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**DISSERTATION ON: "CIVIL SOCIETY IN GREECE AS PART OF A  
EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY"**

**Written by: KallirroïKalampoka**

**Registration Number: medst 19003**

**Supervisor: Emmanuel Papazoglou**

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## **DEDICATION AND GRATITUDES**

I feel quite happy that I have completed my post-graduate studies on “M.A. in Mediterranean studies” at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Peloponnese.

Firstly, I want to express my appreciation to my supervisor Mr. Emmanuel Papazoglou for his guidance and assistance.

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## ABSTRACT

The political context of this discussion is focused on the fact that organized forms of civil society, namely CSOs and NGOs, can act as intermediaries between central government, local authorities and communities, so as to shape an overall new type of communitarian provision.

Sociologists and academics define civil society as articulate organizations which represent the interests of shared-minded groups as well as social interaction and citizens' initiatives. Scholars define all these associations in a different way and classify civil society as a composition of groups with general interest, professional and trade unions and generally business interest associations. According to the EU, as it is related by the European Commission, civil society tends to be aligned with governance process by following supportably the principles of representative and participatory democracy. However scholars can hardly see EU associations as part of Europe's civil society (Kohler-Koch & Quittkat, 2009).

CSOs are mainly seen as drivers of change and providers of both economic models and social innovations. They are divided into service providers and advocate organizations which promote human rights, and civic engagement participating in policy making. These two roles are interlinked and are dealing with organized groups of people which share the same interests and try to influence and push policy makers to decide in their own interest. However for many researchers there is not a clear understanding of the exact role and action of civil society organizations (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

**Keywords:** Civil society, citizens' initiatives, civil society organizations, human rights, solidarity, trust, participatory democracy and governance, accountability, independent actors, EU engagement with civil society, European Commission.

## INTRODUCTION

It is very common for a researcher to wonder what a civil society is in general and specifically what a Europe's civil society is. More importantly researchers try to identify the role which civil society can play in aiding citizens' participation in governance advocacy. For the EU Civil society is a compound and multi-level sector, it is articulated from a wide range of associations which ranges from specific to wider social interests groups. All these heterogeneous groups shape a social structure which aims at the protection of society in general and specifically to those in need. These associations can be referred as CSOs.

In addition, CSOs are voluntary associations that respond to the criteria of being not-for-profit structures and are organized as self-interested actors, not state but parallel to state. Most authors support that CSOs are the associations which represent "general interest" and are in an eager quest of public good. In a nutshell, just a few such organizations are local and international trade unions (TU), Professional organizations (PO), General Interest Associations (GIA), Business interest associations (BIA), which are considered qualify CSOs (kohler-Koch & Quittkat, 2009).

Many sociologists have dealt with the role and actions of civil society globally. To sociologist Habermas civil society's fundamental basis consists of a complex of associations of general interest inside the organized public spheres which pursuit problem-solving discourses. CSOs are more interested in partnership rather than membership and focus more on transparency, trust and participation in EU governance within an empowered European Union and following mainly democratic procedures. CSOs are not only communitarian associations but also representative socially interactive actors which usually work in accordance with the principles of democracy (kohler-Koch & Quittkat, 2009). Also Gramsci strongly supported in his theory that civil society is distinguished from political society and is more close to community than to politics. It can be in the structure of sociology and socialization. It is a modern social phenomenon, a concept with both ideological and political content in general (Maglaras, 2013).

In Gramsci's theory civil society represents a field where the private and the public space as well as the economy and the state are organized in a hegemony way. However this theory seems not to have been analyzed to suit to a contemporary sociopolitical reality because the interpretation that Gramsci tried to give about civil society can be now considered as one "behind the times" and "insufficient". This theory seems not strong enough to explain the modern model of these organizations which actually target broadly to fulfill people's needs. Gramsci's theory claimed that civil society could become a revolutionary lever of the working class so as to dominate on the capitalist economic western system against the "hegemony of the proletariat", the working population against the capitalism and the bourgeois state. But modern civil society, in contrast to Gramsci's time, opts for a collective social support in the community as a whole. However, we can say that Gramsci's theory is restricted mainly to the historical period of the inter war (Maglaras, 2013).

The research question on what 'civil society' is and what is made up of, can be answered by popular definitions about CSOs which are defined to be organizations working within the state and the private sector, in order to arbitrate public issues. CSOs include a very wide range of institutions and operate on many different sectors, including the global, regional, national and local sector. In a nutshell, CSOs include NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), community groups, research institutes, think tanks, advocacy groups, trade unions, academic institutions, parts of the media, professional associations, and faith-based institutions, generally they are the whole strata of society (Forrester & Sunar, 2011).

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

a2d	Access to democracy
BIA	Business Interest Associations
CIVICUS	Civil Society Index Report for Greece
CS	Civil Society
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
COM	European Commission Communication
ECI	European Citizen Initiative
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ESC	Economic and Social Committee
ESS	European Social Survey
ERF	European Refugee Fund
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	General Interest associations
GTS	Greek Third Sector
HIGGS	Higher Incubator Giving Growth & Sustainability
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
ISTR	International Society for Third-sector Research
ND	New Democracy
NGA	Non-government actors
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
OCS	Organized civil society
PO	Professional Organizations
PTF	Partnership for Transparency Fund
RHR	Respect for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TU	Trade Unions
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
2ndWW	Second World War

- **FIRST CHAPTER**

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- 1) A new process of governance in the EU where civil society state-holders and regional-local administrations seek a better standard of politics.**
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## **FIRST CHAPTER**

### **1) Purpose and contribution of the Dissertation**

This Dissertation focuses on answering two basic research questions: the Greek civil society organizations, its characteristics and what makes it different from the rest of Europe. The second is why civil society in Greece remains largely weak and what can be done so as Greek civil society come close to European civil society organizations.

In this study we define CSOs the formally-organized structures which share various interest issues and act as arbitrators between state authorities and the public (Divjak & Forbici, 2017, p. 3). CSOs through their advocacy role can actively take part in decision-making procedures at both a socio-economic level and cultural activity in contrast with NGOs (Non Profit Organizations) that are voluntary organizations in which anyone can participate in local, regional or even international level without participating in the decision-making activity. However, as we will see below, CSOs are an important part of the social structure as they manage to cooperate with institutional actors and adapt to social change by searching and exploring path-ways for development of new services as well as managerial strategies to fulfill their social purposes. All these can help to build stronger and firmer European governmental patterns so as to enhance not only representative but also participatory democracy in the future through collaboration and exchange services. So far in Greece we don't have such a strong involution between GSOs and government, as for example happens in Germany, Great Brittan Sweden.

The purpose of the Dissertation is to attract public interest to CSOs which cater for humanity in order to contribute resources and funds for poverty reduction in society globally. However there are some limitations as the survey is conducted at a national level and this does not allow generalization of the results at the international level. Also the close-ended questions fail to explain the underlying reasons for the outcome.

## **2) Methodology/Tools and status of the work**

The analysis of this topic has been carried out through intensive desk research studies and through a research of academic papers referring to the past and current role and the future prospects of CSOs. The studied papers involved different surveys, interviews research, quantitative and qualitative questions as well as studies of internet platforms and global CSO network.

The study focuses on the literature review, at national and international level using data sourced from books, articles, published reports, dissertations, websites, and electronic databases to provide a summary and synopsis of the existing literature.

The literature research included a review of the existing legal frameworks applicable to CSOs such as Heal Link, Springer Link, Academia edu, Google scholar, Science Direct, sites of international organizations (UN). The quantitative research has been conducted for the collection of primary data and the statistical tools helped to analyze and present the quantitative data so as to generalize the results.

## **3) Definition of CSOs**

Civil society is a heterogeneous formation which makes generalizations difficult (Huliaras, 2014). Civil society is a conglomeration of NGOs and the third sector but it differentiates the government from the private, profit-oriented sector. NGOs are trying to help in a way that government is unable to do for numerous of reasons and also individuals can't help enough. Civil society is a space of un-coerced human collectiveness with voluntary organized self-generating social life (Simiti, 2018). Civil society can be seen as whole body consisting of various "organs" all very important for the good operation of the social system as it encompasses public groups that exist outside the state (Carothers, 1999). Academics support that civil society social movements consist of voluntary associations, community groups, professional and philanthropic organizations (Huliaras, 2014, p. 3).

For some social scientists civil society does not include only political parties, trade unions and general protective groups. It has become an organization that promotes public interest with non-profit activities among countries in the developed and less developed world. It is closely related to democracy and development, in a way that democracy works because they watch out for people who are in a weaker social position (Sotiropoulos D. , 2013). Civil society is also defined as “*an arena*”, “a place for peaceful fight”, separated from the state, the market, the family, where people gather to discuss and debate about common interest issues. This is an initiative between civil society actors and the institutions of the state sector. In the CIVICUS/ODI Research Report *arena* is a particular space where people gather in order to debate, discuss, associate and try to influence society more broadly (Fioramenti & Heinrich, 2007).

Civil society is associated with democratic life in which citizens take collective action to demand a change in state policies and in which also voluntary associations come forward to offer their services to vulnerable groups. In this meaning voluntary civic groups work parallel to democratic governments and help them to be more effective in social welfare (Sotiropoulos D. , 2013). We have seen in the past the invaluable services of voluntary organizations in rescuing people in emergencies of earthquakes, floods, and even in the recent Corona virus epidemic. From Francis Fukuyama view associational life is necessary for modern democracy to be achieved and established. Democratization can promote cooperation between individuals and economic growth. So civil society has become an indispensable actor for modernization and is seen as both driver of change and provider of economic models and social innovations. That will bring democracy in everyone and will give them opportunities to achieve things even if they don't have for example the financial means (Huliaras, 2014, p. 5).

As democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is equipped with political parties and elections, and with individual and collective rights then an empowered civil society becomes a strong supporter of a democratic system. It fosters pluralism and contributes to more effective policies by being an important player in fostering peace in conflict resolution (Manservisi, 2020). The phenomenon of pluralism is very intense nowadays, we observe that we have

a growing social divide within society and that society must fulfill the rights of each different group. However in Greece, we observe a paradox phenomenon of a weak civil society within a flourishing democracy (Sotiropoulos D. , 2013).

#### **4) Target population and respondents**

This dissertation targets on group activities and behavior, citizens' initiatives both on the rational individual and the homo economicus. It is an attempt to make respondents realize that they should not only be able to exist, but to emphasize that citizens' initiatives become quite successful when people organize collective goods and services. Collective action is possible through face-to-face communication within well founded institutions where rules and regulations work. Collective action is associated with common or group interest achievement. In the EU the ECI (European Citizens Initiative) is historically the first transnational instrument of participatory democracy. ECI are one of the greatest novelties of the "Treaty of Lisbon" that allows the EU citizens to communicate with the European Commission and suggest their own proposals of interest in the EU cognizance (Forrester & Sunar, 2011).

Secondly the dissertation also targets on self-interest individuals who possess high and low available positions, and on those individuals who are within a collective action setting. All these respondents can use authority rules, which specify set of actions, and can empower individuals to withhold non-producers or over-appropriators from exploiting social groups. Also the utility of exclusivity enhances collective action and it remains an important asset for the target population.

## SECOND CHAPTER

### **1. Greek civil society within a flourishing democracy, a weak societal state-dependent organization, the reasons for its weakness.**

#### INTRODUCTION

This article review examines the evident data which show the weakness of Greek civil society comparing it to EU countries. There is a prevailing idea about Europe's division between the Northern strong and powerful countries and the weak Southern ones. Southern European countries, as well as Greece, are viewed with a weak civil society, increased clientelistic relations and a negligible behavior towards public authority (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008). In Greece since the transition to democracy in 1974, civil society has shown its presence and quite intensively. However, this does not mean that today civil society in Greece is strong. Greek civil society still remains lower in rank if we compare it with other West European nations which set an example for us that we need to achieve (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006). Findings also show the degree of the not well organized civil society in Greece because of the strong institutions within Greek society which are the state, the political parties, the influential Greek Christian Orthodox Church and the strong family bonds.

To begin with, a number of causes can explain the reason why Greek civil society has remained weak. The fact is that Greek civil society is mainly dedicated to family bonds revealing so that the Greeks are not eager to mingle with formal organizations. This situation can be explained as an apparent lack of interest. The Greek citizens tend to care more for their families and their narrow cycle (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006). Also, clientism is a very widespread way for Greek citizens to achieve what they want in short term but they don't really care about a long term solution, that's why they are not very interest in civic engagement (Huliaras, 2014). Even more, the history of adverse state formation, the church-state relations with

civil society, the ineffective policies of tax incentives accompanied with the lack of civic education are some more important factors. Studies have shown that civil society in Greece has been organized in the last two decades but this procedure was not a much bottom-up activity, it started from a top-down process. Even though this initiative was not on the right basis however it was supported by EU which encourages civil society activities by offering generous funding. The EU promotes volunteering initiatives that grow to become a protective umbrella for large communities which also could be transformed into more organized forms of activism. EU generous funding most of the times didn't made a big difference because governances didn't use them wisely and with a long term plan, they used the funding to cover up some "burning" needs of that time. Also, the recent economic crisis had simultaneously pushed in some ways and prevented in others the citizen participation in associations and activism (Huliaras, 2014, p. 17).

Prior to Greek financial crisis Greek civil society was still in an early stage of development in contrast to state development. After the crisis social solidarity groups popped up unorganized, parallel to official channels, and created volunteering groups and informal networks to provide social assistance to vulnerable groups. At the beginning of the economic crisis and in the period of 2010-2013, some political parties were accused of the state's economy exploitation and civil society's negligence. As a result large citizen groups demonstrated peacefully and proposed alternative economic policies. This situation provoked a type of civic activism, civil society mobilization which in a way revealed how liberal democracy works (Sotiropoulos D. , 2013, p. 2). These primary ideas were adopted by the Greek civil society and showed that in times of serious crisis, civil society can be reborn and take action.

## **THE REASONS OF WEAKNESS**

It is seen that a vivid civil society can contribute greatly to maintain the democratic rights in the community and can also support economic policy issues. However there are cases where civil society is very vibrant but the people are in a poor situation. In Bangladesh, for example there exist rich civil society organizations and NGOs but this strength does not convey wealth to

people (Carothers, 1999). So the route to economic growth is not always aligned with an active civil society, as there are strong civil societies quite active and successful within weak economies and vice versa. However it is supported that a well-developed civil society can co-exist with an advanced state economy. This means that citizens who manage to live in comfort and lead an affluent way of life can spare more time in associational life, be better educated, can deal with fine arts, music and sports. This behavior indicates an advanced way of life in a more advanced society (Carothers, 1999). According to Ernest Gellner the active role of civil society which is separated from the state but parallel to it, and is also powerful enough to balance the power of the state, has been established only in the European continent and not in the rest of the world. Some rates of volunteering research have shown that citizens of higher social status are into voluntarism more than those who are in lower social strata. Volunteering behavior appears stronger amongst highly educated people as these people are regarded to know more about society's suffering, and have developed an advanced awareness of people's problems than the lower educated people. Moreover, studies have revealed that low-income and unemployed people volunteer less than well-off ones as unemployment makes them to seek help and it seems to be a logical phenomenon because they are the ones who need the help of society and struggle more to have a decent life (Kalogeraki, 2018).

In Greece an active civil society remains still in low levels. Even though Greece is a European democratic country there is a lack of robustness and vigor in the Greek community. To most analysts an important factor that has negatively affected the strength of civil society and continues to keep it in a weak level is the dominant role of political parties. This can be explained as throughout and after the Dictatorship, civil organizations such as trade unions, student associations, even cultural organizations were affiliated with a political party and this aspect which is shared with Mouzelis and Pagoulatos point of view reveals that Greek civil society has been a victim of "partitocracy". The early, after Junta formation of the Constitution and the country's late industrialization, have led to the supremacy of clientism, patronage and to the vertical incorporation of the social spectrum to politics. So the combination of state-dominance and partitocracy, and the country's imperfect modernization



has led to the weakness of a Greek civil society in the emergence of a Greek modern State. Also the CIVICUS survey has revealed that political parties have implemented people's demands and aspirations to such a degree that nowhere else can this be seen. For example only the Greek political parties managed to mobilize citizens along with civil society organizations to campaign against global armament seeking global peace in the 1980s (Huliaras, 2014).

One more factor that can explain this weakness is the role of Church and its relations with the state. This means that religion in Greece can effectively mobilize civil society action as Greece is mainly a religious homogeneous society (religious minorities are about 4% of the population), and the Greek Orthodox Church has been established as an ethnic national church. The Greek state on the other hand restricts the church's independence and makes the Church a part of the state administrative "apparatus" by offering the clergy state salaries. Consequently, the Greek state has nationalized religion and this nationalization with the secured status of funding has led the Orthodox Church not to be obliged to create institutions as religious schools, orphanages, senior host houses to safeguard its economic position. From the very constitution of Greece, the close connection between society and the state emerges. This situation acted as disincentive for activity in contrast to the Catholic and Protestant Churches which play an active role in creating parallel institutions to the state and get funding for their existence (Huliaras, 2014).

Another reference that is connected to Greece's weakness has to do with the historian's Koliopoulos aspect as far as the Ottoman's era influence on Greek society. The Ottoman State was an unrepresentative and unfair state and tried it obstructed the Industrial Revolution and the technologies from entering the eastern places of the Mediterranean. The Greek state, being under occupation for such a long period, had been assimilated to the Ottoman Empire and incorporated pre-modern structures, a segmentary society of clans and familism, and splinter groups which acted as an impediment to modernization, development and westernization for the most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Huliaras, 2014).

Continuing the study referring to the strength and weakness of civil society in Greece the tax incentives seem to have influenced the Greek society to this point. In developed societies tax alleviations help business and organizations to be more charitable. For example the US offers the most generous tax breaks and this in return has led to a high level of charitable giving proportionally to countries GDP. This situation seems similar both in Britain and Australia, while in Greece the tax system not only pushes people to charitable donations but offers limited and complex incentives. It seems that in Greek society donations are more common to the State and the Church than to NGOs or other civil society organizations. It should be noted that there is limited trust to NGOs' charitable giving, an aspect which should not be taken as a generalization (Huliaras, 2014).

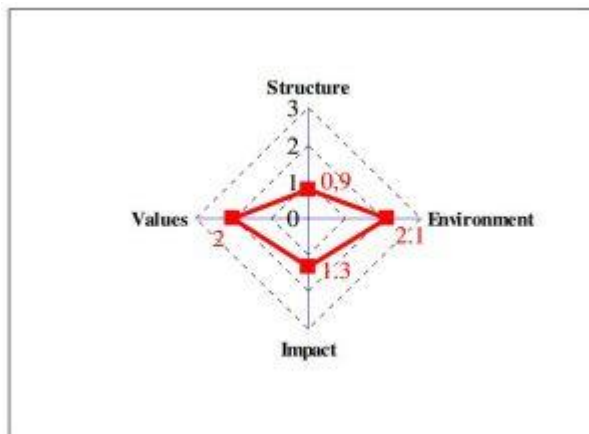
As far as trust to NCOS in Greece is concerned, it has been revealed that some civil society organizations were involved in corrupted practices, forged close relations with state funding agencies and sought funding instead of offering to the society. That might be the reason why the citizens are not interested in volunteering and donate their money, because they don't trust NGOs. There are also examples from some autonomous and very powerful organizations and pressure groups that had tried to undermine democratic institutions in order to reap the benefits of a political party. We have also examples of some civil society organizations set up by individuals or a small group of people aiming at a business-profit interest rather than a solidarity purpose (Sotiropoulos, 2014). Moreover trust in traditional formal civil society organizations is undermined by a series of scandals implicating NGOs and their relationship with state funding, leading to several criminal prosecutions (Sotiropoulos D. , 2013). As discussed in this paper if CSOs wish to become effective and win the trust of the wider public they need to monitor the state and the corporate sector more systematically (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006).

Concluding a final reason that may have affected the weak levels of activism in Greece can be the lack of civic education. Schools can successfully foster civic engagement to young people. Greece is one of the few European countries where civic and citizenship education is not offered as a school subject. Moreover teachers' training on civic education has never

offered in Greece. Even though in Greece there is a big number of Universities that produces that kind of scientists the education system in Greece doesn't use them. Consequently the lack of civic education can account for the lower levels of civic activity in Greece (Huliaras, 2014). Proceeding with the study "why Greek civil society remained weak" and comparing Greece to the "Mediterranean pattern" of Spain and Portugal some light is shed to this question. These countries, compared to other European ones, had been under dictatorial regimes which restricted and prohibited freedom of association and speech. As a result this policy made Greek society to be distrustful in interpersonal cycles. So through education on human rights, freedom of speech and thought all these behavioral residues can be overcome and push Greek society forward (Huliaras, 2014).

A final research question is what causes the differences between Northern and Southern European civil organizations? The answer after empirical research is the existence of different models of interest mediation and also the different history paths that these countries have. In UK for example most organizations are professionalized, formalized, specialized and centralized with little state support as they are rich in resources. Also in Sweden the difference is that these organizations receive high state support. In contrast, in southern Europe, especially in Greece, civil society organizations seem to be poorer in resources, not well-organized, formalized, specialized and centralized (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008).

So according to data gathered from various sources and experts on how the state of civil society in Greece is, Greece has very low levels of social investment, civic activism and associational population. From the overall findings and collected data, Greek civil society is depicted on a geometrical diamond figure grouped into four not well-balanced dimensions. These dimensions of Structure, Environment, Values and Impact are between 0.9 and 2.1, and indicate a quite underdeveloped civil society with weak structure and limited impact on society. But there exists an environment with quite positive values (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006) and (Fioramenti & Heinrich, 2007). Below is this Diamond shape of the Greek civil society.



#### **HOW A GRADUAL STRENGTHENING OF GREEK CIVIL SOCIETY WILL BE ACHIEVED.**

The most important factor that has helped to a gradual strengthening of Greek civil society is Greece's entering the EU. The EU funds through EU-funding for citizenship programs have created an incentive for collective action which led to citizens' mobilization and boosted voluntarism. The LIFE program, set by the European Commission in 1992 and extended up to April 2013, has financed 204 Greek projects of 269 million Euros worth (Huliaras, 2014). Most of these projects targeted to the creation of Greek NGOs especially for nature and biodiversity as LIFE influenced the environmental awareness in Greece. Also service providing NGOs for migrants and refugees were on the increase and tried to create refugee centers in Greece as this country became a heaven destination of migrants since the 1990s. These NGOs offered humanitarian support and legal advice to human inflows and provided them with social health and psychological care. Now we have NGOs that are specialized in refugee's problems as for asylum-seekers, a fact of crucial importance for those poor people. Moreover the European Refugee Fund (ERF), which was set up by the EU member states, has offered generous funding and led to the creation of several NGOs in Greece (Huliaras, 2014). However the generous EU funding has born adverse incentives for the creation of some NGOs in order to win bits. This is

explained by the fact that even many NGOs started as voluntary associations but by the time they were transformed into “exploitation agencies” of human suffering. However, the EU funds have aided NGOs generally to become helpful to marginalized groups, like the Romas, and even more to mobilize people to help larger communities (Huliaras, 2014).

Many studies on social movements have shown that structural factors as unemployment, the legitimacy crisis of the Greek political system, the increased demand for materialist values in the Greek community have led to social unrest and participation in political protests. The 2009-started economic crisis urged citizens to actively be engaged into solidarity and political participation. Under this spectrum many new NGOs were born and old ones reported an increase in voluntarism connected with private donations. Also the Greek Orthodox Church remained dominant for philanthropic initiatives in Greece by feeding more than 250.000 people every day (Henley 2012 in Huliaras2014). Before the economic crisis the only civic mobilization in Greece was the active voluntarism in the 2004 Olympic Games, the voluntarism on the Athens earthquake, the demonstration against the police in December 2008 when a young boy was fatal shot by the police to name just a few (Huliaras, 2014). What also helped all this mobilization was the use of the internet, SMS, the Facebook, and the Twitter. With the enormous growth of social media people can be more updated and more united against social injustices. It seems that Digitalization has affected the work of CSOs as it has facilitated the exchange of information and the mobilization of members and supporters to take action. From all these It is obvious that social networks facilitated an instant and direct action and reaction (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

According to scholars of social movement the supportive role of the state in strengthening civil society bares the most important validity. Well established strong and active states can greatly encourage the development of a vibrant civil society. Better-governed states with credible and transparent politicians can promote activism through trusted associations (Huliaras, 2014). In Earnest Gellner’s book “*conditions of liberty, civil societies and its rivals*” civil society activism aims at filling the gaps created by the state’s inability to provide certain social services to people’s needs. In this book it is supported that non-governmental institutions are so powerful that can balance the power

of the state and hinder it from dominating on society. Civil society could distinct itself from the state and be recognized as a space between state and society to offer support to social mobility for the individual's adaptation to new roles, duties and identities. To Gellner's view the division between state and civil society has been established only in the European continent and not in the rest of the world. In contrast to Gellner's theory even though Greece is a European country civil society has not become strong because the state is a "lame Leviathan" and is unable to collect taxes for example and in return to offer reliable services to its society. It is a fact that in Greece there are a lot of taxes, almost for everything, but still a lot of people manage to not pay them (Huliaras, 2014).

Comparing Greece with other European countries, one can see that in Greece there is long tradition of individualism and lack of tradition on voluntary and community work. Data from researches point out that Greeks normally are not willing to participate in voluntary actions and they rarely register in voluntary associations. Schools, especially in the past, rarely encourage students to become volunteers, that's why we do not observe any significant change of culture. A European Union study, in 2010, ranked Greece in those countries where less than 10% of the population aged over 15 takes part in voluntary activities, whereas the EU average was 22%. The European Social Survey in the fifth round (2011) shows that only 14% of Greeks participated in voluntary activities in contrast to 26 % of Italians, 15% of Spaniards and 12% of Portuguese, while the EU-27 average is 24 %. However during the economic crisis in Greece the picture of voluntarism has changed showing an important increase in the participation of volunteers in various social actions. The recent spontaneous contribution in relation to the refugees and immigrants in some Greek islands, especially in Kos and Lesvos and in the city of Athens, illustrate the substantial role of volunteers to face the difficult situation. Moreover, some recent qualitative findings reported a substantial increase in volunteerism and mainly in informal organizations, such as social networks that act as emergency relief mechanisms for those in need (Kalogeraki, 2018).

The emergence of civil society in the wake of the economic crisis in Greece was seen as a positive step to assosionism. Compared to the pre-

crisis period a lot of citizens participated in collective efforts to help people to preserve the living standards and exercise their rights. This is seen as civil society's evolution (Kalogeraki, 2018). It should also be noted that whilst past research has consistently underpinned the lower levels of voluntarism in Greece compared to other European countries (e.g. European Commission 2007; European Commission 2010; European Commission 2011), the present findings show that in the specific domain volunteering and membership is more prevalent among Greeks than citizens in the rest countries participating in LIVEWHAT project. Thus, this project provides Greek civil society with a roadmap for the future and has laid the path for civil society and other stakeholders to take initiatives and act for making Greek civil society stronger in the future (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006).

## **2. What can be done so as Greek civil society come close to the European civil society organizations.**

It is a fact that several studies have revealed the weakness of organized civil society in Greece in comparison to other European countries (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017). This weakness can be related with the post-dictatorial period when the authoritarian state had the control of political parties and over the associational activism (Simiti, 2018). It is astonishing that only Greek political parties have managed to mobilize citizens since the transition to democracy in 1974 (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006). That means that the Greek state can incite or stifle civil society initiative easily resulting in an intense impassivity and a minor participation with very few and deficit organized civil society organizations in Greece. However it has been noticed a change in society's mobilization especially during the last two decades (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017). People have started to devote some of their time and money to social solidarity which has gradually led to the formation of many NGOs. This tendency has been aided by the increased society's interest of social and environmental issues accompanied with the rise of "post-materialistic" demands in the Western world. Also the EU

financial aid that have been made available to NGOs and civil society organizations in the last twenty years have given a rise to that tendency of the creation and organization of formal civil society organizations (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017).

Since the beginning of the economic crisis in Greece, a mobilized board of state and non-state actors provided aid to the sufferers of the economic crisis to tackle poverty. An increase of informal not well organized civil structures within neighborhoods and in local community came forward to cover rising social needs as public funding cutbacks have negatively retarded the pace of NGOs and civil society. A shift in funding organizations has been recorded creating insecurity in the NGO sector which caused plenty of financial difficulties to the operational activities of the Greek NGOs and civil society (Simiti, 2018). However the economic crisis caused a change in the party system and the solidarity networks creating autonomous political economic space by following a new global paradigm of radical activism. In Greece when the citizens started “building” a co-operative structure, which is necessary for a civil society, the economic crisis began. EU economic funds could replace the weak activism and associationism so Greece could coexist with other European civil society organizations (Simiti, 2018). The strength and effectiveness of civil society depends mainly on how active the civilian mobilization becomes, however its strength and enduring features depend a lot on the institutional and economic environment. So the economic crisis in combination with the austerity policies have influenced Greek civil society with reductions in contributions by individual donors, private foundations, international institutions and governments (Simiti, 2018), (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017).

It is a well known fact that financial crisis can inflict a serious damage on the non-profit sector, especially when economic revenues decline. The not-for profit Greek NGOs have been severely afflicted by the economic crisis because they depend on external funding as they are unable to raise sums for their operation. Both their members and the public could not contribute funds to help them to build their own bases let alone the Greek governments. On the other hand we can say that the crisis had an unpredicted positive effect on the Greek Third Sector, as many NGOs adopted new mechanisms



for the improvement of their sustainability and the rise of volunteerism. To Durkheim's point of view '*of social solidarity and social order*', volunteering is a social phenomenon which involves interactions and relations among individuals, which bind society members together (Kalogeraki, 2018).

The above mentioned situation motivated an increase of contributions by private philanthropic foundations which gradually led to the autonomy of the GTS: Greek Third Sector from EU and the state funds. So it is seen that the Third Sector tried to restructure itself and its financial resource base during the economic crisis. The impact of this change resulted to private foundations such as Stavros Niarchos, Jonh S. Latsis or Bodossaki foundation, which were existed long before the crisis, to have changed their activities from providing scholarships and supporting cultural and arts-related events to offer services to vulnerable people. Also several new foundations have been established to support people who have been hurt by the crisis. The Greek Diaspora has also offered a lot to people in need during the economic crisis. It has been noted an increase in private donations to all civil society organizations which has substituted the decline of the state support. Important support has been offered to associations and solidarity networks activating especially on health, social inclusion and human rights as well as refugee influx. This support has been secured through monitoring the evaluation processes so as the funding to be offered to people in need (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017). The increasing funding by the above private foundations has led to a rise of volunteers and NGOs employees. This development has changed the fading volunteerism and in contrast added to the increased awareness of the Greeks about the impact of the crisis on people's suffering.

It is a fact that the economic crisis has affected and alternated people's habits and social behavior. From the Thales Survey it has been seen that volunteers now seem to care more about social and health problems and offer their help and support to those causes instead of participating in activities on culture, art and traditional events, or even environmental protection campaigns. Volunteerism and activism has been focused more on social issues of homeless or starving people in comparison with environmental and cultural causes. The survey has revealed the change in volunteerism since

the beginning of economic crisis in Greece. It was a rational shift of interest due to economic misery of the Greek society (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017). It has also been revealed that even though a significant atomization of social activity prevails within Greek community, in cases of natural disasters, environmental threats, famine and wars mobilization to help victims is astonishing both intra-state and abroad. Examples of civic mobilization reveal how people reacted when earthquakes hit Athens and North-East Turkey. Also people's extended awareness is obvious in the help-aid programs when people cooperate to provide medical care in Ethiopia, through the UNICEF program to assist children and women in humanitarian emergencies in Sudan, south Africa, East Asia, are just a few(Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006).

Concluding it can be inferred that Greece, the most afflicted European country by the economic crisis with a relatively weak civil society, has shown steps of an increased associational volunteerism through the crisis. The economic crisis opened a window for the Greek civil society, mainly through informal groups and networks, to offer social assistance to vulnerable groups. The crisis had a mixed impact of positive developments with the receding state funding to be superseded by the civic engagement and mobilized citizens. Social structures and self-help groups emerged and offered support to impoverished Greeks and migrants. It is also important to say that informal local forms of activism and engagement have risen apart from the state and the EU funding. For the first time civil society has been autonomous from the traditional political authority with the private foundations to become the most important donors of new sources of funding. The future will show how long this new trend will last but judging by the recent refugee crisis we see that the Greek civil society is more strengthened as far as solidarity and collaboration is concerned. Someone can say that solidarity is one of the characteristics that promoted people to volunteer (Tzifakis, Petropoulos, & Huliaras, 2017).

### **3. The challenges Greek civil society faces today and how it can be in the future.**

Today Greek civil society has faced great challenges which have changed completely the image of the past. The traditional Greek political parties, which tried to build new constituencies through organized civil society has been obsolete now. Greek CSOs struggle to survive, some of them did not but new social movements had emerged quite different from the traditional predecessors. They range from Children's Smile, with a budget of 10 million euros a year, to small groups to organize to clean up rubbish near their area (Vathakou, 2019). Since the economic crisis citizens have been trying to improve their lives by organizing themselves through movements of participatory democracy. They protest against partitocracy and attempt to reshape the Greek society, through collective movements such as the "indignants" movement, the "won't pay" etc. All this activism shows a shift towards association for people's support (Huliaras, 2014), (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

In the last ten years the financial and refugee crisis have caused dramatic changes in the civil society landscape in Greece. Many informal CSOs were established and with the formal ones managed to mobilize citizens and implemented projects to provide services to people in need. From the Afouxenidis' survey it has been concluded that there are 6,217 CSOs in Greece. These range from small associations, humanitarian and cultural, at local level with limited resources, to the largest Greek and international CSOs registered in the country. However all these have faced a lot of challenges such as lack of funding, cooperation and networking, lack of legal framework to facilitate the operation of certain CSOs and refugee housing. The major challenge is funding even though positive steps towards diversification of funding resources have been made over the years of the crisis (Vathakou, 2019).

Another challenge can be the cooperation between civil society organizations. In the past there were not many civil society organizations and the existing ones targeted on different groups in different regions with no need

for cooperation. What adds more to this challenge is the increase of these organizations in the last ten years which has made cooperation more difficult. Now we have a lot of NGOs which are active in the refugee sector and must cooperate in some way for the best results to this particular problem. Even more, the lack of appropriate institutional framework adds to the ineffectiveness of the operation of CSOs (Vathakou, 2019). Another challenge that makes things difficult for CSOs is the uneven geographical distribution throughout Greece, with the majority of these organizations to be spotted in urban areas, mainly in Athens. That means that these organizations cannot be near to people who are in need in rural and remote areas so in most cases cooperation, collaboration, and interrelation turn to be a difficult venture. As a result increasingly ill-suited regulatory frameworks have restricted civil society organizations' space, and in Greece we observe that there is a problem with decentralized areas in many different cases (Anheier, Lang, & Toepler, 2019).

The question is how CSOs respond to challenges. As far as the cost is concerned a decrease of operational costs can be achieved through diversification of financial resources so as many CSOs continue to exist. Transparency and trust are also vital for the function of these organizations. Also networking and cooperation is one of the strategies that can meet the challenges. The use of mass media to increase awareness and gather financial support from individuals is very important. Digitalisation has helped a lot for messages to reach society quickly and easily. Also the HIGGS (Higher Incubator Giving Growth & Sustainability) initiative can through educational and supportive programs reinforce non-profit organizations operating in Greece. HIGGS is an example that promotes collaboration among CSOs as it is housed in a three-floor neo-classical building in the center of Athens where people can work independently but also collaboratively. Collaboration with different organizations can be productive as collaborative behavior is something that can be learned in an appropriate environment. The exchange of ideas and know-how among different perspectives is very important for designing an effective action plan to solve a problem (Vathakou, 2019).

Both economic crisis and EU influence led to a growth in quality and quantity civil society and also to the withering of political parties. Representative structures, couldn't meet the societal need and problems any

more. However, in comparative terms, Greek civil society is still not well-organized and its future development will presuppose a well-structured base on which civil movements can operate. From literature review it is seen that the dominant central government in Greece is responsible for the relatively underdeveloped and poorly organized nature of civil society. A positive and respectful relationship between the state and CSOs is important to ensure a long-term sustainability for civil society (Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006).

#### **4. The future European and national relations between CSOs and policy-makers in the EU.**

A research question is how countries can both build and maintain a powerful active environment for civil society. Quantitative expert surveys recommend on how governments in combination with civil society will be able to find ways of their coexistence both in national and multilateral issues. Traditionally, CSOs appear as an intermediate actor between the government and the people. In the past governments used to turn to CSOs to discuss issues with the public so as to get a quick and relatively broad response (Divjak & Forbici, 2017). Similarly, people joined or formed a CSO when they wanted to influence public policies. Now this role seems to have changed or have been diminished due to different reasons such as individualization and loss of long-term membership, loss of credibility, and loss of trust and populism. There has also been a shift in public funding and a change of the nature of voluntarism. On the other hand individualization has limited people's mobilization and time for activism and personal goals as most of time is spent on on-line voluntarism outside the traditional CSOs. This has led to a lack of dialogue and in-depth discussions which may lead to loss of relevant information. Also the lifestyle of the working population has changed significantly the behavior and work of CSOs. In the past people had a nine-five stable job and by doing so they had free time for volunteering employment, in contrast nowadays people's working time in combination with

irregular shifts makes it difficult for them to spare time for voluntary work (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

CSOs of any kind (local, national, or cross borders), have been through a very challenging and constantly changing environment in the current decade. It is indicative that civil society organizations space and mobility is shrinking in some places around the world as a result of the economic crisis, authoritarian or hybrid regimes, and flawed democracies which lead to a slow process of erosion. A need for reform and dialogue efforts is needed to stabilize the space and operation of CSOs. In middle-income countries, bureaucracy along with restrictive laws and regulations may impede registration of membership and donations, these practices can become an obstacle to the role and the development of civil society (Anheier, Lang, & Toepler, 2019).

So a need for new structural methods and a differentiation from previous policies is important for the sustainability of SCOs. Different approaches that go beyond the one-size-fits-all of current regulatory frameworks should be implemented. Frameworks should be based on functional feasibility by taking into account organizational forms, comparative advantages and drawbacks for the implementation of their targets. CSOs should emphasize on people's demands and act as service providers for civilians' needs. CSOs have for long tried to find rules and regulations, measures and incentives so as to be complementary or supplementary towards the fundamental independence of their role which is to support people in need and become social innovators (Anheier, Lang, & Toepler, 2019).

## **THIRD CHAPTER**

### **1. The nature and organizational structure of European CSOs and their role in EU politics.**

Civil society in the EU is associated with different contrasting images and takes different contradictory roles of the European polity. The EU is based on

democratic virtues and gives a great priority to divergent views and roles of civil society's activism within both the European Union and the peripheral and could be members (Kohler-Koch, 2009). Every country in the EU uses deferent policies and programs to meet their standards. More and more countries are becoming conscious about the important activism of civil society. In most countries, mainly in the western ones, there are strong active civil society organizations which through their role and strength that take up within the community characterize the democratic structure of the country (Howard, 2011).

As far as southern European countries it is concerned, a recent empirical research has revealed that by the second half of the 1980s, voluntary participation in associations increased and generated a considerable capacity for contentious action. If we compare Northern European motivation to southern European movements we can see that latter ones are more informal and decentralized in their structure. But, qualitative data have shown that southern European movements are rapidly changing with the support and sponsorship of policy norms of the European Union. This trend is quite clear in Mediterranean countries of Spain, Portugal and Greece where political parties tried to control new social movements during those countries' transition to Democracy. Luckily, with the end of Southern European dictatorships in the 1980s and 1990s this control decreased significantly, and CSOs began to emerge (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008).

Continuing the analysis on the nature and organizational structure of CSOs in the EU, and gathering data from Kohler-Koch's article "*The three worlds of European civil society*" a research question about the democratic life of the Union came forward. For some sociologists the Union lacks in democratic life. That attracted attention to the principle of *participatory democracy*, citizens' right to participate and exchange ideas on issues of the Union action publicly. In this article Kohler-Koch claims that civil society reflects democracy and the democratic added-value if different nations manage to co-exist as an organized community under the EU umbrella with common laws and regulations, interests and ambitions. In that article some questions come forward concerning the '*existing democratic deficit*' because democratic accountability is deficient lacking the sticking substance which can

connect the countries of Union. The democratic deficit is a problem causing by institutional democratic mechanisms within the EU. It is called “deficit” because the Union acts favorably towards those already functioning at nation-state level leaving some states with their citizens behind (Rumford, 2003). It is believed that the democratic deficit will remain unless the EU institutions become more democratic to all EU citizens. The EU is a political system that exerts governmental functions without having a government and making so trust in institutions a variable for the quality of democracy. As a result civil society organizations become the actors who advocate their members’ concerns showing so the efficacy of the democratic Union. In democracies CSOs can ‘stand for’ and ‘act for’ people, by prioritizing values and human rights (Kohler-Koch, 2009). It is also implied that the EU is deficient in representative democracy because the central institution, whose members are elected directly by citizens, is weaker than the member-states’ parliamentary institution. Furthermore, the referred “democratic deficit” has only latterly raised to the top of the agenda discussions showing the EU to seek to acquire a rate of democratic constitutionalism (Rumford, 2003).

In a democratic system of politics the principles of *representative* and *participatory* democracy are of outmost importance. These two principles act mutually and allow space for the inclusion of civil society in shaping EU politics. In parallel, these principles account for a rich associational life and become the base for the development of strong social movements within the society. The EU policy strongly claims that the development of civil society in European countries has helped to diminish the democratic deficit and has even built secured transnational governance. Civil society’s role is to connect the national and the supranational and furthermore to connect national society to transnational governance. The right to association offers benefits to the community as social movements and civil society organizations are forms of more democratic and less hierarchical types of governance (Della porta & Diani, 2011). It is also quite astonishing how fervently the European Commission initiates the idea of connecting European governance with its citizens through civil society organizations. The Commission plays the role of an active entrepreneur in the social construction and has made the involvement of civil society in EU governance absolutely necessary. The



Commission appoints different roles to civil society organizations in order to achieve more effective cooperation among interesting groups which wish to speak univocally and be representative too (Kohler-Koch, 2009).

From the above data it is inferred that civil society is regarded as a lever to the legitimization of public authority on a multi-level system of European governance. Because it is an independent actor it has become a key partner in development activities contributing to the national and international development for poverty reduction (Bhargava, Little, Ritchie, Clark, & Elmendorf, 2016). Historically the turn to civil society organizations started in the early 1990s and over the last decades this turn has gained momentum for the re-orientation of EU integration (Kohler-Koch, 2009). European civic space transcends national space.

A research question on how the structures of associational life and the dynamics of public sphere help or hinder the achievement of “good society” goal, comes from the studying articles of sociologist Donatella Della Porta. To her mind social movements articulate each society’s dynamic elements dealing with both society and politics. These social movements are sparked by like-minded people concerned with specific issues and search for an autonomous space from both the state and the market (Della porta & Diani, 2011). In that point the sociologist gives more emphasis on participatory democracy in contrast to representative principle as more and more people could participate in the democratic life of the EU via organized civil society organizations. Also the EU-civil society relations frame the conditions for sustainable integration. The European Parliament with the Council and the Commission promote an active European citizenship and opt for more active CSOs involvement as to ensure the future move-ahead integration. These EU institutions want people from different social and national backgrounds who live in the European continent to be grouped as European citizens, and be engaged to social activism with debates, be able to express opposing ideas, or be equally informed. In that way high hopes have been invested in civil society as a remedy to the democratic deficit of the EU with the precondition that the principles of pluralism, transparency, representativeness and accountability should foster legitimacy and trust (Kohler-Koch, 2009).

Concluding, from an analytical perspective the EU should build transnational structures of representation because it lacks 'commonality of demos'. The EU is a union of states and nations who aspire to participate in decision-making both in transnational and supranational level according to the standards of democracy. On the one hand, civil society brings invaluable feedback to the EU decision-making process because it presents the interests and values of the Europeans and voices the citizens' demands and concerns. Organized civil society gives citizens a voice to support their rights. On the other hand, civil society organizations have a voice but not a vote in order to be involved in decision-making. This makes civil society an underdeveloped lever in the governance approach, a social construction of an amorphous sphere of individuals that lacks specialized expert knowledge even though it is close to the political nerve of citizens. Civil society is made of citizens and stands by the citizens on call but what matters more is its capacity to influence governance policy for the community's welfare. Overall, in Western countries voluntary and solidarity organizations have recently become a central part of the social life. People join organizations and meet with common interest citizens who help them to expand their horizons through these public activities (Kohler-Koch, 2009).

## **2. Participatory Democracy in EU and civil society's effective role in Europe of tomorrow.**

European integration is one of the most important factors that the EU has been trying to promote for several years among member states and the would-be ones. In the EU the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament have been fostering a really active involvement of citizens on the EU governance in order to boost European integration (Della Porta & Diani, 2011). The European Commission Communication (COM 2011), which provides EU policy for development through dialogue, seeks more strengthened links with civil society organizations, social partners and local authorities. This can aid in the formation of a strong society which will lead

successfully to a dialogue with governmental authorities. COM emphasizes on some priorities that the EU should pursue for civil society's engagement with external relations. The EU should promote a well organized environment for CSOs in partner countries so as to perform their roles as independent development actors effectively. The EU through its external policy has consolidated its role as an independent actor in foreign affairs and has gained credibility to achieve international cooperation and development with its external instruments. This process can help CSOs to implement their basic purpose of helping people in need (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

The EU is the first global donor for CSOs in humanitarian crises and can effectively support countries through CSOs. The EU considers civil society organizations all those non-state, non-partisan, non-violent, not-for-profit structures articulated by people who share common ideals and objectives not only political, cultural, social but economic ones as well. These structures operate from regional-national to international, urban and rural organizations prioritizing openness and transparency for their activities among them. Furthermore, because of the awareness that many society associations have in different areas, a lot of people assume that this fact gives them more coherence to decide about different societal problems, and how to solve them effectively. At the grassroots level, numerous CSOs have successfully made a difference in people's lives being the first responders and main advocates to fulfill community's needs. It is inferred that a rich associational life can be the base for the development of strong movements which lead to autonomous civil society. An autonomous civil society can really benefit people in need and offer substantial support to society (Della Porta & Diani, 2011).

Continuing the analysis on representative and participatory democracy in the EU, representative democracy is a governmental process founded on the procedure of elections where individuals are elected by citizens to represent them (Forrester & Sunar, 2011). Even voting is the most powerful form of citizen participation however there are other democratic instruments such as public debates, public meetings, campaigns, citizens' polls, citizens' advisory committees, petitions, written notices, hotlines and 'video boxes', mailings, online forums, and score cards, that citizens or officials can use in order to enhance the public participation of policy making. Relatively to

participatory democracy and how civil society can influence the Europe of tomorrow, we see that EU's approach on CSOs revolves around two main concepts, firstly on human rights, democracy and good governance and secondly on inclusive and sustainable growth for human development. The importance that the EU gives to CSOs is obvious from the fact that civil society is welcomed and included in the global development agenda at the international level. At the national level, however, the scope for civil society action varies widely with two evident contradictory trends to surround this variance. On the positive side many governments have made explicit commitments to engage with civil society. This venture is supported in the 2030 Agenda when in September 2015 all 193 UN Members agreed to involve civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country level and in accordance with country policies (Bhargava, Little, Ritchie, Clark, & Elmendorf, 2016).

An illustrative example of the importance of governmental partnerships is the Agenda of Sustainable Development Declaration, which was signed by all the UN members in 2015 and it inquires a high cooperation between the countries. More than half of these countries which signed the 2030 Agenda have already met the eligibility criteria for OGP, which requires openness to citizen participation and engagement in policy making and governance. On the other hand, a number of governments decided to increase the restrictions on civil society's operating space and have focused on access to the funding, the registration requirements and activities of civil society. UN's Special Rapporteur on civil rights in 2014 released a report pointing that each country should bear the responsibility of multilateral institutions to protect and promote civil rights. As a result, this report compelled the EU institutions to accept their commitment with CSOs activism by giving them access and speaking rights at meetings, allowing citizen access to their documents and, where possible, financing local CSOs. This report will safeguard the existence of CSOs so as in the next 10 years civil society will be even more engaged in the articulation and implementation of national development policies and programs (Bhargava, Little, Ritchie, Clark, & Elmendorf, 2016).

### **3. European CSOs and the affecting societal trends.**

The role and impact of civil society have been being studied and analyzed through books and studies by great organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, and Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies. These studies are focused on Civil Society's perspective both globally and on the Europe in future, seeking access to a different procedure for European governance. It is sought civil society's stakeholders along with national and regional-local administrations to be able to achieve a higher standard of governance in Europe. This new-oriented process will need differently organized structures through new communicative channels engulfing players of wider social groups so as this process to be achieved. But this process can also be affected by societal trends such as Demographic changes, Economic crisis, Digitalization, weather and climate changes, populism and a shrinking civic space. We see that societal trends usually influence civic mobility and especially in recent and future years with all this influx of migrants that may continue to happen (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

It is seen in recent years that the EU along with other regions in the world face demographic changes by migration, the ageing population in combination with low birth rates, and the changing of family structures. The community of elderly people has raised, people stay healthier and live longer because of better conditions. On the other hand the EU is decreasing in young people as fertility rates have become lower leading so to shrinking working people and simultaneously an increased number of retired people. As a consequence the working population will bear a heavier burden in order to provide the social expenditure required by the ageing population. Also the changing lifestyle of the working population with irregular working hours and unstable jobs is another factor that has added to the challenges CSOs face in the EU (Divjak & Forbici, 2017). As far as migration, especially from non-EU countries, has affected CSOs' character making them more diverse and obliged to provide services to bigger and multicultural groups. Never before has been witnessed

a migrant crisis in Europe at such a degree since the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>WW. This situation calls for the development of new services and the appearance of new organizations which will be able to deliver services and to advocate the rights of migrants. Unfortunately, individual's volunteers and social movements are the ones that meet the immigrants' needs and problems (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

What has also affected the EU countries and their CSOs more or less is the recent economic crisis which started in the USA in 2008 and it then expanded in Europe. Because of this, public funding for CSOs has decreased in order to balance the budgets by cutting public services. It is also important to be stated that CSOs have become more important and their relations with authorities have been improved so as to provide support to the unemployed and the poor. Continuing with the factors that have influenced the role of CSOs it is important to see the effects of Digitalization. Digitalization has helped and facilitated a lot the direct interaction between CSOs and citizens in the EU. CSOs are endlessly trying to come to terms with the new digital world by exploring new possibilities and engaging educated people in order to meet the new needs. Contrary, all these new processes may have some negative effects on the public discourse as dialogue and in-depth discussions have lost their old dynamic of face to face contact (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

As key societal trends have affected CSOs in the EU some very important steps should be taken. First off all the legitimacy of CSOs as a bridge between institutions and citizens by the European institutions and a deep contact between people that CSOs represent should be built in non-hierarchical communication structures. Secondly a change of fundraising practices should be attempted so as CSOs be less dependent on state's economic support, they should try to find new ways to earn incomes by being inventive in their methods. CSOs try to obtain EU funding, it is clear that the EU and the European Economic Area have been important economic sources for NGOs, but the EU funding is perceived to be too complicated because of bureaucracy. That policy worries the future management of CSOs and their relationship with national authorities. The role of the EU and national institutions should encourage CSO advocacy efforts instead of limiting them and push institutions to invest on CSO new "start-ups" in the same way as

they do in business. Thirdly it is important for CSOs to develop their own new paths in order to offer support to community, to emphasize on their mission on prevention and not the alleviation of existing or emerging problems. Last but not least in importance they should promote “amateurism” for solidarity, and develop a decentralized community approach for collaboration and exchange services. In view of the emerging needs of the elderly population, migrants and other groups, CSOs are responding with different advocacy campaigns aiming at strengthening public services for the elderly, ensuring the rights of migrants, building coalitions with other organizations, social movements and individuals. All these can be achieved under fervent and ambitious leadership which will be able to cope with the constantly changing dynamics in community. It can be concluded that creative leaders are able to recognize the value that comes from engaging broadly and seeking wide participation of all stakeholders in the development initiative. For this reason it is mandatory for CSOs to actively monitor the implementation, impact and quality of services in order to see and estimate the results of their efforts for the common good (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

#### **4. What may await European CSOs in the future?**

Here is presented a future foresight for the European CSOs commenting on the challenges they are already facing and up to 2030. There are also recommended various strategies that CSOs, the EU and national decision-makers should take either to change or at least minimize the effects of negative trends that influence their mobility. They also should try to take advantage of the most positive trends. In a research question if civil society in 2030 will be more active and supportive than today, some optimistic respondents claim that the conditions under which these associations are organized will become more advanced. This advancement can be feasible through a better education, expanded CSOs due to bigger population, and a firmer democratic EU which will continue to promote civic values, human

rights, freedom of thought and speech. On the other hand, the pessimists think that the situation will be worse because of wars, the less necessity for CSOs to represent citizens as they can communicate with politicians directly, decrease of donations, and finally neo-liberalism, all these can become influential factors to the worsened situation. It is also strongly stated by both side respondents that financial problems, politics, demographic changes, social events, decrease of volunteers and digitalization have become the most influential factors. As for the future, respondents stated that new technologies (digitalization, social networks), economy, political crisis, demographic changes (especially migration), weather/climate changes, public image of CSOs et. al. are factors that will influence CSO's activism as a whole, in the next years and up to 2030 (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

Generally speaking, the survival of CSOs in the future can mostly depend on the increased social innovation and the improvement of their existing services. CSOs should use innovative ideas and follow new-action paths in the future. By looking only what they have done in the past does not help them to proceed and be successful in the future. They should re-invent their mission as fervently community supporters by offering actual help to sufferers instead of treating them as passive recipients of charity. It is also important to intensify their activities towards rapidly arising risks when need comes in an unstable policy environment. They should be actively against elite career politicians on the one hand, and fight against elitism of CSOs on the other hand. Because politicians are regarded to work for the public good and serve communities, for this reason CSOs should be encouraged to be engaged in politics parallel to politicians. By doing so they will cultivate trustfulness of their actions and this will attract more individual donations which are absolutely necessary for their existence (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

Actually from studies in social science, we do not know how CSOs will be in twenty or thirty years. Our experience from the past tells us that CSOs will have to adapt to new things so as they will be able to exist and play the role of the civil society actor. For this to happen, hard work is necessary to organize massive voice in public through CSOs activism which will help citizens' participation more openly. Moreover EU institutions should activate all available mechanisms in order to address EU legislation of fundamental rights



in member states. The EU, national institutions and CSOs should further cooperate and show European solidarity, if and when civic space is under threat in any member states and not only. Actually the EU institutions, and especially the European Commission, should develop new mechanisms for funding, trust, transparency, accountability, citizen participation, freedom of speech et.al, and all of them would help CSOs to tackle the issue of shrinking civic space (Forrester & Sunar, 2011). Finally, it is known from studies that the EU has developed various complimentary instruments to support CSOs. One example is the European Institution for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which finances projects to promote the role of CSOs in order to remain strong in democratic governance and limit the state power. This support boosted CSO support in public life and has reduced poverty especially in remote places. All in all, the EU is the main donor for CSOs in partner countries, and more importantly it offers half of the world's official development assistance (Divjak & Forbici, 2017),(Forrester & Sunar, 2011). The EU has adopted an Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy which has addressed to civil society space giving so a crucial role to civil society to operate independently. This process shows the EU's support to civil society beyond traditional development projects but a shift to participation in public life as actors of governance. Generally, CSOs play a key role in promoting the culture and values of democratic governance (Divjak & Forbici, 2017).

## **FOURTH CHAPTER**

### **1. A new process of governance in the EU where civil society state-holders and regional-local administrations seek a better standard of politics.**

The European Union is a political construction founded on the principles of the democratic law on the one hand and of liberty, freedom and Respect for

Human Rights (RHR) on the other. The most prevailing principle appears to be citizens' right of forming associations to serve common purposes and participating actively in society. A powerful European civil society acts as EU's mirror which depicts the democratic image of the EU construction. This situation helps to win the confidence of non-members and the candidate countries citizens (Rumford, 2003). Globalization has also helped to the creation of a transnational 'level' of civil society and in some way it added to the development of new forms of public life. Because of globalization transnational actors got empowered to debate about regional and global issues. More importantly citizens were facilitated to participate in the decision-making processes either locally, provincially, nationally or even internationally and particularly in countries in transition (Forrester & Sunar, 2011).

The aim of EU integration for countries also offers CSOs a great opportunity to support citizens' participation in the decision-making process. Citizens' participation brings people and government closer. This practice enables citizens to set policy goals and priorities, oversee politicians' and administrators' actions but makes politicians accountable for their actions. Also the process of citizens' participation helps community to express itself by emphasizing on society's needs and problems, and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of implementing policy (Forrester & Sunar, 2011). The process of sharing information and getting involved in the decision making acts as a guide for potential member states to comply with the laws and regulations to these of the EU allowing CSOs to monitor their law abidance and can identify if they contribute effectively. An important factor is that civil society is not seen as a manageable and controlled lever, but as a governmental partner. Civil society's parallel way to the state and the economy, can contribute a lot to European integration. A well organized civil society can fight against people's exclusion and keep society well informed about social, economic, health and other events of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC). The EU governance requires well-organized civil society participation that has the potential to generate rapid economic growth and increased 'social exclusion (Rumford, 2003).

Civil society can reinforce its leading role and counter the democratic deficit in the EU as the EU fosters consultation with CSOs and provides

support for the consultation. CSOs usually offer options and experiences on citizens' participation and this can bring added-value to the policy reformation process (Forrester & Sunar, 2011). It is emphasized that in the "network Europe" governance involves an interaction of multiple exercise power levels, and the involvement of (NGA) non-governmental actors in the policy-making process. This 'network Europe' of governance consists of a partnership between EU institutions, national governments, regional and local authorities and civil society interacting in new ways of issues (Rumford, 2003). Citizen participation in the EU Member States and the would-be Members is seen as a fundamental action resulting in good governance. Consequently, civil society's strength can secure good governance both transnational and within a 'network Europe' (Rumford, 2003).

## **2. CSOs and their relations with national and EU institutions.**

The likelihood of the EU to become more democratic in the future arouses a debatable discussion. In this writing the discourses of governance, citizenship and democracy of European civil society dominate in the idea of a unitary social order. The regular coexistence of a European Civil Society, citizenship, democratic governance is a fundamental precondition and should exist and work as a functional unity. For this reason civil society stands against the threat of both fragmentation and division within the EU. Civil society can act as a mechanism against the threat of fragmentation and division of a cohesive EU (Rumford, 2003). European integration can be secured within the field of an (OCS) organized civil society. Voluntary associations, citizen protest groups, people's initiatives and similar organizations are closely contacted in the European countries, and expand their missions and their orientation beyond the borders of their nation states. They have been engaged in mobilizing and organizing events and campaigns across countries and in that way they show what they can achieve if they are united (Lahusen, Kousis, Zschache, & Loukakis, 2018). The integration of the EU can possibly create the preconditions of transnational organizations to

form a type of transnational governance. European governance is more than an establishment of citizenship and rights regime through nationally sponsored moves. European governance requires the creation of new constituencies of European NGOs, citizens' groups, and other actors which co-opt in the *business* of governing of Europe. This can generate fresh momentum for European integration and can help advance genuinely European solutions to possible European problems (Forrester & Sunar, 2011).

In this survey it has been identified the need of more powerful dynamics to knit the European transnational society within a global frame for a better governance and democracy in Europe. The EU governance has been stimulated by the willingness of multi-level governance models for EU integration but the incorporation of different regional, national and supranational groups can be impossible for an actual EU integration. The prevailing thought on EU governance demands a high priority to pan-European partnerships between the Commission and the (OCS) organized civil society. The Commission's interest in securing the services of civil society in regulating and managing a European space has been to encourage the institution of a formal European civil society (Rumford, 2003).

### **3 Concluding remarks emphasizing on the more awoken Greek civil society and the legitimization and usefulness of NGOs along with informal networks.**

From studies it can be concluded that in Southern Europe civil society organizations have become stronger in recent times and especially after the consolidation of (ND) new democracy in northern Mediterranean countries. Also after their accession into the EU and their consolidation within the EU, the southern European national organizations have shown a remarkable development (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008). However formal civil organizations in southern Europe, especially in Greece, seem to be not well

equipped as far skillful staff and members and their bases of resources if they are compared to Northern European CSOs. All in all comparative civic analyses document that Southern Europe CSOs have grown fast because of national governments' support and EU' sponsorship (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008).

Comparing Greece with other European countries we see that there is great diversity as far as civil society and voluntary organizations is concerned. Greece, for example, does not have either strong or old civil society group, actually the first wave of society groups was around the seventies, and after the nineties with the environmental movement that was motivated by the EU funds. It is also obvious that the level of protest over an issue varies according to the importance of the problem in each area, but in contrast political issues seem to be the most fervent factors in mobilizing people. Environmental organizations in Britain, Germany and Sweden show that they are well-established with autonomous resources of income and with significant state sponsorship. Germany has got well established civil society organizations, with a high level of activism into the public and political spheres. In contrast these organizations are poorly endowed in southern Europe but surprisingly enough they have good contact with national governments, and especially those of the EU which offer them financial support. In Greece civil society organizations are mainly dependent on the EU because the Greek State does not have a powerful economy with surpluses that can go to charity (Kousis, Della Porta, & Jimenez, 2008).

Looking at social mobilization in Greece, we see that the economic crisis since 2008 in combination with the inflow of refugees during 2015 and 2016 might have led to a gradual increase in civil society groups and direct solidarity actions in Greece. Nevertheless, the national contexts remain more important than the organizational profiles. Civic groups from Germany may be more actively represented among the transnational arena when they are compared to Greece. As it has mentioned above, the organizational field in Greece remains less formal with fewer professionalized outspoken groups able to follow a contentious approach (Lahusen, Kousis, Zschache, & Loukakis, 2018).

The social and economic crises which have affected the EU states, and Greece in particular, have not only led to a considerable growth in Greek organized civil society but have also led organizations to transnational activism. The different groups have a lot of differences but also similarities that is why we need to compare them and understand which factors push them to deal with transnational solidarity activism. In fact, civil society organizations might benefit from engaging in solidarity activities by having the opportunity to contact with EU institutions and agencies, and/or from membership of European associations and platforms. We know from research that the EU-level allows civil society organizations to get their opinions heard across Europe, and also pressure the national governments. EU-associations and networks could also find ways to get the funding needed that will replace the lack of adequate domestic support structures.

As discussed in this document, during the past two decades the establishment of more democracy and democratic rights around the world has pushed CSOs and citizens to participate in the policy making processes and monitor government performance paths. We observe that the CSOs have surprisingly increased and their activities as well. Studies on civil society have shown that CSOs can play an influential role in setting and implementing public policy agendas across the globe. To a great extent CSOs advocate principles and policies of transparency and accountability within the community. Also scholars of social movement support that citizens have been demanding a direct interaction with the elected officials in order to know the result of government programs and actions. This citizens' demand has been feasible within newly established democracies, maybe an impossible process in an undemocratic world (Berthin, 2011).

As an oversight mechanism, CSOs are able to create new effective ways of accountability and can also impel more oversight mechanisms for better governance and an effective public service delivery. The hopeful fact is that in western democratic countries the political parties have started to cooperate with civil society to formulate a government policy. This trend can lead to the allocation of political responsibilities to more involved citizens, allowing their participation in politics more and developing new mechanisms for consultation, dialogue, oversight and monitoring. However, in non-democratic

countries, civil society's efforts pushing people to participate in local or regional governance for greater openness and monitoring is still the norm (Berthin, 2011).

Generally speaking this paper sheds light on the emphasis that should be given on civil society's strength in order to demand greater governmental accountability towards society. We also fervently centered our analysis on civil society initiatives in many social topics related to education, health, poverty reduction and service delivery. Also other key areas such as the environment, political accountability, and financing poverty have been to the interest of this study.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper the main goal was to center the analysis and research on the area of Greek Civil Society as part of a European Civil society. Using studies of literature review in social science and following research paths on civil society initiatives we managed to carry out this dissertation project shedding light on the way how the Greek community understands and communicates the concept of CSOs.

In a great number of articles it has been written that civil society organizations are weaker in Southern European countries comparatively to the northern ones. It has also referred at the beginning of this report that the same happens with Greek civil society organizations. This weakness can be explained by the overbearing authoritarian state during the Junta and post-authoritarian period in Northern Mediterranean countries. The impact of that political situation has lead political participation to be weakly representative in both Southern Europe and Greece. If political parties are few and strong in a state with sound influence, then civil society remains weak and unable to develop a strong activism. We may characterize the Democracy in Greece as party-centered process where the parties tend to be very strongly involved in the welfare state.

In general, civil society can be an evocative player and be actively involved in programs and policy-making in the public and private sector locally and globally. Civil society is a formation of organizations and associations with voluntary groups which univocally voice people's demands in the EU multi-level system. More importantly it has become an instrumental lever to countries' harmonization and approximation to EU rules and norms. CSOs have become vehicles for immediate EU strategic aims and are aligned with the overall EU strategic objectives adopting projects oriented to EU harmonization.

However the EU civil support should be more effective despite the notable EU policy improvements in recent years. EU civil society should make better value for money, be more politically effective and more closely aligned with strategic aims. To put it in a nutshell a more effective civil society support



entails EU leaders and member-state ministers to show their political voluntarism to prioritize civil society cooperation to a greater degree and defending civil society more unequivocally.

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