-conduct: "The analysis of governmentality ... implies that 'everything is political.' ... Politics is nothing more and nothing less than that which is born with resistance to governmentality, the first revolt, the first confrontation" (Foucault 2009, 217).

Up until now, I have looked at different ways of conceptualising the aporetic relationship between conducting power and revolts of conduct, highlighting "the active sense of the word

'conduct'" (*ibid.*, 201) in counter-conducting individuals or groups, acting "in the very general field of politics or in the very general field of power relations" (*ibid.*, 202). I would now like to turn our attention to a passage by Foucault, which appears in his 1 March 1978 lecture:

There is also the theme of the nullification of the world of the law, to destroy [for] which one must first destroy the law, that is to say, break every law. One must respond to every law established by the world, or by the powers of the world, by violating it, systematically breaking the law and, in effect, overthrowing the reign of the one who created the world. /.../ The Western and Eastern Christian pastorate developed against everything that, retrospectively, might be called disorder. So we can say that there was an immediate and founding correlation between conduct and counter-conduct. (*ibid.*, 195–6)

What is compelling in the above quotation is the profoundly negative and destructive form that a counter-conduct can take. A counter-conduct is not always constitutive of some positive alternative order of things, of some "better" form of conduct. Yet, from its destructiveness something positive and more structured can emerge, outlining a new constituent framework.

Foucault's words "sinning to infinity" and "nullifying the world of the law" bring me back to Derrida when he talks about the "the annihilating violence of destructive law" or the "divine" violence (Derrida 1992, 31), as opposed to the human law-making violence. It seems that divine violence, for Derrida, is actualised as if coming out of the blue – it is "revolutionary, historical, anti-state, anti-juridical" (*ibid.*, 55). Moreover, this divine violence "does not lend itself to any human determination, to any knowledge or decidable 'certainty' on our part. It is never known in itself, 'as such,' but only in its 'effects' and its effects are 'incomparable,' they do not lend themselves to any conceptual generalization" (*ibid.*, 56). Both the mythic, human law-making violence and divine violence contain an element of "the undecidable", Derrida continues, which is "the violent condition of knowledge or action" (*ibid.*). And this is exactly what is puzzling in Foucault's quotation above: this undecidability, contingency and radical openness of performative action. In his exposition of counter-conduct, Foucault conceptualises it "in the form of strategies and tactics" (Foucault 2009, 216), which puts emphasis on its rational and constructive qualities, belonging to the realm of law and politics. However, I would also like to expose the other, less gracious side of counter-conduct, which can be ruthless and unforeseen. The divine violence that Derrida and Benjamin talked about is what Arendt would probably term "force". Arendt emphasises how we often use "force" in everyday speech "as a synonym for violence, especially if violence serves as a means of coercion" (Arendt 1969, 143). She believes the term should be reserved for the "forces

of nature" or the "force of circumstances" to denote "the energy released by physical or social movements" (*ibid.*, 143–4).

This undecidability in the performative action of counter-conducting movements, therefore, can be better understood by Arendt's description of the unpredictability and uncertainty a course of action takes. Arendt speaks here of the double incapacity: one is the incapacity "to undo what has been done", which is "matched by an almost equally complete incapacity to foretell the consequences of any deed or even to have reliable knowledge of its motives" (Arendt 1958, 233). A sequence of actions is a process, which is "never exhausted in a single deed, but on the contrary can grow while its consequences multiply" (*ibid.*). From this, we can see that "action has no end" (*ibid.*), hence our inability to predict with certainty the outcome of our actions. In light of this insight, we can demystify the "mystical" or "divine" character of destructive violence of law, the law of revolutions and so on. Our inability to rationalise the unforeseen, and thus the unrationalisable, accounts for the seemingly "out-of-the-blue" and unexpected qualities of divine violence. For this reason, Arendt proclaims that "men" are unable to bear "the burden of irreversibility and unpredictability, from which the action process draws its very strength" (*ibid.*, 233):

That this is impossible, men have always known. They have known that he who acts never quite knows what he is doing, that he always becomes "guilty" of consequences he never intended or even foresaw, that no matter how disastrous and unexpected the consequences of his deed he can never undo it, that the process he starts is never consummated unequivocally in one single deed or event, and that its very meaning never discloses itself to the actor but only to the backward glance of the historian who himself does not act (*ibid.*).

To remedy the irreversibility and unpredictability of the action process is not to turn to "another and possibly higher faculty", Arendt contends. Conversely, Benjamin is of the view that the end to this perpetual and ruthless oscillation between conduct and revolts of conduct can only come "if the existence of violence outside the law, as pure immediate violence, is assured" (Benjamin 1996, 252); a Messiah of some kind or sort that would deliver "the sign and seal /.../ of sacred dispatch" (*ibid.*). For Benjamin, this force is unequivocally of divine character; in actuality it is "revolutionary violence, the highest manifestation of unalloyed violence by man" (*ibid.*). Whether this divinity of the revolutionary force is truly transcendental or just a mystical cover for intensified resistances of conduct, it is "neither equally possible nor equally urgent for man to decide when

pure violence was effected in a determined case" (Benjamin in Derrida 1992, 55), since it cannot be "recognizable as such with certainty, unless it be in incomparable effects" (Benjamin 1996, 252). Arendt, on the other hand, thinks that the remedy is actually one of the potentialities of action itself:

The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility ... is the faculty of forgiving. The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises. The two faculties belong together in so far as one of them, forgiving, serves to undo the deeds of the past, whose "sins" hang like Damocles' sword over every new generation; and the other, binding oneself through promises, serves to set up in the ocean of uncertainty, which the future is by definition, islands of security without which not even continuity, let alone durability of any kind, would be possible in the relationships between men. (Arendt 1958, 236–7)

Binding oneself through promises, or the making of contracts and laws in other words, is Arendt's proposed solution to the "two-fold darkness of human affairs" (*ibid.*, 244), the inability of humans to be self-reliant and the impossibility to master the course of one's actions. Arendt maintains that if we did not rely on "contracts and treaties" in political communities, the only alternative would be "a mastery which relies on domination of one's self and rule over others". Here Arendt emphasises the role of law (not rule of law) in providing some certainty and predictability in the ocean of uncertainty that characterises human affairs. However, where the danger lies in law-making, Arendt warns, is when it is "misused to cover the whole ground of the future and to map out a path secured in all directions" (*ibid.*), in other words, when the over-judicialisation and the depoliticisation of decision-making foreclose the possibility for politics in advance.

The same danger of law becoming an end in itself, rather than a means for achieving a higher end, is also identified by Benjamin, Derrida and Foucault. At one point or another, the circumstances of human affairs require, or even demand, the "binding oneself through promises", the institutionalisation of radical politics, yet in this process the danger is that politics ever more slightly fall, yet again, into the destined trap of decay (Benjamin 1996, 251). It is in this sense that Derrida and Benjamin diagnose the "decay of parliaments", an observation that strikes a chord with today's parliamentary politics as well:

The parliaments live in forgetfulness of the violence from which they are born. This amnesic denegation is not a psychological weakness, it is their *statut* and their structure.

From this point on, instead of coming to decisions commensurable or proportional to this violence and worthy (*würdig*) of it, they practice the hypocritical politics of *compromise*. The concept of compromise, the denegation of open violence, the recourse to dissimulated violence belong to the spirit of violence, to the "mentality of violence" (*Mentalität der Gewalt*) that goes so far as to accept coercion of the adversary to avoid the worst, at the same time saying to itself with the sigh of the parliamentarian that this certainly isn't ideal, that, no doubt, this would have been better otherwise but that, precisely, one couldn't do otherwise. Parliamentarism, then, is in violence and the renunciation of the ideal. (Derrida 1992, 47–8)

In the passage from revolutionary and charismatic presence of the radical political opening to representation, parliamentary institutions forget the originary violence from which they were born: "When the consciousness of the latent presence of violence in a legal institution disappears, the institution falls into decay" (Benjamin 1996, 244). The overstratification of parliamentary politics represents for Benjamin and Derrida the foreclosure of the undecidability and openness of politics in pursuit of the ideal. No less pertinent is their point about capitulation and compromise in the face of the adversary, foreclosing again the open field of possibility in politics. Similar to Derrida's critique of the decay of parliaments, we can also understand the decay of the pastorate that Foucault identifies, brought about by its "extremely rigorous and dense institutionalization" and "extreme complication of pastoral techniques and procedures" (Foucault 2009, 202–3).

Moreover, the "amnesic denegation" (Derrida 1992, 47) of the decaying institutions is not due to "a psychological weakness", says Derrida, but it pertains to their "*statut*" and "structure". In other words, the cycle of lawmaking violence and counter-violence, of conducts and counter-conducts – revolutionary violence going through the institutionalisation process until it reaches the point of amnesia and declines into decay in face of a new counter-movement – keeps revolving until it is interrupted and suspended by the force (or divine violence) of what Benjamin (*ibid.*, 252) calls "a new historical epoch". The cyclicalness of this movement suggests that the stratification of conducts inevitably leads to their dense institutionalisation and amnesic denegation of its primary aims. Robert Michels (1962, 342) described this paradox, which the counter-conducting movements inevitably find themselves in, as "the iron law of oligarchy". In order to capitalise on their numerical strength, Michels emphasised, social movements need to organise and strategically coordinate their actions. However, as soon as they overcome the hurdle of disorganisation and undergo a process of institutionalisation, they are facing the danger of overstratification and of losing sight of their original aims (*ibid.*, 61). The principle of organisation

is, thus, on the one hand a prerequisite for the success of counter-conducting resistances, while on the other, it threatens their demise.

Antonio Gramsci makes a similar observation in his analysis of political parties in periods of "organic crisis" (Gramsci 1971, 210). These arise because the social classes become detached from the leadership and structures of the traditional parties. As a result, vacuums of new political possibilities are opened up and Gramsci here cautions against "violent solutions" and "the activities of unknown forces, represented by charismatic 'men of destiny'" (*ibid.*). Gramsci describes these crises as "situations of conflict between represented and representatives", which are not only limited to state structures, but can also be found in the world of business and "high finance", the Church and "all bodies relatively independent of the fluctuations of public opinion" (*ibid.*). Although happening at different levels and in different geographical settings, these critical moments have in common a "crisis of authority" or a "crisis of hegemony" (*ibid.*). As Gramsci explains, the reason for the crises of political structures is their lack of organisational flexibility: the lack of the "party's capacity to react against force of habit, against the tendency to become mummified and anachronistic" (*ibid.*, 211):

The bureaucracy is the most dangerously hidebound and conservative force; if it ends up by constituting a compact body, which stands on its own and feels itself independent of the mass of members, the party ends up by becoming anachronist and at moments of acute crisis it is voided of its social content and left as though suspended in mid-air. (*ibid.*)

Gramsci, therefore, comes to the same conclusion as Benjamin and Derrida, as well as Foucault. The ossification of dominant conducting structures reignites counter-conducting individuals and groups into action. Foucault's notion of counter-conduct illustrates here that these counter-conducting resistances share the same modality with established conducting structures in the sense that both forms are engaged in relations of power and both endeavour to hegemonise their position. This can be observed in situations where revolutionary parties have emerged victorious out of violent political struggles, and after having spent a few years in a position of power, the revolutionary parties have fallen into the same loop of structural stratification.

We can take the example of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico. Its beginnings were radical and go back to the late 1920s. It was established under the name the National Revolutionary Party and undertook the process of state development and integration in the post-revolutionary period. Its role was so dominant in the absence of organised state structures that its national presence became equated with the state itself. Its absolute state

dominance finally came to an end in the 2000 presidential elections (MacLeod 2004, 37–8; Russell 2009, 155). What makes the case of the Mexican PRI interesting for the understanding of the transition between ephemeral revolutionary movements and their institutionalisation is its politico-ideological evolution and the concurrent fall in popular support, which had to do with the rampant corruption charges, electoral fraud and arbitrary control of state institutions. From its socialist (or social-democratic) beginnings, it joined the general trend of the time and transformed into a centrist neoliberal political party.

This observation also holds for the post-politics of liberal representative democracy more broadly. As Sitrin and Azzellini (2014, 60–1) remind us, the tendency of liberal democracy towards oligarchy is not "simply the result of inadequate regulation", but, as I have demonstrated above, is part of the very structure of the institutionalisation of representative politics. Whereas Sitrin and Azzellini, like other autonomists, see the solution in replacing liberal democratic institutions with alternative, direct forms of democracy, I wanted to show that radical politics should work around this aporia of representation in the democratic self-rule. What is it in this cyclical character of power, from radical moments of resistance to its more conservative institutionalised form, that is so aporetic in its structure? It is exactly what Jacques Rancière was refusing to incorporate in his understanding of politics and what Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida analysed in their own essays on the violence of law: the dilemma of rule. Following my conceptual re-examination of politics in relation to resistance, I argued that we cannot properly understand politics without putting the concept of power at its centre. Power can be actualised both in its ephemeral, perhaps violent and most material form in resistances, counter-conducts, protests movements, riots and revolutions, but power is also symbolically engrained in established structures of (self-)rule, whether it is a dictatorship or a democracy. While Rancière's theoretical contribution to thinking how we can break the "the circularity of the *arkhê*" through politics should not be overlooked in a radical political project, we should also not be under any illusion that we can avoid the aporia of rule/power by simply setting the question aside. Only by recognising its inevitability and its constant presence in political projects and resistances of various scales and sizes can we at least hope to keep the hybrid relationship between the demos and the democratic structures vibrant and alive.

As such, the aporia of rule is bound to haunt and dynamise the debates on the radical left, not just between the advocates of autonomism and theorists of (counter-)hegemony, but more generally in terms of the significance of democratic politics and the (in)adequacy of the liberal democratic framework for the construction of a radical alternative to neoliberal governmentality. The cyclical character of the relationship between counter-conducting resistances and conductive

power, as Walter Benjamin put it, is an unstoppable dynamism of political life, which at one time intervenes into the establishment of representative politics and structures the new political forces at another. Yet, although the two forces are in constant antagonism with one another, this does not mean that political thinkers and activists need to choose one over the other. The strategy behind a counter-hegemonic alternative to neoliberal governmentality should be precisely to tactfully thread along the lines of both forces, while keeping in mind the aporetic structure of rule.

Conclusion

The present chapter endeavoured to redefine our understanding of institutional politics by relating it to the radical politics of resistance through the concept of power. Instead of approaching the question from the point of ordinary practices of parliamentary and state politics, my analysis used extra-institutional resistance as its main reference point to understand the emergence of institutionalised politics as a result of the structural development of counter-conducting resistances. As I have demonstrated through the discussion of Arendt's and Foucault's conception of politics, politics cannot be thought separately from power as some authors have suggested in the past. For politics to be understood in its complexity, both its institutional side and the ephemerality of political passion in resistances need to be taken into account together. If we fail to incorporate the notion of power into the study of politics, we are left with studying the formal political institutions without understanding the underlying ideological and discursive processes that uphold them, while underestimating the potential impact of resistant forces on the fringes of the established political order.

In taking up the challenge of examining the conceptual relationship between institutional and radical politics, I found Foucault's notion of counter-conduct especially apt for the task at hand. The semantic construction of the concept already suggests this double sidedness to the phenomena of power. Power is the very "material" that holds the opposing forces of institutional politics and resistance together. To further explore the interplay between counter-conducting resistance and conducting power in institutionalised politics, I have turned to different critical and poststructuralist thinkers, such as Derrida and Benjamin, Rancière and Gramsci. Foucault's exposition of the disruptive and theatrical nature of *coup d'État* in relation with the dominant governmental rationality, *raison d'État*, together with Derrida's theorisation of Benjamin's notion of the violence of law, illuminates the interplay between counter-conduct and conduct in relation to more classical notions in the domain of politics, such as the rule of law, the state and revolution.

Through a critical analysis of Rancière's distinction between politics and the police, I demonstrated that his understanding of politics is lacking for failing to account for the element of rule in politics, which only becomes visible when the notion of power is brought into discussion. A similar shortcoming is identified in autonomist political thought where the question of (self-)rule is resolved through the proposition of an absolute (Hardt and Negri) and direct (Sitrin and Azzellini) democracy. Yet, as I have argued, such a position bypasses the ever present paradox of representation in institutional politics, as well as the opportunity to transform the existing structures of established power by directly engaging in their processes.

With respect to the potentiality of resisting mass movements and together with Gramsci's insights on the formation of cultural hegemony and historical bloc, two important findings are underlined: (1) counter-conducting mass movements can have significant impact on dominant discourses and the way power relations are perceived in society; (2) however, for such movements to succeed more effectively in constructing a positive hegemonic alternative, a different way of governing/being governed, they need to organise and use pragmatic strategies to capitalise on the energy of ephemeral political passions. What the analysis in this chapter found over and over again is the need for organisation and institutionalisation of power: while bringing with it the danger of overstratification and losing sight of its original political aims, resistance cannot overcome the obstacles of the ordinary and dominant order without engaging the existing political structures.

The next chapter will serve as an explanatory lens to build upon and exemplify in one the practical implications of the theoretical findings developed until this point. I will use the examples of post-2008 protest movements and the appearance of new radical left parties in Southern Europe, such as the Slovenian United Left, Podemos and SYRIZA, to demonstrate how these forces recognised the aporia of power in its double-bind nature through engaging with and taking over the statist forms of power. All of these party movements have potentialised their power both through their links with social movements, as well as through the use of vertical structures of power. This way they pursued the democratisation of institutional politics and giving a voice to the ordinary people on the one hand, while reframing the terms of the response to the crisis of representation in political and economic institutions as a need to challenge neoliberal governmentality. Taking into account the theoretical observations made in this chapter, I will suggest that the challenge for the radical left will be to maintain a hybrid relationship between horizontal forms of organising (through social movements and direct action) and vertical structures (political parties and state institutions). Drawing upon social movement and political

party literature, I will expound the new challenges that the new radical left is facing in responding to the depoliticisation of democracy under neoliberal governmentality.

CHAPTER 5: Challenging Neoliberal Governmentality: Social Movements and the New Radical Left

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to bring together theoretical observations from previous chapters and assess the challenges that anti-austerity movements and the new radical left parties are facing in their resistance to neoliberal governmentality. Having provided an economic institutional history of the dynamics between (neo)liberalisation and counter-movements, as well as the conceptual illustration of the struggle between conducting power and counter-conducts, I will now take the post-2008 wave of protest movements as an illustration of the unravelling of these dynamics. By drawing upon social movements and the new radical left scholarly literature, I will first demonstrate how the protest movements appeared and mobilised as a result of the structural and socio-economic inequality highlighted by the financial crisis of 2007–2008. As I have shown in Chapters 1 and 2, the depoliticisation of politics and increasing marketisation of society are the two main trends of neoliberal governmentality. While the latter provides the material conditions for dissent (socio-economic inequality, unemployment, social insecurity), the first explains the alienation of citizens from participation in formal democratic institutions and the subsequent recourse to alternative channels of repoliticisation (protest, social movements, direct democracy). In response to the autonomist radical left's objection to power, I will insist on the need for radical politics to engage with the existing structures of power and address the question of government. Only in this way can the radical and progressive Left effectively transform the operative coordinates of neoliberal governmentality and avert the continuing impoverishment of the disenfranchised and the underprivileged. My economic institutional analysis of capitalism in Chapter 2 has clearly shown how important the role of the state has been in providing the conditions for the expansion and maintenance of neoliberal governmentality, and thus it is crucial for the radical left to give due consideration to these transformations. Yet, as the analysis of the dynamics between established conducting power and counter-conducts has shown in Chapter 2, there are serious pitfalls to the institutionalisation of resistance and participation in institutional politics for the radical left. The way forward, as it has already been argued by some authors (see Mouffe 2015; Kioupkiolis 2016; Errejón and Mouffe 2016), is to build a party-movement model of democratic politics which would

transcend the binary between institutional party politics and often anti-institutional social movements. This hybrid model would need to be agonistic, as analysed in Chapter 1, and provide the mechanisms for channelling passions and democratic demands between the party structures and the membership base.

In this chapter, I will argue that the post-2008 wave of protests and the emergence of the new radical left parties in Southern Europe represent an alternative political response to the depoliticisation of representative politics, which comes as a result of the alignment of mainstream political parties around a neoliberal reform programme. The neoliberal politics of austerity and structural reforms have worsened the material conditions of many ordinary citizens through the cutting of wages, increased unemployment and elimination of working standards. While these circumstances point towards the economic nature of the crisis, the waves of protest movement mobilisations erupting in 2009 also exposed a crisis of liberal democratic institutions, which were unable or unwilling to respond to the legitimate concerns and demands of the protestors. Through the sustained development of reflexive critique during the public square occupations, the protest movements gradually transitioned from a moralist and individualising blame of the bankers and the greed of the financial services to a more systemic critique which connected institutional politics (mainstream political parties, governments, courts) with the way market economies are run and regulated. The importance of this political economic perspective was also noted and reflected in the social movement literature, which found its way back into the mainstream of the field, especially after the 2007–2008 financial crisis (Císař 2015, 62).

I will begin my inquiry by first situating the emergence of the post-2008 wave of protests within the experience of antecedent movements. By comparing them to the Global Justice Movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s, I will point out some key continuities and discontinuities, which will help me compare the methods used, the reasons for their emergence and their limitations. My analysis will focus on the material conditions for their emergence, the institutionalisation of resistance, and the relationship between the movements and political parties. An overview of key problems and challenges facing anti-austerity protest movements and the new populist radical left parties will lead me to propose that there needs to be greater synergy between the two different fields of study. This methodological position is based on my more practical proposition for the adoption of a party-movement model in radical left politics. By using the case study of the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests and the appearance of the United Left party on the Slovenian political scene, I will demonstrate the dynamics between more horizontal ways of organising present in the protest movements and the more vertical structure of party politics. Together with the Spanish Podemos/Indignados, Greek SYRIZA/anti-austerity movement, I will

argue that these protest movements and new radical left parties are subverting the two main trends of neoliberal governmentality: (1) they are transforming the face of democratic politics by disrupting the depoliticising hegemony of institutional politics; and (2) they are challenging the neoliberalisation of society through exposing the role of political institutions in maintaining neoliberal governmentality. But while these actions represent a transformative and democratising counter-movement to neoliberalism, they also entail new obstacles, similar to those outlined in terms of the institutional dilemma in Chapter 1: (1) the first concerns the difficulty that the implementation of the party-movement model of politics has proven to be for the new radical left parties; and (2) the need for a different conception and transformation of the role of the state in challenging neoliberal governmentality. I will address these obstacles in the last part of the chapter.

Social movements and populism in times of austerity

The post-2008 wave of occupations and protest movements marked a key moment in the reinvigoration of democratic politics in societies, where the citizens' exercise of democracy had been limited to the ritual of general elections every four or five years. While the political and economic elites were trying to reassure the public and the markets that the economic system was under control, the soaring trends of increasing unemployment and the worsening of socio-economic standards were telling a different story. The governments in Europe, dominated by the neoliberal consensus amongst established centre-left and centre-right parties, were restricted by the neoliberal orientation of policy-making. Instead of using governmental action to intervene into the market economy and use public investment for the creation of jobs, the governments in Europe embarked on a path of further fiscal self-limitation and austerity in the belief that this would boost private investment and economic growth. On the contrary, the self-inflicted impotence of neoliberal governments in relation to the economy only protracted the crisis, resulting in meagre economic growth, creation of poor and insecure jobs, and a renewed increase in household debt. Through the Polanyian lens of the double movement, this response to the financial crisis, which represents "dangerous tendencies towards the 'disembedding' of economic life", would result in the emergence of a countermovement for social and environmental protection (Dale 2010, 215). And following Foucault's observation of liberal governmentality in Chapter 2, as neoliberal

governments extend and rationalise their activity with reference to the optimum market performance, the likely high socio-political cost of neoliberalisation propels into motion another crisis of governmentality. And, indeed it did.

In her book *Social Movements in Times of Austerity*, Donatella della Porta sketches an outline of protest movements after the financial crisis, starting with the protests intensifying in Iceland in January 2009, Tahrir Square in January 2011, permanent occupations being set up in Puerta del Sol in Madrid in May 2011 and in Syntagma Square in Athens over the summer of the same year, Occupy Movement in September 2011, followed by a global day of action on 15 October 2011 (della Porta 2015a, 1–3). Although della Porta recognises the differing local circumstances that provided the conditions for the eruption of these protests around the globe, she nonetheless identifies a common thread in the protesters' calls: the collusion of interests between public institutions and private economic interests, growing socio-economic inequality and the failure of public institutions to manage the economic crisis in a way that would benefit the ordinary people (*ibid.*). While attributing the Tahrir Square protests and Arab Spring under the common banner of global protests against neoliberalism can be disputed (see Mättig 2016; della Porta and Mattoni 2014, 3), they all signify an increased intensification of people's distrust of representative politics and, more specifically, established political forces. Moreover, as Lorenzo Zamponi and Priska Daphni (2014, 193) warn us, despite the media representations of the post-2008 wave of protests as something new and spontaneous, like every new movement, the anti-austerity protests also have roots in the movements that preceded them. Their analysis, as well as the empirical research done by della Porta (2015a), backed up by accounts of academic activists, such as David Graeber (2013), link the nature of the protests to the early 2000s Global Justice Movement (GJM), which gained worldwide visibility during the demonstrations against the 1999 World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit in Seattle. What the GJM and post-2008 wave of protests have in common is "the rejection of old-fashioned party politics, the same embrace of radical diversity, the same emphasis on inventing new forms of democracy from below" (Graeber 2010). Yet, what is different, Graeber continues, is the target:

where in 2000, it was directed at the power of unprecedented new planetary bureaucracies (the WTO, IMF, World Bank, Nafta), institutions with no democratic accountability, which existed only to serve the interests of transnational capital; now, it is at the entire political classes of countries like Greece, Spain and, now, the US – for exactly the same reason. (Graeber 2010)

The shift from the transnational dimension of the GJM to the more localised movements of the post-2008 wave of anti-austerity protests is a notable development that challenges the accounts in the social movement literature of “an ineluctable trend in collective action” from the national to the transnational level of protest (della Porta and Mattoni 2014, 3). Della Porta and Alice Mattoni point out that although the financial crisis was indeed singular and global, “its timing and dynamics varies across countries”, which was also reflected in the way the protests “followed the geography of the economic crisis”, manifesting itself with “different strengths and at different times in different European countries” (*ibid.*).

Here it is worth briefly framing the debate in relation to the phenomenon of new social movements to understand the true significance of the political economy dimension of the post-2008 protest movements. Ondřej Císař (2014, 54) describes new social movements as “a manifestation of the new systemic conflicts within post-industrial (or late) modernity over autonomy, quality of life, and recognition of minority life styles (identity politics)”. The dominant view in social movements literature from the 1970s onwards was that class conflict was pacified in the welfare-capitalist institutional arrangement (Cohen and Arrato 1992; Habermas 1996). According to this view, “post-industrial society is no longer defined by the struggle between two dominant classes, but oscillates around new varying conflicts over human rights, gender equality, individual autonomy, political participation, and environmental protection” (Císař 2014, 54). Together with the emergence of neoliberal governmentality, these times marked the disappearance of capitalist analysis in the mainstream of social movement studies, as well as of other fields in social sciences (Silver and Karataşlı 2015; Hetland and Goodwin 2013; della Porta 2015a). With its emphasis on questions of democracy, fairness and social justice, the GJM marked a significant shift from the social movements in the 1980s and 1990s, which were more “oriented towards single-issue politics and pursuing a pragmatic course” (della Porta and Rucht 2012, 9).

In terms of the social composition and political culture, another discontinuity can be noted between the GJM and post-2008 protest movements. While the GJM comprised “a network of networks of activism”, joining together activists from mostly middle-class occupations who participated in different political and social associations and groups, the post-2008 wave of protests was predominantly composed of new-comers without previous political affiliations, “amongst them those who were hit hardest by austerity measures” (*ibid.*, 8). Benjamin J. Silver and Şahan Şavas Karataşlı (2015) specifically underline the role of new working class formations in the recent wave of protests. The neoliberal structural reforms of the labour market, the outsourcing of manufacturing and post-Fordist modes of production, combined with the pursuit of

austerity measures, has propelled into movement grand-scale making, unmaking and remaking of working classes and workers' movements. This has accelerated the destruction of established livelihoods more quickly than the creation of new ones, leaving behind "an enlarging mass of unemployed, underemployed, and precariously employed workers" (Silver and Karataşlı 2015, 139). The mass presence of unemployed youth and the Polanyi-type of "struggles by established working classes defending ways of life and livelihood that are in the process of being 'unmade'" testifies to the importance of the political economic dimension of the post-2008 wave of protests (*ibid.*, 138). Compared to the new social movements that emerged from "the pacification of class conflict, and even the *embourgeoisement* of the working class" after the mid-1960s, the post-2008 wave of protests reflect "the pauperization of the lower classes as well as the proletarianization of the middle classes, with the growth of the excluded in some countries to about two-thirds of the population" (della Porta 2015a, 35). The fragmentation of once more stable social categories, such as the working class and the subjects' institutional affiliations, has a direct effect on the chosen forms of collective organisation.

With regards to the forms of collective action used, horizontal network structures replace more centralised organisational forms found in the trade unions and political parties or crowd-funded associational forums, which we could see in the GJM. Della Porta ties this organisational shift with the development of neoliberal governmentality, which increases precariousness and social insecurity and reduces "availability of time and material resources to contribute to collective efforts" (della Porta 2015a, 158). As neoliberalism redefines the role of trade unions and other corporatist actors that had been the key building blocks of the social democratic model, the idea of a direct democracy becomes a key empowering element in the emerging movements. The fragmented social basis under neoliberalism thus favours "more fluid and less structured forms of mobilization", such as occupations and camps in public spaces (*ibid.*). Coupled with the general distrust in institutions, the horizontal forms of collective action in the form of occupations of public squares did not only represent an opportunity to protest against the political elites and austerity measures, but also a way of experimenting with participatory and deliberative forms of democracy (della Porta 2015b, 774). In this sense, the post-2008 anti-austerity movements, such as the Indignados in Spain, the Syntagma square occupation in Greece and Occupy Slovenia, were prefigurative in their objective: they were not just opposing the established political practices, but also prefiguring alternative ways of organising society (Rasza and Kurnik 2012; Graeber 2013). The protest movements' tendency towards horizontal and non-hierarchical forms of organising and decision-making can be understood in light of the protesters' mistrust in established democratic institutions, which also "resonates with a large part of the population in the countries

more hit by the austerity measures” (della Porta 2015a, 220). This aspect of collective action in social movements has been captured in different ways by social and political theorists: as anti-representational, anti-establishment, self-organisation, prefigurative politics, autonomy, horizontality, the multitude, and many more (e.g., Day 2005; Maeckelbergh 2011; Hardt and Negri 2012; Graeber 2013; Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis 2014). It has also been the subject of analyses of particular movements, such as the Gezi Park protests in Turkey, the Syntagma Square protests and the Indignados, the Occupy movement and others (see Özen 2015; Prentoulis and Thomassen 2013; 2014; Sitrin and Azzellini 2014).

Yet, as I have argued in Chapter 4, the horizontalist character of collective action in the new protest movements purposefully evades the question of representation and rule, which is crucial in the wider political context of achieving paradigmatic change. Indeed, as della Porta notes, the horizontalist model of collective action in the post-2008 protest movements carries with it some key weaknesses for challenging neoliberal governmentality. Although the protest movements have empowered masses of disenfranchised ordinary citizens, their mobilising capacity was not always consistent. Della Porta assigns this fluctuation in mobilisation of protesters to the difficulty of maintaining prefigurative forms of democracy: “consensual decision making takes time, assemblies can be frustrating, participation goes in waves, material needs often win over solidarity and public commitment” (della Porta 2015a, 220). The protesters’ distrust in vertical structures of more traditional organisations, such as trade unions and other associations, has also meant that coalition-building and organisational cooperation was proven to be difficult. Moreover, occupations in public squares are short-lived forms of organisation, which clearly underlines the need for more openness towards vertical forms of organising and coalition-building with other progressively-oriented vertical structures.

This division between more horizontalist radical politics in protest movements and the vertical structures of institutional politics is also reflected in the social movement literature itself. As Sidney Tarrow (2015, 94) notes, there has been a long-standing disciplinary division between the study of social movements and the study of political parties (see McAdam and Tarrow 2010, 2013). Della Porta and Dieter Rucht (2012, 2) maintain that the movements themselves are “often idealized as being open, participatory and decentralized, and therefore relatively free from considerations and problems of internal power”. Unlike political parties, social movements are conceptualised as groups that “do not want to seize power but rather influence powerholders” in a position of exteriority to established power structures (*ibid.*). Doug McAdam and Tarrow (2010, 529) argue that social movement studies are too “movement-centric”, which precludes it from paying sufficient attention to the interactions between social movements and other institutions

involved in contentious politics. Instead, following Charles Tilly (2008), they propose social movements and systems of institutional politics to be viewed as mutually constitutive, which would offer a more dynamic and interactive perspective on politics (McAdam and Tarrow 2013, 325–6). While McAdam and Tarrow do points us in the right direction, one that underlines the interrelationship between social movements and party politics, their almost exclusive treatment of social movements as independent agents outside and in the exteriority of institutional politics is limiting with regards to my aims in this chapter. The recent emergence of the new radical left in Europe, where parts of the post-2008 protest movements in countries like Spain, Greece and Slovenia have undergone a transformation into political parties, calls for an analytical approach that can better account for the intimate relationship between party politics and protest movements (Goldstone 2003; Kriesi 2015).

One way of tackling this limitation in the social movement literature would be to follow Kenneth M. Roberts' (2015) lead in analytically linking social movements and populism studies, and together with the studies of electoral politics, address “the representational failures that trigger anti-establishment patterns of political contestation” (*ibid.*, 685). Roberts comes to this premise by recognising that both concepts, social movements and populism, entail “non-institutionalized forms of contentious politics” and “are widely used to refer to the political mobilization of common citizens in opposition to established elites” (*ibid.*, 681). However, depending on how one defines populism determines the nature of the relationship between social movements and party politics. Roberts distinguishes between a minimalist discursive or ideological conception of populism and a populism conceptualised as distinct mode of popular subjectivity. In the discursive tradition, populism is defined by its “anti-elite or anti-establishment ideology, rather than any particular mode of popular subjectivity” (*ibid.*, 684). Such a conception allows for both top-down and bottom-up patterns of mobilisation and can include both horizontal and vertical forms of organising. The second conceptualisation of populism is more leader-focussed and emphasises top-down mobilisation of mass constituencies under the (charismatic) leadership of a counter-elite. For the purposes of my analysis, I will stick with the minimalist or so-called discursive approach, which allows for greater fluidity of the operational dynamics between social movements and political parties. As such, it will be able to capture both the anti-elitist appeal to the people that dominated the discourse of post-2008 wave of protests and the transformation of movements into party-movements, namely in Greece (SYRIZA), Spain (Podemos) and Slovenia (the United Left).

This brings me to the practical proposal of modelling the relationship between horizontalist practices of protest movements and the vertical structures of party politics, both of which feature in the new radical left parties in Greece, Spain and Slovenia, within the concept of a party-

movement. Herbert Kitschelt has used the term movement-parties to analyse the transition of movements into parties, seeing movement parties as transitional and comparatively rare phenomena (see Kitschelt 2006). As I will demonstrate below in my analysis of the 2012–2013 Slovenian popular uprisings and the subsequent emergence of the United Left party, the concept of a party-movement can be used as a concrete model which encapsulates the dynamics between social movements and party politics that is expressed in the new radical left. Following Alexandros Kiouпкиolis' (2016, 115) invocation of Ernesto Laclau, I will argue that only by maintaining a hybrid link between the horizontalist ways of organising in social movements and the vertical structures of party politics through a party-movement, can a radical politics tackle both the depoliticisation of democratic politics and challenge neoliberal governmentality. Through horizontal mobilisation of critical masses in social movements, the party-movement offers a political response to the depoliticising character of institutional politics, while evading the tendency of bureaucratisation that beleaguers centre-left parties, which is "easily colonised by the corporative power of the forces of status quo" (Laclau 2014, 9). And only by actively engaging with the vertical structures of government and participating in electoral politics, can the new radical left affect "long-term historical change" to neoliberal governmentality (*ibid.*).

In the following section, I will use the case of 2012–2013 Slovenian protests and the emergence of a new political party on the left of Slovenian politics, *Združena levica* (the United Left), as an illustration of the reasons for the move in the new radical left from horizontal ways of political organising to vertical structures. The scholarly literature already covers the cases of Podemos and SYRIZA, exploring the conditions for the emergence of these new radical left parties in the context of the post-2008 protest movements and/or populism (Spourdalakis 2014; Stavrakakis 2014; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014; Agnantopoulos and Lambiri 2015; Martín 2015; de Prat 2015; Raffini *et al.* 2015; Jerez *et al.* 2015; Stavrakakis 2015; Mateo 2016; Kiouпкиolis 2016; Aslanidis and Rovira Kaltwasser 2016; Katsambekis 2016), and while there is some literature on the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests (Vezjak 2013; Musić 2013; Krašovec 2013; Kirn 2014), its scope ends with calls for the establishment of a new radical left party in Slovenian politics. After an analysis of the conditions for the 2012–2013 wave of protests across Slovenia and the reasons for the move of some protest movements towards entering electoral politics, the chapter will follow Roberts' proposal for better engagement with electoral politics literature (more specifically Katz and Mair 1995; 2009) by addressing the challenges that lie ahead for the United Left and other new radical left parties in Europe.

The Slovenian case

Although often excluded in the analysis of other high profile cases in Europe, the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests could easily be grouped together with other similar popular reactions that took place across the European continent after the financial crisis, for example the anti-austerity movements in Greece and Spain between 2011 and 2012, the 2012–2015 Romanian and the 2013–2015 Bulgarian protests, and the 2014 protests and occupations in Bosnia (Horvat and Štiks 2015). They all share an anti-establishment orientation, with the movements made up of diverse groups of individuals, indignant towards the political and economic elites for being unable to provide decent living standards following the 2008 financial crisis. Another feature that unites all six countries in their political experience is the elite-led transition from an authoritarian regime to representative democracy. With their own idiosyncratic nuances, the protests challenge the official narrative of a successful transition and interrogate the role of the national political class in skewing the transition in favour of vested interests (Kraft 2015, 201–5).

The protests that took place between November 2012 and the summer of 2013 were spurred by corruption charges against the mayor of Maribor, the second biggest Slovenian city, and later an anti-corruption commission report accusing the then Prime Minister Janez Janša of having broken the law by failing to report assets. The subsequent protests growing in strength led to a parliamentary vote of no confidence for Janša's government in February 2013. What makes the Slovenian case especially interesting for my analysis is the interaction of horizontal practices during the protests and the vertical structures that emerged from them. Below, I briefly outline the history of Slovenian activism and radical politics since 2004, when Slovenia became a full member of the European Union (EU), including the Slovenian Occupy movement, 15O, the immediate precursor to the 2012–2013 protests. I will categorise the main radical political initiatives in Slovenia in this period according to their use of horizontal and/or vertical forms of politics. I will then proceed to analysing the organisation and composition of the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests and outline the reasons for change in political strategy of the main protest committees, one of which resulted in the creation of *Iniciativa za demokratični socializem* (the Initiative for Democratic Socialism [IDS]), which later became part of the United Left. In particular, I will be focussing on the reasons for the move from horizontal ways of political organising to vertical structures and the need for a new party-movement model in Slovenian politics.

A brief history of Slovenian activism

In order to understand the emergence of the Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS) and the United Left in Slovenia, we need to acknowledge the history of horizontalist practices that precedes the 2012–2013 Slovenian protests. The brief history of Slovenian activism and radical politics that I will outline here is merely a snippet taken out of a longer and more extended context which reaches back to the days of civic activism in ex-Yugoslavia.²⁵ We can situate the beginnings of organised and more coherent activism a decade after the independence of Slovenia, which at the time was still undergoing the transition to join the rest of European liberal democracies. Rasza and Kurnik (2012, 245) identify the alter-globalisation movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s as a key period when “some activists in Ljubljana were first politicized”. The alter-globalisation campaigns were quickly followed by protests against the US invasion of Iraq (March 2003) and Slovenia’s bid to become a member of NATO (May 2004). The mid-2000s in Ljubljana were characterised by “changing landscape of the city and its outskirts, the loss of the public realm through privatisation, the authoritarian management of populations and practices and the reduction of diversity [*sic*] all for the logic of profit” (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 45). In response to this elite-led neoliberal transformation of the Slovenian capital, activists occupied and reanimated an abandoned bicycle factory, Rog, in order to produce a space for mobilising collective resistance and disrupting the corporatist vision of Ljubljana (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 47). The occupied space served as a platform for the production of alternative forms of life and localised resistance through organised assemblies and active participation of its users (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 52). Struggles over citizenship and belonging came to dominate the Slovenian activist scene in the second part of the 2000s, with the horizontal practices of direct action and decision-making being the main organisational structure (Rasza and Kurnik 2012, 245). However, these protest actions were small in scale and did not have a demonstrable effect beyond the scope of activist and academic circles.

The financial crisis of 2008 and the worsening of socio-economic conditions provided the fertile ground for a protest movement on mass-scale. Inspired by the Arab Spring, the 15M movement in Spain and Occupy Wall Street, the Global Day of Action on 15 October 2011 kicked off protests and occupations in Slovenia. Activists in Slovenia gathered in Koper, Maribor and Ljubljana, where a group of participants occupied the square in front of the Ljubljana Stock

²⁵ For more on civil society and activism in the former Yugoslavia, see Lukšič 1990, Jelušič 2006 and Fink-Hafner 2015.

Exchange.²⁶ The 15O Movement, or Occupy Slovenia, provided a common public space for the critique of financial capitalism and for the “collective capacity to manage our own lives and reconstruct society from below” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 252). Similar to the Spanish 15M movement, Occupy Slovenia represented an autonomist moment of horizontal direct democracy. One of its slogans was “No one represents us!”, and, in their self-understanding, it was “a movement based on principles of direct democracy and direct action – horizontally, in network form” (Večer, quoted in Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 242).

The protests were thus clearly framed within the crisis of representation so that the solution to this crisis was to think of democracy in terms of direct and horizontally organised action. Already here we find a tension between horizontality and verticality that we will analyse in more depth below in relation to the 2012–2013 protests. Take, for instance, the question of how to relate to the state. In their analysis, Razsa and Kurnik (2012, 249–50) describe the dilemma faced by activists here: on the one hand, making demands to the state, and in terms of rights, risks reproducing the very oppressive structures that the activists are struggling against; on the other hand, the activists must start from things as they are. Razsa and Kurnik and their informants describe this in terms of ‘contradictions’ that cannot be resolved, and their conclusion is that horizontality can neither be counterfactually assumed nor be taken as an absolute goal. In that case, we are dealing with a continuous and never-ending negotiation between horizontality and verticality. Another and less obvious example is the activists’ description of what they are doing as the creation of spaces, or frameworks, of encounter (Razsa and Kurnik 2012). These are spaces where, because they are autonomous and horizontalist, individuals and groups who are different can come together and act in common. Yet it is also clear that these are spaces that have to be carved out of a larger society of more vertical relations, that they have to be defended against co-optation, and that they have to be protected against centrifugal forces by some common ground.

While the occupation was mainly stationed in front of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange, the activists also helped mobilise students at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where the occupation lasted for three months from the end of November 2011 to January 2012.²⁷ As Anej Korsika and Luka Mesec (2014, 85–6) recount, the occupation of the faculty was successful in bringing together a wealth of experience from different participants; however, it failed to realise any of the demands put forward to the management. The same fate hit Occupy Slovenia three

²⁶ Žurnal24. 2011. *Policija vodi postopek o prekršku*, 16 October. Available at: <http://www.zurnal24.si/pred-borzo-20-sotorov-clanek-137910> (27 July 2016).

²⁷ Žurnal24. 2012. *Zasedba filozofske fakultete končana*, 26 January. Available at: <http://www.zurnal24.si/okupacija-ff-koncana-clanek-146765> (27 July 2016).

months later. Due to internal conflicts and protest fatigue, the occupation in front of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange ended in April 2012.²⁸

The 2012–2013 waves of protest in Slovenia

Without this “rather long prehistory to the Initiative [IDS]”, where most of its “active members were already active in the student movement, various student organizations, newspapers, fights against plans to implement tuitions” (Korsika and Mesec 2014, 85), we cannot comprehend fully the role that past experience in horizontal practices of organising played in the development of the uprising. Yet, despite the importance of the activists’ experiential and organisational support, the protests themselves were first started by new-comers, ordinary people with previous experience of political activism or institutional affiliation. As Kirn (2014, 116) points out, political apathy “has long characterized citizens’ attitude to the structural problems that the region of Maribor has been encountering”. The region of Maribor, along with the rest of Eastern Slovenia, has been experiencing two decades of “failed cultural progress and economic devastation” in the form of foreclosures, shutting down of key regional industries and outsourcing of jobs (*ibid.*). After the introduction of “a system of hundreds of radars to measure speed limits” on Maribor’s roads in 2013, the second biggest city in Slovenia, “more than 20,000 people were issued speeding tickets in only two weeks – in a city of 100,000 inhabitants” (Vezjak 2013). This had a clear material impact for the residents’ household budgets, which propelled people’s frustration with the municipality. The residents’ indignation grew once it became known that the new radar system was set up as a result of “a private public-partnership [sic], which benefited the mayor and his partners” (Kirn 2014, 116). Although it may seem superficial, the speeding tickets represented “the symptomatic point where *the objective conditions of poverty were subjectivized*. It was at this moment that most citizens started feeling that something was rotten.” (*ibid.*). Awaken from the apolitical slumber, the citizens traumatised by material deprivation and exploitation in one of the poorest regions of Slovenia, suddenly take to the streets to publicly express their anger with the local government.

The first in the series of Slovenian protests took place on 2 November 2012 in Maribor, in front of the city town hall. The “All-Slovenian People’s Uprisings”, as they were called in the media

²⁸ RTVSLO. 2012a. *Gibanje 150 bo pospravilo šotore pred Ljubljansko borzo*, 10 April. Available at: <http://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/gibanje-150-bo-pospravilo-sotore-pred-ljubljansko-borzo/280793> (27 July 2016).

and by the protesters themselves, were organised through the use of social media, mostly through Facebook, blogs and Twitter. The turnout at the first protest was only around 50 people, but the protest was still reported in the national media. The second protest in Maribor then took place ten days later on 12 November 2012. About 400 or 500 protesters demonstrated in front of the city hall, this time carrying placards with the symbolic slogan “He’s finished!” (in Slovenian, *Gotof je!*), calling for the mayor, Franc Kangler, to step down. The protesters also threw eggs at the façade of the city hall and burnt a speed camera when marching towards their final destination. The third protest march against the mayor of Maribor took place on 21 November 2012 when he was elected member of the upper chamber of the Slovenian parliament. Around 1,000 people attended the march and blocked the electors and the mayor from using the exit route from the city hall. The police had to intervene to let people leave the building.²⁹ The fourth protest in Maribor on 26 November 2012 was well attended, with around 10,000 people protesting. Because a part of the protest turned violent, the police intervened, and seven police officers were injured and 31 protesters detained.³⁰

It was not until the protests spread to the capital Ljubljana that the movement started to organise itself not just along horizontal lines, but also vertical. While the first protests in Maribor were mostly organised through the social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, the first protest in Ljubljana was an opportunity for different civil initiatives, activists, intellectuals, students, trade unions and other member of public to work together and increase the mobilising capacity of the movement. The first protest in Ljubljana took place on 27 November 2012.³¹ The second was held only three days later and the organisers helped mobilise around 10,000 people. Five more waves of protests took place between December 2012 and March 2013, with the biggest one taking place on the Slovenian Culture Day, 8 February 2013, gathering more than 20,000 people.³² The protest movement was very diverse in composition and united different social groups and civil initiatives: from students, lecturers and trade unions to precarious workers, pensioners, anarchists, ecologists and socialists (Gračner 2013). The coordination of activities and protests

²⁹ RTVSLO. 2012b. *Video/Foto: Obsedno stanje v Mariboru – ranjeni policisti, aretirani protestniki*, 26 November. Available at: <http://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/video-foto-obsedno-stanje-v-mariboru-ranjeni-policisti-aretirani-protestniki/296698> (27 July 2016).

³⁰ 24ur.com. 2012. *FOTO in VIDEO: Gorenak: Policija ni ščitila Kanglerja, ampak življenja*, 27 November. Available at: <http://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/foto-in-video-so-protestniki-izzivali-je-policija-prekoracila-pooblastila.html> (27 July 2016).

³¹ RTVSLO. 2012c. *Foto: Nekaj protestnikov bo vztrajalo čez noč*, 27 November. Available at: <http://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/foto-nekaj-protestnikov-bo-vztrajalo-cez-noc/296775> (27 July 2016).

³² RTVSLO. 2013a. *Foto: Največja vseslovenska vstaja do zdaj. Protestiralo 20.000 ljudi*, 8 February. Available at: <http://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/foto-najvecja-vseslovenska-vstaja-do-zdaj-protestiralo-20-000-ljudi/302017> (27 July 2016).

took place through the movement's General Assembly, but also other newly formed coordination groups, such as the "All-Slovenian People's Uprising" Committee, Committee for Social Justice and Solidarity, the Coordination Committee of Slovenian Culture, the Committee for Direct Democracy, the Movement of the Responsible, and a group of young digital savvy students and academics called Today is a New Day, and the Initiative for Democratic Socialism (Gračner 2013).

By the time of the fifth wave of protests in April 2013, the different protest committees started considering the next steps for the movement. At the beginning of the protests, the main goal was to put pressure on the political elites to change the direction of Slovenian politics – mired in corruption, especially at the local level of government – away from the path of neoliberal structural reforms of cuts to public services and dismantling the welfare state (Modic 2013). Instead of only targeting the political parties in power, the protesters held the whole political class responsible for the corruption-ridden transition to a capitalist market economy, during which key industries were privatised and sold off to tycoons. The protest organisers took this general position of externality in order to defend the political impartiality of the movement and stave off any accusations that they were orchestrated by oppositional political parties. In this sense, we can understand why the protest movement portrayed themselves as above formal politics and as neither left nor right. This strategy of maintaining (a)political purity was necessary for upholding the legitimacy of their demands in the eyes of the general public, who were strongly distrustful of politicians and political institutions.

However, the political efficacy of the strategy started to wear off after Janez Janša stood down as Prime Minister, one of the key demands of the movement, and when it became clear that other established political parties, especially the centre-left Social Democrats and Positive Slovenia, were not going to call for early elections. This is when the differences about the way forward for the protest movement between the different groups started to become starker. There was a clear division over the right political strategy and aims of different protest committees. The two main responses that formed across the protest movement were: (1) staying active in local communities and civil society (horizontally), but not take part in political party politics; and (2) establishing a hybrid political movement which would act on the ground in civil society (horizontally) and through new political parties (vertically) at different levels of governance (local, national and EU level). The performative group of artists, musicians and other creative individuals, Protestival, was premised solely on horizontal ways of organising (Mladina 2013; Sedlar 2013), as well as the City Assembly Initiative in Maribor which acts as a platform for self-organisation of Maribor's citizens in tackling common local issues (Nemac 2014). On the other hand, the "All-Slovenian People's Uprising" Committee, the Committee for Social Justice and Solidarity and the

Network for Direct Democracy chose to adopt vertical ways of organising in order to be able to contest established political parties in the formal institutions of representative politics. So did the Initiative for Democratic Socialism, but because of their clear ideological orientation and radical aims in their political manifesto (e.g., workers' management of state-owned corporations, an active role of the state in industrial policy and economic coordination, an end to austerity [IDS 2015, 30–5]), other main protest groups were reluctant to form a wider coalition with them (Lubej in RTVSLO 2013b).

Splits also occurred within protest committees themselves. This division is perfectly exemplified by the split in the “All-Slovenian People’s Uprising” Committee between two of the lead committee organisers, Uroš Lubej and Peter Petrovčič. In an interview for the Slovenian daily *Primorske novice* (Littoral News) a year after the protests, Petrovčič admitted that the main reason behind the failure to form a united front against all established political parties was that they could not come to an agreement as to how to proceed (Vidrih 2014). Some protesters, like Petrovčič, believed that the protest movement should demand for all political elites to step down, whereas others, together with Lubej, were satisfied with toppling Prime Minister Janša's right-wing government (RTVSLO 2013b). The first group took the position that all politicians and political parties bear the responsibility for corruption and the state of the economy in Slovenia, regardless of whether they are coming from the right or the left. While the second group agreed with this stance, they believed that the protest committee should be focussed on connecting with other protest committees and use the momentum to build a new political party in the Slovenian political space (RTVSLO 2013b; Golob 2013). The division between sticking with the horizontal forms of activism or adopting vertical ways of organising the protest movement was characteristic of the whole protest movement by summer 2013, which resulted in the dispersal of the protest movement's momentum. Some of that energy was channelled into, or rather multiplied by, the decision of some parts of the movement to adopt more vertical structures of organisation and enter electoral politics.

Uroš Lubej and the majority of protestors from the “All-Slovenian People’s Uprising” Committee joined the Committee for Social Justice and Solidarity and the Network for Direct Democracy, and together formed the *Solidarnost* (Solidarity) political party (Solidarnost 2016). In the electoral campaign for the early parliamentary elections, they formed a coalition with the Social Democrats, who were ironically also one of the targets of the protest movement (Delo 2014). The Solidarity party failed to get any seats, however. Meanwhile, the Initiative for Democratic Socialism adopted a more hybrid structure of vertical and horizontal ways of organising than the Solidarity party. In the following, I will use the Initiative for Democratic

Socialism as an example to illustrate the tense relationship between horizontality and verticality in the quest to construct an alternative to neoliberal and representative politics.

The emergence of the IDS and the United Left

The Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS) was formed as a more coherent grouping of the movement's protesters which formulated and put forward their own demands under a clear political-ideological project: to advocate and struggle for a democratic and ecological socialism. Their base drew intellectual energy largely from academic and student Marxist thinkers of all colours and from the Workers and Punks' University, an educational project run as part of the Peace Institute in Ljubljana (Korsika in Robertson 2014). Aware of the limitations of existing centre-left parties in Europe, namely the depoliticisation of political structures and the adoption of a neoliberal programme of reform, they adopted a party-movement model of organisation to tackle both: (1) by nourishing and maintaining its ties with social movements, the party-movement can avoid the bureaucratisation and depoliticisation of its structures; and (2) by entering representative politics and through policy-making, they can transform the role of the state and other structures that maintain the neoliberal governmentality. As Krašovec rightly points out, the price the IDS would pay if it avoided the terrain of state politics would be too high, since this would mean "keeping with the rather powerless protest-form, while the main decisions regarding the state budget allocation, laws regulating labour relations, organization of social institutions, levels of taxation, etc. still remain in the hands of the parties of capital" (Krašovec 2013, 319). It was the valuable collective experience drawn from the horizontalist ways of organising in the past that provided the basis for "a clear understanding ... that different and most importantly much stronger organizational forms are necessary" (Korsika and Mesec 2014, 86). This did not mean that the IDS was ready to abandon their roots – instead the move was viewed as a politically strategic multiplication and broadening of their impact. They still considered themselves primarily as a social movement, engaged in horizontalist practices and resistance, but with an added set of formal and vertical structures which can engage with and participate in the existing structures of established power, that is, representative democracy. On 8 March 2014, the Initiative for Democratic Socialism formally established itself as a political party. At the same time, the IDS joined two other smaller, and ideologically related, parties, the Democratic Labour Party (*Demokratska stranka dela* – DSD) and the Party for Eco-Socialism and Sustainable Development of Slovenia (*Stranka za ekosocializem in trajnostni razvoj Slovenije* – TRS). This

coalition-building led to the establishment of the United Left political party. The rationale behind the move to more vertical ways of organising is provided in the following justification on their website:

On the basis of our achievements, and especially our failures and the limitations to our activist operations, we have increasingly come to the realisation that we need a more stable and organised form of operating. A decision was reached which acknowledged the need for operating within the centres of political power as well. We see the establishment of our party and our candidacy at the European elections in May 2014 as the next steps on the path of a broader and more organised movement. (IDS 2015, my translation)

This strategic move should not be seen as a rejection of the horizontal ways of organising which was the predominant form of the IDS's operations during the 2012–2013 wave of protests. It is precisely the result of a conscious decision on the part of the activists to expand the social impact of their activities, while acknowledging the dangers that vertical organisational structures entail:

[W]e perceive this as a political problem, [a] party must not be a goal in itself but only [the] means for achieving higher political goals. We do not want to build a classical bourgeois party that will be just one among many. Instead, we want to build a proper workers [sic] party that will be only an instrument of a wider and deeply rooted movement. (Korsika and Mesec 2014, 87)

The affirmation of its rootedness in social movements is demonstrated by the organisational structure of the United Left, where social movements and autonomous individuals make up the fourth pillar of the party-movement, alongside the IDS, DSD and TRS.

In the 2014 early parliamentary elections, the United Left won 6% of the vote, 2% over the parliamentary threshold, which translated into six seats in the 90-member Slovenian National Assembly. It gained this first parliamentary success on a clear manifesto for democratic socialism as an alternative to the neoliberal politics of austerity and by riding on the general dissatisfaction of Slovenian voters with the established mainstream political parties. Whether it could have made better electoral gains by adopting a more ambiguous populist discourse (with regard to Podemos, see Kioupiolis 2015), rather than a clearly Marxist one, remains to be seen as the party-movement looks for ways to broaden its appeal. I will say more about that in the next section.

To go back to the organisational make-up of the United Left, as the analysis of the IDS' manifesto shows, the relation between horizontality and verticality is understood more in terms of a dialectical relationship rather than one between two opposing forms of organisation (Workers and Punks' University 2013, 38). The hybridity of such a relationship can only be maintained through an ongoing process of activist dedication and pragmatism, while avoiding falling into either the "fetishism of the party" or the "fetishism of spontaneity" (*ibid.*, 38). IDS' activists use the terms "organisation" and "spontaneity" to characterise this relationship: "only an appropriate organization can guarantee the political effectiveness of spontaneous impulses and thus prevent the dominant system from co-opting it, and only by maintaining a connection with spontaneous impulses, can we prevent the ossification of the organization and ensure its adaption to changing circumstances" (*ibid.*, 39). Organisation, or verticality, and spontaneity, or horizontality, are thus not opposed, but represent two different aspects of the same whole. IDS' political project goes beyond the relationship of horizontality to the party structure and to the structure of the political system, because the IDS are seeking to hegemonise not only the political system, but society. Thus, for instance, Korsika and Mesec (2014, 88) write of the need to "establish all kinds of workers institutions" in order "to contribute to building socialist hegemony". Here hegemony is understood as leadership through the creation of consent. This clearly has a vertical relationship to it, but the consent cannot simply be manufactured from above, but must be rooted in horizontal and vertical relations within civil society.

When it comes to the need for leadership and more professionalised organisation of a popular movement, a compelling question that needs attention is the seemingly irreconcilable tension behind the hybrid nature of the new political force that the United Left represents in the Slovenian political landscape. The way the United Left presents itself and wants to be perceived by ordinary people is not only in terms of offering an alternative set of policy proposals and a new ideological direction in politics. They also manifest an alternative form of organised politics where operating through a political party (at the national level through parliamentary assemblies, but also at the local level) is just one form of political organising. As I said earlier, the difference from the established mainstream parties lies in United Left's hybridity and interpenetration with their grassroots base. Despite the United Left having representatives elected at different levels of established governance structures, their internal structures are partly composed of less formalised processes of political deliberation and organisation, such as general assemblies, street protests, consultations with the wider movement membership, and so on. What remains to be seen is how long this delicate relationship of hybridity will stay intact. As these parties step into the field of "governing" and some inevitable compromises come along the way, their fidelity to the

original ideals of the movements are tested. This tension has been more than clear in both SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain. I will address these common challenges that the new radical left is facing in the next section.

But before I move onto the challenges, I would like to underline the significance of the party-movement model in addressing the depoliticising tendency of representative politics under neoliberal governmentality. The hybridity between the horizontal practices and vertical structures of organising that the party-movement model enables should be understood as a vital umbilical cord that prevents the institutionalised part of the movement from ossifying and alienating itself too much from its grassroots base. The process of institutionalisation of protest movements is nonetheless a necessary step in constructing an alternative to the establishment's neoliberal reformist project. The United Left demonstrates what Chantal Mouffe has been arguing, with Ernesto Laclau: to connect different struggles around one common political project in order to effectively channel the antagonisms and political passions through existing democratic structures where they can challenge neoliberal hegemony. Mouffe is critical of an autonomist "act of radical refoundation that would institute a new social order from scratch" (Mouffe 2005, 33). She believes that a counter-hegemonic articulation of "socio-economic and political transformations" is possible within the "context of liberal democratic institutions" (Mouffe 2005, 33). I agree with Mouffe that the failure of the Left to articulate a credible and realisable counter-hegemonic alternative lies partly with the prevalent Leninist and anarchist positions on the radical Left that endorse "a total rejection of the liberal-democratic framework" (Mouffe 2005, 33). The moment of coming to terms with this observation among the members of the IDS, SYRIZA and Podemos was therefore crucial in escaping the self-perpetuating melancholy of the Left.

The challenges for the new radical left in Europe

In the last section of the chapter, I would like to address what I identify as two key challenges for the new radical left in face of the neoliberal governmentality and what I briefly alluded to as the institutional dilemma in Chapter 1. The first concerns the sustainability of the party-movement model that was adopted by the United Left, and also by SYRIZA and Podemos. In the last year and a half, the model came under sustained pressure of the increased dynamism between two different logics, that of parliamentarism (verticality, bureaucratism, centralisation, depoliticisation) and that of social movements (horizontality, decentralisation, politicisation). The tension between

the two logics seems to be exacerbated even more when the party-movement comes into government, as was demonstrated by the experience of SYRIZA in the summer of 2015. The second challenge involves the radical transformation of the state that is needed in order to bring about the long-term historical change to neoliberal governmentality. As my economic-institutional analysis of (neo)liberalism in Chapter 2 has shown, without altering the self-limitation principle of the state in relation to the market activity, the political imaginary of the representative structures in liberal democracy will continue to be paralysed by the principles of the free market economy. I will see both challenges as co- and inter-dependent: resisting the depoliticising tendency of electoral politics by maintaining a hybrid relationship between the new radical left and social movements, while taking account of the need to take over the state through electoral competition, the key condition for its consequent transformation.

The challenge of maintaining the party-movement hybrid relationship

Let me first reiterate the factors and the circumstances that herald the need for a party-movement model in the new radical left's struggle against neoliberal governmentality, and then address the challenges that it is facing. As Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (1995) establish in their systematic analysis of the changing models of party organisation and party democracy, each model of party formation that is dominant at a given time has its own associated model of democracy.³³ They distinguish between four party models: (1) *the elite party model*, dominant in the late 19th and early 20th century, which had restrictive suffrage requirements and excluded the propertyless; (2) *the mass party model*, with more organised membership and the introduction of universal suffrage through the activation and empowerment of the disenfranchised, dominant until after the Second World War; (3) the modern *catch-all party model*, which is characterised by the waning of ideological distinctiveness of political parties and the individual's association of party affiliation with one's social identity, becoming prominent in the age of mass communications and consumerist society in the second half of the 20th century; and (4) *the cartel-party model*, which signals a close alignment of established political parties around common political aims, where the democratic process is a means of achieving social stability rather than social change (*ibid.*, 9–

³³ Katz and Mair build their analysis on top of other models of party development (e.g. Otto Kirchheimer's (1966) catch-all party and Angel Panebianco's (1988) electoral-professional party). Katz and Mair criticise previous approaches for presupposing a linear development of party formation, where the final stage ends in either stability or decay. Instead, they propose to view the development of parties as a dialectical process with reference not only to their relationship with civil society, but also with the state.

22). As a result of economic globalisation and the collapse of “the perceived importance of the left-right ideological divide” in the 1990s, the cartel-party model is the symptom of the ensuing depoliticisation from these processes, which signifies a growing interpenetration of political parties and the state and a tendency towards collusion between the mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties (Katz and Mair 2009, 754–5). Furthermore, the dominance of the cartel-party model also has an effect on how we perceive and understand democracy:

With the development of the cartel party, the goals of politics become self-referential, professional, and technocratic, and what substantive interparty competition remains becomes focused on the efficient and effective management of the polity. Competition between cartel parties focuses less on differences in policy and more ... on the provision of spectacle, image, and theater. Above all, with the emergence of cartel parties, the capacity for problem-solving in public life is manifested less and less in the competition of political parties. (*ibid.*, 755)

With the institutional moderation of class conflict and “the increasing homogeneity of experiences and expectations of the vast majority of citizens associated with the rise of mass society and the welfare state” (*ibid.*, 758), the political parties under the cartel-party model start to follow what I described in Chapter 4 as Robert Michels’ iron law of oligarchy.

It is in the context of this post-democratic state of politics that the Indignados movement sprang up in Madrid, with its rejection of *la casta* (the caste), the Occupy movement in New York City with its denouncement of the 1%, and the Slovenian protesters issuing a general indictment of the whole political class. The counter-movement to the depoliticisation of politics under the cartel political system signified a political response to the crisis of democracy. The protest movements successfully captured a new strategic opening, offered by the crisis of the political economic system, for constructing a critique of both the cartel-party model of representative politics and neoliberalism. By politicising “certain issues that were previously seen as private grievances”, these social movements “created a climate, a state of perceptions, that opened the possibility for political change” (Errejón and Mouffe 2016, 71–2). This process of politicisation also entails a cultural socialisation of the protesters, traumatised by the exploitation by neoliberal governmentality, through which new political identities are constructed. And although this politicisation by social movements did instil “ideas of change” into the “common sense” of the general public, the heterogeneous nature of these movements, “putting together very different grievances and discontents some with very weak links with each other”, meant that they were

either unable or unwilling to deal with the questions of vertical power and the state (*ibid.*, 72–3). It is this task that Podemos, SYRIZA and the United Left, notwithstanding their differences, undertook in order to challenge neoliberal governmentality. I will now address the problems that these two tasks entail in turn below.

One key challenge facing the new radical left in their quest for governmental power so as to bring paradigmatic change to neoliberal governmentality is to avoid the risk of over-stratification and over-professionalisation of its vertical ways of organising, which beset the cartel-styled parties that aligned themselves around the neoliberal reform programme. The oligarchisation of democracy and political structures under (neo)liberal governmentality are the very sign of depoliticisation and the sources of conflict between the political elites and political groups, which can result in a crisis of governmentality. Other authors have already identified this tendency in their work, some of who I have covered in the previous chapter: Michels with his iron law of oligarchy (Michels 1962); Schumpeter (2010, 124–27) in relation to the tendency of centralisation in capitalist market economy and state control; Gramsci in relation to the conservative force of bureaucracy and the institutionalisation of political passion (Gramsci 1971); Foucault in relation to the institutionalisation of the pastorate (Foucault 2008); and Derrida and Benjamin and their thesis on the decay of parliaments (Derrida 1992; Benjamin 1996). If the critical weakness of the Indignados movement was its inability to “produce any vertical moment, or result in new political alternatives, leaderships or programmes” (Errejón and Mouffe 2016, 104), then the challenge for the hybrid party-movement type of politics, which we can see in Podemos, SYRIZA and the United Left, will be coming from the opposite side of the institutional dilemma – that means it will need to avoid the trap of depoliticisation.

I argued above that the party-movement model can be the way forward for the radicalisation of democracy, while providing a mechanism for avoiding the tendency of oligarchisation. Yet, maintaining the institutional arrangement of hybridity between the repoliticising dynamism of social movements and the depoliticising tendency of political party organisation while working within the political system has proven difficult. In his analysis of Podemos’ populist strategy in Spain, Kioupkioulis (2016) discusses a number of difficulties that have arisen in the short lifespan of Podemos when trying to negotiate the dynamics between its horizontalist and vertical ways of organising. In order to increase its electoral appeal with the broader segments of society, which reaches beyond the circles of progressive activists operating within the anti-austerity movement, the party structures of Podemos has tended towards the centralisation and hierarchisation of decision-making. Kioupkioulis (2016, 106) rightly points out that this “seems at odds with the ‘horizontal’ layer of egalitarian participation and the 15 M spirit”,

prompting some social activists to denounce Podemos for co-opting the radical spirit of the Indignados movement for its own agenda (Flesher Fominaya 2014). Cristina Flesher Fominaya (2007) identified the same tension between the autonomous movements and the institutional left in Madrid's anti-globalisation network, and it seems that this tension between horizontal and vertical ways of organising is still present in the relationship between Podemos and the Indignados movement. While Kioupkiolis (2016, 111) understands the increasingly "plebiscitary relationship between the leader and his followers" inside Podemos as a tendency characteristic of its populist character and discourse, Íñigo Errejón, the political secretary of Podemos and an elected MP to the Spanish parliament, counters this characterisation. Although Errejón acknowledges that leadership entails "the risk of decisionism" and "of crystallisation into forms... that can be detrimental to democracy", he does not limit this characteristic only to a populist form of politics or vertical ways of organising, but believes that no form of organisation is exempt from these risks and deficiencies (Errejón and Mouffe 2016, 110).

SYRIZA's close ties with the anti-austerity movement in Greece has also encountered a similar tension between the leadership of the party coalition and the membership base, which took a particularly dramatic turn after the 2015 referendum when the SYRIZA-led government agreed to the bailout terms negotiated with Greece's international creditors (see Varoufakis 2015; Lapavitsas 2016). As I already mentioned above, as the new radical left moves into the position of governing, the relationship between the autonomist social movements and the party structures becomes even tenser. The move from a protest party in opposition to a "government in waiting" meant that "certain organisational features that were considered as strengths", such as horizontalist engagement and collective decision-making procedures with social movements, were now seen as hindrances in an attempt to appeal to moderate voters (Agnantopoulos and Lambiri 2015, 7). Here it would be pertinent to bring back and test Kitschelt's pessimistic conclusion that party-movements only represent a transitional moment on the path of electoral competition for power. In a position like SYRIZA's in the summer of 2015, where there is "a declining salience of the core movement issue that originally inspired the mobilization" (in SYRIZA's case, defiance in the face of the transnational creditor institutions) and where there is "the incorporation of the movement party in government executives that are forced to take responsibility for a wide variety of salient political issues" (in government, SYRIZA becomes more closely aligned with the state and transnational institutions), the party leadership makes "programmatically generalization of issue appeals at the expense of the emphasis on single issues attractive to both voters and party politicians" (Kitschelt 2006, 288). This observation is also in line with Katz and Mair's thesis on the cartelisation of parties as they draw closer to the state. To

reiterate their hypothesis here, if parties draw closer to the state, then they are also “likely to be drawing further way from society”, or the membership base of the party-movement (Katz and Mair 2009, 756). And as they “become drawn more closely into the institutions of the state, it becomes more likely that they start to resemble other mainstream parties that have already been in a position of power (*ibid.*). The loosening of the link between the party leadership and the membership base on the ground signals a depoliticisation of the party-movement, which SYRIZA was trying to avoid in the first place with its objective of radicalising democracy.

The tension between the autonomist part of the United Left, which is mostly concentrated within a third of the IDS, and the tendency towards centralisation of the different component of the party coalition, shared by other coalition partners, has also been plaguing the Slovenian model of the party-movement (see Trampuš 2016; Lorenci 2016). At IDS’s party congress in April 2016, the passions between the horizontalist and vertical elements of the party were flying so high that the congress came to a stalemate, ending with violent outbursts by some of the autonomist activists. After a year and a half of working as an opposition party in the Slovenian National Assembly, the party leadership recognised the need for centralising the party structures and channels of communication in order to increase its efficiency in the face of electoral competition by mainstream political parties with a much longer history of parliamentary politics and as a result more developed party structures.

All three examples of the new radical left in Spain, Greece and Slovenia have shown that the key challenge in countering the depoliticisation of democratic politics, which increased with the alignment of centre-right and centre-left mainstream parties around a neoliberal reform programme, will be to maintain the hybrid relationship of the party-movement model of politics. The social movements and organised civil society can act as a source of (re)politicisation of social grievances and injustices produced by the neoliberal governmentality, while the vertical structures of the party can ensure the translation of those grievances into concrete policy proposals and alternatives to instigate paradigmatic and long-term historical change. As the new radical left advances towards taking vertical power in the formal democratic institutions and moves towards greater centralisation, it remains imperative that it does not lose sight of the original aims of transforming representative politics and neoliberalism.

The challenge of transforming the principles of neoliberal governmentality and the role of the state in advanced capitalism

The whole purpose behind the project of radicalising democracy and engaging with the vertical structures of power was to challenge neoliberal governmentality, which accommodated the depoliticisation of institutional politics in its quest to mould the state and society on the model of a competitive market economy. As I have argued in Chapter 2, the disembedding of the market economy from social relations and the recalibration of state governance to the market principles of competition and entrepreneurship fundamentally transforms the objective of policy-making under neoliberal governmentality, where the primary aim is no longer the provision of general well-being for the population, but the adjustment of governing according to the needs of the market. The increasing marketisation of society goes hand in hand with the process of depoliticisation, which shifts the decision-making power away from democratic institutions to independent and (para)legal bodies. The areas of policy-making that once fell under the purview of the state, such as education, welfare, healthcare, creation of jobs infrastructure and energy, are now increasingly outside of direct state-led provision and subject to the principles of the market. This new reality presents a great obstacle for the new radical left in Europe, which requires transformative change, especially at the institutional and the wider cultural level of society. The two levels are interconnected – by focusing on the challenge of transforming the principles of neoliberal governmentality, I hope to include both, although the focus will be evidently on the institutional level.³⁴

The case of SYRIZA's capitulation to the bailout terms of the international creditors in the summer of 2015 offers a good illustration of the institutional difficulties in challenging neoliberal governmentality. In their article, Apostolos Agnantopoulos and Dionysia Lambiri (2015) draw out four different scenarios that SYRIZA was facing as it stood up to the austerity measures and neoliberal structural reforms, dictated by the international creditors (that is, the so-called *Troika*, involving the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund). The four alternative scenarios – capitulation, divorce, compromise and transformation – correspond to the four different counter-neoliberalisation pathways that were set out by economic geographers Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2010a; 2010b): (1) zombie neoliberalization; (2) disarticulated counter-liberalization; (3) orchestrated counter-liberalization; and (4) deep socialization, respectively. After the 2015 referendum results on the bailout agreement, the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government opted for capitulation. Faced with financial

³⁴ For contesting neoliberalism at the cultural level, neo-Gramscian work on hegemony and the common sense would be a productive venue of inquiry (Kenway 1990; Smart 1999 and 2002; Bieler and Morton 2004; Ruckert 2007; Daldal 2014; Kreps 2015). In a more recent publication, with regards to Podemos and the new radical left, Íñigo Errejón describes how a discursive populist strategy can shift the coordinates of neoliberal hegemony and create a popular counter-hegemony (see Errejón and Mouffe 2016, 111–15).

asphyxia, as described by Agnantopoulos and Lambiri's scenario, SYRIZA was "forced to endorse the logic of austerity and neoliberal structural reform *in toto*, with only minor, cosmetic changes" (Agnantopoulos and Lambiri 2015, 7). As a consequence, the neoliberal policy agenda at the governmental and transnational level continues to be dominated by "fiscal discipline, competitiveness and market flexibility" (*ibid.*, 8).

In an alternative scenario, SYRIZA could have opted for divorce from the Eurozone and free itself of the tight fiscal regimes, which form part of the European *acquis communautaire*. Yet, in the context of a disarticulated counter-neoliberalisation, despite forging political alliances with other anti-austerity left-wing parties (*Die Linke* in Germany, *Front de Gauche* in France, *Podemos* in Spain and the United Left in Slovenia), SYRIZA lacked the crucial backing of powerful European national governments (*ibid.*, 7–8). Moreover, an unfavourable and hostile macro-economic environment would have made it difficult for SYRIZA to implement its manifesto of renationalisation and to pursue an active state-led economic policy without breaching the EU fiscal rules and competition law (*ibid.*, 8).

The remaining two scenarios and pathways of counter-neoliberalisation demonstrate additional institutional obstacles that SYRIZA, and the new radical left as a whole, face in the future. In the scenario of compromise or of systemic co-optation, although the emergence of the new radical left might temporarily destabilise neoliberal governmentality, it does not change "the fundamental logic upon which the EU is based" (*ibid.*, 8). This is because they "lack the capacity to infiltrate the echelons of global political-economic power" (Brenner *et al.*, 341), which can only be achieved by infiltrating "the inherited institutional frameworks of neoliberalization" at all institutional levels, local, national and transnational (*ibid.*, 342). Without this deeper socialisation happening, which would re-embed economic activity, so to speak, back into the social and broader environmental framework and transform the (neo)liberal operating principle of state self-limitation, so that institutions are serving the needs of society. A new counter-governmentality can only be constructed through coalition-building at different levels of society, incorporating social movements, civil society groups and trade unions on the one hand and left-wing governments, political parties and party-movements on the other. This way the new radical left would not act as isolated islands of resistance in a hostile institutional environment, which is geared against them from the very outset. Indeed, by infiltrating the governmental centres of institutionalised power, the new radical left and other left-wing parties can endeavour to replace the market-enabling regulatory and organising actions (austerity measures and neoliberal structural reforms) with:

alternative, market-restraining agendas. These might include capital and exchange controls; debt forgiveness; progressive tax regimes; non-profit based, cooperatively run, deglobalized credit schemes; more systematic global redistribution; public works investments; and the decommodification and deglobalization of basic social needs such as shelter, water, transportation, health care, and utilities.

These measures would shift the self-limiting principle of neoliberal governmentality towards an active, interventionist role of the state, which would protect the social and environmental well-being. However, in order to avoid the shift from the present market-dominated, biopolitical form of authoritarianism to a statist one, the project for the radicalisation of democracy represents the magic glue, which would build the necessary links between different levels of government and civil society that would act as a buffer against authoritarianism. The needed infrastructure for connecting different social movements and statist forms of resistance might already be in the making with the establishment of 'Democracy in Europe Movement 2025' (DiEM25). DiEM25 is a pan-European political movement, launched by the former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis, which believes that only through the democratisation of institutional structures at different levels of government in Europe can we avoid the disintegration of the EU and the rise of xenophobia and ethno-nationalism (DiEM25 2016). These initiatives together could herald the paradigmatic shift towards the emergence of a new governmentality, a governmentality that could be described as socialist.

This brings me back to Karl Polanyi's theory of the great oscillation between the market-restraining/democratising movement and the liberal project of establishing a society modelled on the idea of a self-regulating market. Out of this double movement, Polanyi anticipated the rise of a new form of society, which, depending upon the interpretation of his work, entails "either socialist planning or an institutional form of capitalism termed 'embedded liberalism'" (Dale 2010, 226). Similarly, from a more conservative standpoint, Joseph Schumpeter maintained there were firm empirical reasons "for believing that the capitalist order tends to destroy itself and that centralist socialism is... a likely heir" (Schumpeter 2010, 377). At the end of his address before the American Economic Association 1950, a few days before his death, Schumpeter concluded that "Marx was wrong in his diagnosis of the manner in which capitalist society would break down; [but] he was not wrong in the predication that it would break down eventually" (*ibid.*, 431). The present-day context is still defined by the absence of a clearly articulated counter-governmentality, which would provide the institutional blueprint for an alternative to free market capitalism. It is also in this context of the absence of "an autonomous socialist governmentality"

that Foucault (2008, 92) situated the taking shape of neoliberalism, and based on the prognosis of the developing counter-movement in the present, we could say that this context continues to mark the persistence of neoliberal governmentality. With the rise of the new radical left and the counter-movement against neoliberal governmentality after the financial crisis, we are finally seeing organised and orchestrated attempts at different levels of society at defining such an alternative governmentality through the process of democratisation.

Conclusion

This chapter brought together key theoretical observations from previous chapters and synthesised them around the example of post-2008 wave of anti-austerity protests and the emergence of the new radical left in Europe. Having provided the institutional economic analysis of neoliberal governmentality in Chapter 2 and the conceptual illustration of the dynamics between institutionalised conducting power and the ephemerality of counter-conducts in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 explored how the studies of social movements and political parties can inform the relationship between the horizontal ways of organising in protest movements, such as the Spanish and Greek *Indignados* and the 2012–2013 Slovenian popular uprisings, and the vertical structures of representative politics. The neoliberal repertoire of austerity measures and structural reforms, along with the cartelisation of mainstream political parties, were the main targets of the post-2008 protest movements in Europe. By setting up street occupations and holding public assemblies on the possible alternatives to the present post-democratic order, the protest movements disrupted the alignment of political forces around the neoliberal consensus and rejected the return of elites to business as usual.

While the crisis represented an opportunity for neoliberal governmentality to reinforce its hegemonic grip in Europe through adopting a regulatory straitjacket of fiscal rules, it also opened up the space for political contestation and critique of the political system, the very structures that sanctioned and enabled the neoliberalisation of society. As with any kind of governmentality, Foucault reminds us, the neoliberal response to the crisis met with resistance from counter-conducting movements, such as the Occupy and the *Indignados*, challenging the legitimacy of centre-right and centre-left governments in implementing socially damaging neoliberal reforms. The initial reaction of counter-conducting resistances was to reject the centralised structures of representative democracy and put horizontal practices of direct democracy in action. The Occupy

movement and the *Indignados* were successful in mobilising the disgruntled masses of all ages and backgrounds, united in their biopolitical precarity, to join them in imagining and practicing alternative ways of democratic decision-making and politics. Yet, the bodily power of resistance in the streets could only persist for so long in the face of everyday social obligations and personal needs. The decision by parts of the protest movements to organise their structures more formally and extend their struggle to the institutions of representative democracy demonstrated the next step in building a counter-movement to neoliberal governmentality.

After identifying several key limitations in the social movement theory and practice, I argued that the party-movement model could provide the solution for the depoliticisation of democratic politics in the current cartel-like political party system, and in addition serve as the vehicle for challenging neoliberal governmentality. Although the horizontalist modes of organising and decision-making in the GJM and the post-2008 austerity movements empowered masses of disenfranchised citizens, the social movements lacked the institutional capacity to bring about long-term paradigmatic change. This necessitated coalition-building with other more traditional vertical structures of power, such as trade unions and political parties, as well as active engagement with power invested in institutional politics. Based on the experience of operational weaknesses of previous movements and the maturation of a critical moment for the entry of new political forces into the delegitimised political system, new radical political parties in Spain, Slovenia and Greece emerge. With a populist message of a different kind of politics that represents the interests of the ordinary people and the promise of confronting the distrusted elites, Podemos and the United Left manage to enter the parliaments in their respective countries, whereas SYRIZA takes power for the first time in Greece.

The entry into institutional politics, however, presents the new radical left with new challenges. Inexperienced in the workings of representative structures of power, the political groups who were once protesting against the political and economic elites in the public squares are now becoming part of the elite themselves, which demands a pragmatic manoeuvring between the expectations of the membership base and the reality of power distribution among different political forces in the parliaments. As some scholars in social movement studies turn to populism and political party studies, the leaderships of the new radical left parties learn that a different kind of logic operates in electoral politics, presenting a challenge for the party-movement model. While the political strategy of seizing power moves the new radical left parties towards organisational centralisation, it also increases their efficiency in the electoral competition against other political parties. Only by taking control of governments, the new radical left can hope to transform and recalibrate the role of the state in policy-making and running of the economy,

causing a paradigmatic shift in neoliberal governmentality towards a different mode of governing. On the other hand, there will really be a radical shift away from the depoliticisation of neoliberal governmentality if the new mode of governing is coupled with the democratisation of decision-making at different levels of society. This demonstrates how the struggle against neoliberalism is in essence a struggle for democracy.

CONCLUSION

I began this study at a time when anti-austerity protests were erupting around Europe and the possibility of an alternative political vision to neoliberal governmentality started to be articulated in a more organised and tangible way. The feeling shared with many like-minded people on the left, be they students, activists, professors or political commentators, was that of hope. There was an inspiring revolutionary optimism in the air, accompanied by endless debates in public spaces that fostered imaginative deliberation on key questions about the shape of a future society and politics. I have argued that the first reaction to the neoliberal policy response and the financial crisis, up to 2012–2013 in countries like Spain and Slovenia (and even earlier in Greece where social conditions deteriorated first), could be viewed as anti-establishment and prefigurative in nature. For example, as the Occupy Wall Street emerged in the Zuccotti Park in New York City, among those supportive of the movement, there was a widely shared view that the protestors did not need to have clear political demands, that they did not need to articulate a clear alternative political programme. The view was that the occupations served the purpose of opening up possibilities for thinking, imagining and practicing alternative ways of organising radically different from the established vertical structures of power. I have demonstrated in Chapter 3 that the effect of suspension in a crisis, together with the transgressive qualities of critique, contributed to this opening. There was a strong suspicion that pervaded the Occupy movement, and initially also the movements in Spain, Greece and Slovenia, that the protestors should not replicate the hierarchical structures of organisation, which became so emblematic of the dominant understanding of democracy. Representative politics were viewed as structures of domination, corruption and repression, which blocked alternative political voices and ways of life that did not conform to the prescribed conduct of obedient and apathetic citizens. The protesters' aim, therefore, was to avoid hierarchical models of organisation at all costs. As a consequence, these movements also refused the need for elected leaders, who would represent and communicate the movements' demands to the media and the general public. Instead they opted for regular rotation of leadership roles and all-inclusive decision-making, in the form of either organisational committees or general assemblies, which took decisions on the basis of consensus. This was their vision of how a real democracy should function, a model that could have perhaps stood as an alternative to the alienating and stratified structures of representative democracy, or at least that was the hope at the time.

I have shown in this thesis that such horizontal and non-hierarchical model of organisation finds inspiration in the past experience of social movements (for instance, the Global Justice

Movement), and in the theory of post-Marxist autonomism (for instance, Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004, 2009; Sitrin 2006, 2012, 2014; Sitrin and Azzelini 2014) and anarchism (Kurnik and Beznec 2009; Razsa and Kurnik 2012; Graeber 2013). The strategy of the Occupy movement was that of autonomous opposition and non-engagement with the existing political and economic structures of power. Any kind of attempt at cooperating with political and economic institutions was viewed as politically and ethically antithetical to the movement's spirit. In Chapters 4 and 5, I have argued that this approach is inadequate in bringing long-term historical change to the political institutions, where decisions about laws in our society are made. Inspired by Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the concept of "the historic bloc", Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau point to an alternative route for social movements and the new radical left, which incorporates horizontal modes of organising, whilst arguing for complementary political engagement with existing structures of power (Mouffe and Laclau 1985; Mouffe 2005, 2013; Laclau 2005, 214). In order to construct a radical political project, they argue, an alternative discursive formation needs to be articulated by connecting different social struggles under a common counter-hegemonic project/slogan/popular demand. In this respect, Laclau and Mouffe are also critical of the traditional Leninist revolutionary model of attaining radical change. In her own writings, Mouffe expands upon this point through her critique of economic determinism that she identifies in classical Marxist theory. The latter stipulates that the internal contradictions of the capitalist and liberal bourgeois system will bring about their own collapse and pave the way for a socialist revolution. As an alternative to what she views as a reductionist and dogmatic strategy to "a more just society" in modern democratic societies, Mouffe believes that "deep democratic advances could be carried out through an immanent critique of existing institutions", without destroying the liberal democratic order and building another order anew (Mouffe 2013, 133).

Through her critique of the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy, Chantal Mouffe proposes an agonistic model of democracy, which accounts for difference and antagonisms in society by channelling them through the existing liberal democratic institutions, where they can be articulated against other competing hegemonic narratives. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 1, the rationalism and individualism in liberal thought, which are blind to the ever present antagonism in society (the political) and the possibility of constructing alternative collective political identities, make the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy inadequate to respond to the intensifying democratising drives from the post-2008 protest movements. The agonistic model of democracy recognises the constitutive role of power in constructing political subjectivities and the need for a counter-hegemon articulation. Up to this point, I agree with Mouffe's project of radicalising democracy. However, there are two theoretical

problems with important political implications that I think Mouffe leaves unaddressed in her analysis. First, if liberalism is to blame for rationalist and individualist tendencies in contemporary democratic politics, how can the purpose of a radical political project be the defence of the liberal "ethico-political principles" when Mouffe (*ibid.*, 134) herself recognises that neoliberalism has "profoundly transformed" the established political institutions and by implication the very ethico-political principles which guide them? What is missing in Mouffe's political theory is an analysis of the structural connection between liberalism – which she partly critiques, yet at the same time concedes that it cannot be dispensed with, if we are to build a more just society – and neoliberalism. Echoing Ellen Meiksins Wood, this would require maintaining a critical (sceptical) attitude towards liberal democracy, to the extent that liberal democracy is viewed as one of the tools for extending democracy and social justice, while being mindful of the dangers that such a political project brings for radical politics, namely depoliticisation and centralisation of power.

The second problem concerns the strategy in radical politics for building a counter-hegemonic alternative to neoliberalism. I will unwrap the problem first through re-addressing Mouffe's proposal and then exposing the points that remain unresolved. Mouffe (*ibid.*, 135) argues that different movements in civil society need to work together with progressive political parties and trade unions in order to be able to take on the challenge to the neoliberal order. Although Mouffe recognises the element of power relations and structures in her conception of agonistic democracy, she does not elaborate sufficiently on the interplay between radical politics and existing political institutions, neglecting the dangers that this interaction presents. In her model of agonistic democracy, Mouffe underscores the role of liberal democratic institutions in translating unpredictable and violent antagonisms in society into manageable agonisms, which can be articulated in a language and form that are comprehensible by the existing liberal democratic infrastructure. What is left out in her project of radicalising democracy, however, is a theory of the extent to which this translation is needed, and where liberal democracy stands in relation to the manageable agonisms. In other words, if I use the example of anti-austerity movements and the new radical left parties, should social and political movements be completely subsumed by the liberal democratic institutions, to a point where they would resemble the classical model of political parties? Or does there have to be a relation of hybridity established and maintained between the two elements so as to avoid the dangers that I mentioned above?

These shortcomings that remain inadequately explored and theorised in both more mainstream approaches to the study of the post-democratic order (Hay 2007; Stoker 2006; Crouch 2011) and poststructuralist approaches (Mouffe 2013; Rancière 2010) have been the focal point of this thesis. In political party studies, and political science more generally, the analysis is

still predominantly focused on institutional politics, while treating social movements and protests as a second thought to the established democratic processes. In social movement literature, on the other hand, the focus has been on the protest arena of political action, emphasising the role of protest movements in achieving social change, but in externality to electoral politics. As I have argued in Chapter 5, the challenge for radical left politics is to explore the interaction between these two fields and phenomena of political action. Moreover, if capturing state power is one of the key conditions for challenging neoliberalism, then a historical/contextual analysis of the relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism is also required in order to understand the transformed role of the state in this process and the institutional limitations facing the struggle. With regards to the latter, the existing political science and theory literature does not adequately target the ideological involvement of liberalism in what has been identified as the post-democratic transformation of politics. And, while Mouffe provides us with a critical observation that the tension between liberalism and democracy is irresolvable, and as such, it is bound to manifest itself in an intensification of antagonistic outbursts, a critical analysis of neoliberalism and its relationship with liberalism is still missing. To this end, a political economy analysis was needed, which would provide an analysis of the structural relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism. The starting premise for this inquiry is that liberalism and liberal democracy are not neutral and innocent legacies and institutions that have been attacked by neoliberal capitalism, but rather an active component in the logical, yet paradoxical development towards neoliberal governmentality.

This observation led my analysis in Chapter 2 to adopting an economic-institutional approach to understanding political economy, which does not consider the domain of the political (liberal democracy) as separate from the economic domain (the market economy), but as co-constitutive. Drawing upon Michel Foucault and Karl Polanyi, the role of political institutions and ideas is underlined in configuring the relationship between the state, civil society and the market activity. Liberal governmentality is understood through a paradox of two parallel tendencies: one is the depoliticisation of democratic politics through the self-limiting of liberal governmentality in relation to the market, and the second is the process of politicising the domain of the social and the private spheres of life (biopolitics). So, if neoliberalism appears to be limiting the structures of governing, it is in fact extending their biopolitical control and governing mechanisms through the process of marketisation, which integrates both the state and civil society into a competitive market economy. What is particularly insightful in Foucault's analysis is the way the self-limitation principle of liberal governmentality is maintained in neoliberalism as the governance structures adopt the market principles as the axiom of their operational field. The liberal state no longer represents the protective barrier between society and capitalist economic processes; instead, it

intervenes into the processes of private and social life in a way so as to enable "a general regulation of society by the market" (Foucault 2008, 145). The role of the state in neoliberalism is, therefore, not shrinking and becoming an irrelevant governance component in relation to private multinational corporations, as it is commonly suggested in political science and international relations literature. Rather, the opposite is the case: the operation of the state is rationalised in neoliberal governmentality as its mode of governing takes more insidious biopolitical forms, while the market principles of competition and entrepreneurship take over.

As a consequence, the ethico-political principles of liberty, equality and the rule of law in liberal democracy do not go untarnished in this process. By placing the crisis of liberal democratic politics within the genealogical analysis of (neo)liberal governmentality, we can better comprehend the complicity of liberalism and liberal democratic institutions in the hegemonisation of neoliberalism. In turn, this approach can inform the political strategy of radical left politics when it comes to the engagement with political institutions. It dissuades from taking on the naïve view of the state as a neutral mechanism for the construction of an alternative counter-hegemonic narrative (Mouffe's view), as well as the Leninist-Marxist view, which sees the state as a monolithic apparatus of the capitalist bourgeoisie. Instead, this approach can help us re-examine the strategy for radical left politics and take heed of the obstacles the counter-hegemonic struggles are facing both inside and outside institutional politics.

The example of the eventual capitulation of the Syriza-led government to the austere demands of the international creditors in July 2015 illustrates well this predicament of neoliberal governmentality. The compliance of the Alexis Tsipras' government with the creditors' demands, even after 61% of the Greek voters rejected them in a referendum a few weeks before, has provoked feelings of betrayal, failure, and disillusionment in radical left politics – "the melancholia of the left" was resurrected once again. The politics of hope that Syriza represented for many left radicals in Greece and around the world has left many in despair.³⁵ However, what my rethinking of resistance in radical politics has shown in Chapter 4 is that we cannot glorify and romanticise counter-hegemonic movements and political parties. No matter whether the political forces in question are on the left or the right of the ideological spectrum, in the interplay between politics and resistance both conductive power and counter-conducts are inevitably engaged in matrices of power and (self-)rule. In democratic political theory, this brings us to the perennial aporia of democracy, namely of the relation between the ruling and the ruled, elites and the masses, representatives and the represented. My analysis at the end of Chapter 4 demonstrated that by

³⁵ See Tariq Ali's (2015) comment on the situation and numerous intellectual pieces in the socialist Jacobin magazine.

keeping and maintaining the hybrid relation of power between counter-conducting resistances and established conduct (for instance, in the form of political parties and other governing institutions) the counter-hegemonic movements – like the SYRIZA coalition party in Greece, the Initiative for Democratic Socialism and the United Left in Slovenia, and the Indignados and Podemos in Spain – can preserve the vitality of their political projects. Following from this, I cannot underscore enough the importance of radicalising democracy as a theoretical and political project for radical left politics and their struggle against neoliberalism.

This is why crisis was a pertinent concept to use to make sense of the current predicament that we find ourselves in. As it was demonstrated in Chapter 3, it is first important that we understand why a crisis is such a rare yet resurging occurrence, why it causes surprise and appears accidental to the dominant order. By understanding its annunciatory moment and discursively symbolic formation, our judgement-making capacities are already trying to make sense of it, calculate it, manage it and eventually solve it. As Derrida and Foucault have demonstrated through their understanding of eventualisation, in the very announcement of a crisis or an event happening, there is already a manoeuvre by the dominant regimes of truth to conceal what the crisis is exposing through the cracks of the supposed state of normality. However, the very fact that a crisis catches us by surprise as an accident to the dominant order opens up a possibility for questioning and critiquing what has been until then unquestionable and taken for granted. The very suspension of old knowledge and judgments, which suddenly appear inadequate in determining the undeterminable nature of a crisis, urges us to find new answers and make new judgements. Crisis as an analytical framework demonstrated it can elucidate both the contextual environment within which resistance occurs, as well as the conceptual requisites needed for the creation of a favourable context for resistant subjectivities to emerge. My question of inquiry also probed whether the experience of trauma in a crisis can stimulate the desire to be and become a critical, resisting subjectivity at the psychological level. And following my analysis of Catherine Malabou's notion of neuronal plasticity, I demonstrated that external events, such as the socio-political violence of the latest economic crisis in Europe, can damage and traumatise our sense of ourselves and reality around us to the extent that trauma can be more disabling towards fostering a resisting subjectivity to this violence rather than enabling. However, the path of restructuring the sense of the self and social reality after trauma is in no way determined in advance and, thus, can provide the ground for fostering a desire for resistance.

By intervening into contemporary democratic theory, social movement and political party literature, the thesis aimed to provide a more robust understanding of resistance in radical left politics so that it can effectively respond to the contemporary crisis of liberal democracy. My

motivation behind the thesis was therefore deeply political, the same way that I think political theory carries important political and ideological implications for our understanding of politics and society. In principle, I wanted to make three different theoretical contributions to the study of politics: (1) to broaden the understanding of politics in mainstream political science by providing a more nuanced conception of power and, in this way, illuminate the relationship between extra-institutional resistance and institutional politics; (2) to demonstrate the political and theoretical implications of positing resistance outside the field of established structures of power in radical political theory; and (3) to provide a wider political economy framework for understanding the structural reasons for the emergence of extra-institutional political struggles and the future obstacles facing the new radical left.

This thesis, however, partly due to the timing of its completion, partly due to the intentional circumscription of its scope for reasons of coherence, was not able to cover all the research questions that it raised, either directly or indirectly. The trajectory of European politics in recent years presents pressing challenges for the radical left and political theory. I would like to raise some questions in particular to two of them: the continuing difficulty of the left to dismantle the neoliberal consensus around austerity measures and structural reforms, as well as the rise of right-wing populism and authoritarian forms of government. Following my argument in thesis that the radical left should not shy away from institutional politics, if the left is to effectively confront neoliberalism, is the close cooperation between social movements and political parties a viable electoral route to win power? Can this relationship last, or is the party-movement model for democratic politics only a transitory phenomenon in the struggle for power? These questions might receive more qualified answers in comparative politics, for instance, by looking at the difference between majoritarian and proportional electoral systems. The literature on the new radical left in Europe has already shifted its attention from using populism as a discursive strategy in order to broaden the popular appeal for radical political change to assessing the viability of this populist appeal once populist parties get into power.

The recurrent dilemma that the politically engaged theorists and the left are grappling with goes something like this: if the left is not willing to govern and is not able to get into power, then conservative forces will fill the political vacuum. While the criticality of the situation demands quick responses and decisions that would see the left more organised and unified, it seems doubtful whether the project of radicalising democracy can really be achieved under these conditions. Without the counter-neoliberalisation movement spreading into political institutions, the prospects for redefining the role of the state, however, also seem bleak. The future research in political

theory should continue to offer theoretical elucidation around these questions and try to influence the terms of the debate in other concerned disciplines.

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