

FIFTY SHADES OF GROTESQUE: ANTI-AUSTERITY
MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AFTER 2008

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ABSTRACT

FIFTY SHADES OF GROTESQUE: ANTI-AUSTERITY MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AFTER 2008

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The aim of this thesis is to examine the anti-austerity protests that took place in seven European Union countries in the post-2008 Global Economic Crisis by bringing together the Social Movements literature and the Bakhtinesque concepts of grotesque and carnivalesque. The main argument of the thesis is that, from a Bakhtinesque perspective, grotesque and carnivalesque symbols are used similarly in these anti-austerity protests in Europe, despite different regional, cultural and economic elements. In the thesis, a photographic analysis will be carried out on Bakhtin's theories, social movements literature and the findings of the cases discussed, and finally a general discussion will be carried out on three main themes obtained eventually in the conclusion part. Considering the Bakhtin literature and the Social Movements literature together will provide an understanding of the connection between the behavior patterns revealed in the protests and the folk culture. Furthermore, this would also assist in grasping the relationship between the strategy, motivation and emotions of the participants and the Bakhtinesque concepts.

Keywords: Grotesque and Carnavalesque, Bakhtin, Anti-Austerity Movements, Social Movements, Europe

ÖZ

GROTESKİN ELLİ TONU: 2008 SONRASI AVRUPA'DA KEMER SIKMA KARŞITI HAREKETLER

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Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler

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Bu tezin amacı, Sosyal Hareketler literatürü ile Mihail Bakhtinci grotest ve karnavalesk kavramlarını birlikte ele alarak, 2008 Küresel Ekonomik Krizi sonrası dönemde, yedi Avrupa Birliği ülkesinde gerçekleşen kemer-sıkma karşıtı protestoları incelemektir. Tezin ana argümanı, Bakhtinci bir perspektiften grotesk ve karnavalesk sembollerin farklı bölgesel, kültürel ve ekonomik unsurlara rağmen, Avrupa'daki bu kemer-sıkma karşıtı protestolarda benzer şekilde kullanılmış olduğudur. Tezde, Bakhtin'in teorileri, sosyal hareketler literatürü ve ele alınan vakaların bulguları üzerinden bir fotoğraf analizi gerçekleştirilecek ve sonuç bölümünde ortaya çıkan üç ortak tema üzerinden genel bir tartışma yürütülecektir. Bakhtin literatürü ile Sosyal Hareketler literatürünün birlikte ele alınması, protestolarda ortaya çıkarılan davranış biçimleri ile halk kültürü arasındaki bağlantının anlaşılmasına ve katılımcıların stratejileri, motivasyonları ve duyguları ile Bakhtinci kavramlar arasındaki bağlantının anlaşılmasını sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Grotesk ve Karnavalesk, Bahtin, Kemer-Sıkma Karşıtı Protestolar, Sosyal Hareketler, Avrupa



Dik durabilen insanlara...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social Movements is a subject frequently studied by different disciplines of social sciences due to the potential impact they have created in the past and may create in the future. In this respect, Social Movements are defined as an interdisciplinary field of study, and are examined at individual, national and international levels of analysis. The studies that are based on the individual characteristics of the movement participants are generally carried out in the fields of Sociology and Social Psychology in order to make sense of the emotions and motivations of the participants, while the studies on the political, identity-related, and historical reasons for the emergence of social movements are mostly considered within the limits of Political Science. Studies examining the connection of social movements with the structural factors in the global system and the transnational characteristics of movements can further be detected in studies from the field of International Relations.

In this thesis, the anti-austerity protests that arose in Europe in the period after the 2008 Global Economic Crisis will be discussed through the theoretical approach built by the Russian linguist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), specifically on his concepts of *grotesque* and *carnavalesque*. In particular, the connection between Bakhtin's theories and social movements literature will be analyzed through the anti-austerity protests in seven different European countries in the post-2008 period. The seven European countries covered in the scope of the thesis are Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Romania, and Greece. The main argument reads that, as it

could be presented from a Bakhtinesque universalist perspective, despite having different aims and cultural backgrounds, in protests against austerity in seven different countries selected among the European Union members, ordinary and universal images were frequently used by the participants. Thus, grotesque and carnivalesque elements came forward in these symbols. The concept of ‘universality’ here is obviously confined within the already limited differences between seven European Union countries but still serves a valid point of comparison.

This thesis aims to create different approaches in the Political Science and International Relations literature and to present a new field of study by examining the grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in social movements. Emotions and humor phenomena are indirectly related to the subject of this thesis and are among the topics that the literature accumulated in the last few years has frequently focused on. However, most emotions and humor studies overlook the grotesque and carnivalesque elements that Bakhtin attributes to the French writer François Rabelais (1494-1553). The basic assumption here is that social movements have not lost their essence in folk culture and still contain grotesque and carnivalesque elements from this culture. Examining these elements will enable us to learn about social movements' nature, mobilization, and evolution.

The first part will give a general background of the social movements literature. Anti-austerity protests began to gain ground in the literature after the 2008 Global Crisis in a broad sense; however, the development of social movements literature began roughly from the 1960s. Therefore, in this section, the historical background of social movements studies will be presented chronologically from the 1960s, and then the anti-austerity movements will be emphasized. This section will examine various conceptual approaches, theories, social movement categorizations, and

current debates in the social movements literature. Then, the thesis will focus on anti-austerity protests and analyze their place in the existing literature, and their relationship with other types of social movements.

Bakhtin's theoretical approach will be summarized in the second part of the study. Firstly, after presenting an analysis of the connection of the act of laughing and humor with the concepts of grotesque and carnivalesque, the further related definitions will be presented within the framework of the concepts of grotesque, the grotesque body, and the meaning and characteristics of carnivalesque. Afterwards, a discussion will take place on how the grotesque and carnivalesque can be included in the literature of social movements, in particular with regards to the anti-austerity movements.

Humor and laughter provide theoretical explanations since these concepts are necessary for understanding the nature of carnivals and the grotesque body. Laughter is not limited to moments of happiness and contentment. Laughter has been used as a response developed against fear and the source of fear/authority and as a strategy to subdue it since ancient times. This thesis establishes a relationship between carnival squares and squares where contemporary social movements take place; between carnivalesque elements and banners in these social movements; between the concept of the grotesque body and the integral appearance of protesters; and between grotesque elements and the behaviors/patterns of protesters. In the last section of the chapter on theory, examples are provided to illustrate how the use of humor in social movements has become grotesque.

The third part of the study will include an explanation of the methodology and case selection. This section aims to explain two main questions. First, the reasons for

selecting the cases and countries will be explained. Here, it is intended to specifically clarify which individual, group, or political figures the protests are directed against and to examine what benefits or outcomes result from the protests in each country. Understanding the selected countries' internal political dynamics and historical background will also help to understand the characteristic structure of anti-austerity protests. The use of photographic analysis in Social Sciences and how it is used in this thesis will also be explained in the second part of the methodology section.

In the analysis section of the thesis, fifty individual photographs selected from the anti-austerity protests will be presented within the framework of Bakhtin's theory in terms of grotesque and carnivalesque elements, and the common themes and differences in these photographs will be discussed afterwards. Grotesque and carnivalesque elements, which are similar in purpose and content, are explained in the first part of the analysis section. In line with Bakhtin's theoretical approach, grotesque and carnivalesque symbolism types are sought in the anti-austerity movements in seven European countries after 2008. Then, the encountered symbols were classified into six distinct categories. Consequently, a more systematic analysis will take place to identify grotesque and carnivalesque qualities according to their similarities and differences, while examining social processes through the lenses of Bakhtin.

In the conclusion part, in parallel with the result of the analysis carried out in the fourth chapter, the link between Bakhtin's theory and the anti-austerity movements literature will be re-examined, and the main argument of the thesis will be discussed once again. It will be evaluated what kind of contribution the thesis can offer to other studies in the literature through the subject of grotesque and carnivalesque symbolism in anti-austerity protests discussed in the thesis. The limitations of the

thesis, its scope, and how it can be expanded in future research will all be assessed at the end.





CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In the first half of the twentieth century, studies on social movements were generally limited to studies conducted by sociologists and political scientists. With the effect of new concepts and theories that entered the literature since the late 1960s, discussions in social movements studies had accelerated; in the 1990s, the impact of globalization along with the emergence of neo-liberalism and anti-globalization movements had brought new units of analysis and theoretical approaches to field studies.

2.1. Definition and Scope

An extensive literature, such as social movements studies, it is difficult to come up with a single or precise definition that everyone agrees on. Although people in many different parts of the world have protested in order to change the things they were not satisfied with history since the 1960s, more idea-based, freedom and social rights-based Civil Rights Movements emerged in the USA. However, the social movements that developed in Europe had ideological and class reasons at their root, and the European Workers' Movements are considered mostly state-oriented social movements (Chesters & Welsh, 2011, 2).

In order to make sense of social movements, the concepts of 'protest' and 'conflict' should primarily be analyzed. According to Alain Touraine, even if individuals can define precisely what they are reacting to in situations such as currents of ideas, cultural innovations, and social panics, not all social movements in which they are involved can be defined as 'conflict' because it requires a clear

definition of the circumstances on where and what opponents have fought or negotiated over (Touraine, 1985, 750) Touraine defines three forms of conflict as follows: (Touraine, 1985, 750-755)

- (i) Conflicts in which there is a competitive pursuit of collective interests – a situation of conflict occurs when individuals or groups are opposed in a market to maximize their interests and profit;
- (ii) Conflicts in which the occupier instigates the conflict as a result of a sense of threat to their values, and in the process, a new social, cultural, and political identity is constructed;
- (iii) Conflicts that are aimed towards the change of the system in place and its rules.

Accordingly, conflicts do not have to be a zero-sum game and can include some that align with the interests of two or more sides, in which “class” conflicts, conflicts of political institutions, or intellectual divergences occur over cultural orientations (Touraine, 1985, 750-756).

While Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani agree that social movements can also be understood as representations of particular values, they also have the potential to attempt to alter social norms and orders fundamentally (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 66). However, there should be a distinction established between the terms social movement and protest. Protest is, above all, a political tool for the weak and a way of waging war in which bodies, identities, and discourses are employed against the ruling class or the object of one's opposition (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 165-166). Contrarily, social movements do not include protests as the only strategy only or protest is not a method used only by social movement activists (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 168).

Della Porta and Diani assert that social movements are distinct social processes that allow actors to engage in collective action and consist of three fundamental components (2006, 20-21): actors, who work to inspire others in line to bring about social, political, and cultural change; ongoing coordination within informal networks with other organized individuals and structures; and a distinct and specific collective identity.

A social movement's fundamental component is the existence of a shared identity, and members of that identity work together in non-institutional methods to achieve a common objective (Giugni&Grasso, 2020, 135). Although it does not entirely align with his definitions of informal networks and non-institutional paths, Charles Tilly has a similar perspective on the conflictual aspects of movements in his concept of social movement. Accordingly, social movements are created by synthesizing three fundamental components that need to be identified (Tilly et al, 2022, 32-34).

- (i) A campaign for social action brings together a group of people with similar demands, the objects being demanded, and a large number of people who are aware of the aspirations from the outside. Through the shift from a single action to a series of actions alongside engagement with the general public, a campaign can develop into a social movement.
- (ii) Social Movement Repertoire: For a social movement to emerge, people must band together, and the united group must then be capable of holding protests, demonstrations, and other mass gatherings.
- (iii) "WUNC" (Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment): Organized individuals must adhere to regulations and make sacrifices on their behalf. The establishment of a social movement depends on self-sacrifice and rules like appropriate behavior, decent dressing, the usage of flags, costumes, or emblems in unison and harmony, the density of social movements, and the ability to carry on inclement weather.

Social movements, in general, are a type of movement organized against established rules and dominant cultural values, in which clearly recognizable dissident people congregate and cause a form of social conflict (Touraine, 1985, 772).

Della Porta and Diani proposed four distinct categories of questions for the methodological analysis of social movements (2006, 5-6):

- (i) When the changes in cultural, daily, and political life that have taken place in the global system since the 1960s are evaluated as structural changes, we shall be able to understand their consequences on social movements and conflicts. Can social movements be viewed as conflict expressions, and how do structural changes impact these conflict aspects? This type of questioning allowed for the creation of several social movement classifications.
- (ii) What roles do cultural factors play in identifying social problems, and how do we move from recognizing a social problem to taking collective action? The question of the source of social movement cultures and values is one question pattern in this category that is significantly more important for the scope of this thesis. The thesis will contend that Bakhtin's conceptions of grotesque and carnivalesque can be used to build a different viewpoint on social movements, cultures, and values.
- (iii) What are the alternative solutions to the difficulties experienced at the beginning and the end of collective action, and what are the organizations' impacts and solutions of identity, symbol, and emotion to these challenges?
- (iv) The more crucial question is: How and why are protest tactics and strategies evolving? How might social, cultural, and political conditions influence a movement's likelihood of success? Additionally, why and how does the level of communal violence vary between protests? The importance of humor at the level of protest tactics and strategies will be significant within the context of this thesis. Numerous studies especially examine the impact of humor on emotions and mobilization in the social movement literature.

2.2. Historical Development and Categorization of Social Movement Studies

In order to make sense of the various types and approaches in social movements, it is necessary to take into account the development and structural changes in the world since the early 1960s and analyze the effects of these changes on the causes of the formation of social movements and the forms of mobilization. As a result, this section will analyze the emergence of chronologically different types of social movements, the content of new theories and methodologies that were developed alongside them, and the structural changes in the global system.

Although there are various opinions and discussions on the topic, The four distinct types of social movements proposed by Donatella della Porta in her study *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism Back Into Protest Analysis* are generally acknowledged in the literature. It will be much simpler to conduct a literature study using the table that Della Porta prepared, which provides an overview of the different kinds of social movements that have taken place within the past seventy years.

	Old Social Movements	New Social Movements	Global Justice Movements	Anti-austerity Movements
Social Basis	Industrial Workers	New Middle Class	Class coalitions	The precariat
Norms	Universal Class Identity	Single issue identities	Plural identities	The citizens
Organization	Hierarchical	Participated network	Deliberative models	Direct democracy

Table 2.1. Categorization of Social Movements (Della Porta, 2015)

2.3. Old and New Social Movements

Old and new social movements are differentiated by the bases of their participants, their values or demands, and the structure of their movement organization. It is crucial to include the structural changes in the global system into the analysis, which is the most important factor affecting these three elements in the distinction between the old and the new.

2.4. Old Social Movements

The old concept of social movements refers to the idea that the working class collectively created social movements as a result of the production processes. It is discussed in a discourse on how capitalism was distributed globally, how the modern capitalist state was formed, and how to fight back against the institutional apparatus of the ruling class (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 126). Identity was a significant notion for activists and interpreters of previous social movements (Tilly et al., 2022, 141). Old social movements include working-class movements that occurred in the twentieth century and social movements that developed within industrialized societies at the end of the nineteenth century (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 127). Workers are the main actors in conflicts and can be distinguished from today's participants by characteristics like their skills in organizing and ability to mobilize, as well as the homogeneity components brought about by sharing the same jobs and workplaces (Della Porta, 2017, 457). The working class, the primary actor in the old social movements, seeks to overthrow the political establishment and establish a new one.

2.5. New Social Movements

Political organizations that were independent of labor unions, student uprisings that began in France in May 1968, student movements in countries like Germany, England, and Mexico, women's organizations, and environmental movements all

occurred between the late 1960s and the early 1970s (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 1). While old social movements emerged during public holidays, celebrations, or special events; new social movements could occur at any time and condition (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 169). Theoretical frameworks like Marxism and structural functionalism suitable for old social movements are starting to fall short in the face of current movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 6). The belief that previous social movements are now over and new social movements are beginning to develop is the result of many social upheavals in the post-1968 world (Tilly et al., 2022, 140).

The terminology of "New Social Movements" and the literature were initially introduced by Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci. Touraine contends that by the 1970s, protests by ethnic minorities, women's rights protests with significant female participation, protests in response to urban crises, and anti-war protests had broken apart from the previous social movements (Touraine, 1985, 773). Although the old social movements' primary goal was to topple the power, they opposed political reason and the desire to establish a new order; more culturally-inclined protests have started to arise in new social movements. The idea of "new" was introduced into the literature in response to criticism that the Marxist paradigm was unable to study this new phenomenon because now, in addition to the working class, women, students, and groups perceived as marginal actors also took to the streets (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 127). Touraine believed new social movements had a tendency and a desire to overthrow bureaucratic hegemony (Tilly et al., 2022, 141). Touraine contends that new social movements are less socio-political and more socio-cultural than their historical counterparts, constrained in their scope of influence and intellectual capacity (Touraine, 1985, 778-780). Alberto Melucci claims that the fundamental theoretical question of the social movements of the 1970s should be related to

whether a new class conflict has emerged in advanced capitalist societies. In this context, it is also necessary to address the question of how the new structures of collective action forms are related to capitalism (Melucci, 1980, 201). In the 1970s, new analytical tools like the *Collective Behavior Theory*, the idea of *Post-Materialism*, and the *Resource Mobilization Theory* were created in order to address these concerns.

Collective Behavior Theory focuses on the impact of the concept of "symbolic production" in shaping the conditions that create collective action and new identities (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 29). Researchers such as Touraine and Melucci considered the post-1970 period as a process of social transformation and defined the social conflicts and movements that occurred in this period, which they referred to as the post-industrial society (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 62). What is meant by symbolic conflict and symbolic production is not a conflict originating from the means of production as in the past, but the occurrence of conflicts aimed at breaking the domination of cultural production (Touraine, 1985, 774). In other words, the masses of people, intellectual and cultural, constitute a protest square against linguistic and social lifestyles (Touraine, 1985, 778). Therefore, the new movements are considered a model movement that mobilizes every individual and group directly impacted by the cultural manipulations which aim to homogenize their lifestyles (Melucci, 1980, 219).

The "new middle class" concept is one of the theories put forth in recent years, and it should be considered alongside post-materialism. The origins of these two concepts can be traced to the emergence of new middle classes and the development of new value systems as a result of the expansion of welfare services after the 1970s, the establishment of welfare states, the ease of access to education, and the increase

in population density across cultures (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 124). Since the 1970s, changes in the social system as a result of factors like the transition from the conveyor belt system in production systems to automated technological systems, the formation of small working groups, changes in the service sector, the disappearance of the proximity of the neighborhoods where the working class lived the entry of women into the workforce - these have disrupted the working class' homogeneous structure and weakened the class system (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 38-40). With the participation of people with a high level of education, such as doctors and attorneys, into the old concept of a 'middle-class individual,' the middle class has then grown and evolved into a more heterogeneous structure (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 39). Unlike workers' movements, the participants of these new movements are not motivated by material gain; instead, they seek to limit the growth of government intervention and preserve their privacy in order to avoid the intrusion of political will into their daily lives (Della Porta, 2017, 457). This new type of conflict is not between the industrial working class and state power anymore; instead, it is a confrontation between groups who have divergent opinions regarding the utilization of cognitive and symbolic resources as well as the development of ideas (Della Porta, 2017, 457).

Ronald Inglehart's two famous essays, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies" (1971) and "Modernization and Postmodernization Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies" (1997), are based on Touraine's studies. Inglehart discusses the change under the discourse of transition from materialist values to post-materialist values. He argues that with the increase in social welfare (in Western societies), human life and mindset have also changed; with the reliable distribution of wealth through the state

channel, for the first time in history, large masses of people have grown up with the idea that survival can be underestimated (Inglehart, 1997, 32). In line with the results of the surveys conducted in Western societies since 1970, the materialist norms created by the industrial society, that is, the idea of seeing economic development and wealth as the highest priority has been replaced by giving priority to the ideas of identity and individual freedom in post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1997, 32). For example, in contrast to the options for increasing public participation and defending free speech, which corresponds to the post-materialist ideals of contemporary man, the options for upholding the national order and combating price increases were values held by earlier generations (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 69). This is the rationale behind the inclusion of environmental movements, organizations founded by marginalized groups like the *LGBT* community, or movements started by women in the new social movements that aim to reject post-materialist and materialist principles.

The Resource Mobilization Theory was developed in the 1970s because of American sociologists' claims that individuals could participate in social movements and actions by making informed decisions and accounting for their interests. In this context, the formed collectivities merged their resources and sparked a conflict (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, 14-16). Instead of focusing on "why" social movements occur, Resource Mobilization Theory's fundamental strategy asks "how" they form and how to organize them successfully (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 7-8). Resource mobilization theorists contend that in this situation, participants who organize social actions are rational and participate by considering costs and benefits (Jenkins, 1983, 528). Additionally, conflicts of interest influence the primary objective of social movements, and new social movements with institutionalized structures can deploy

their resources (Jenkins, 1983, 528). However, the additional formal connections, networks, and other strategic elements that these movements logically construct are equally crucial to their success (Jenkins, 1983, 528). As it considers political thinking and economic calculations rather than the emotions and psychological dispositions of the participants, it also focuses on other factors that may benefit social movements, such as relationships with the media, connections with other organizations, and the pursuit of fundraising (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, 1212-1213).

2.6. Global Justice Movements

Since the 1980s, the term "globalization" has gained popularity and frequently denotes a neoliberal configuration of international markets. According to David Harvey, the best method to improve human well-being is to release each individual's entrepreneurial abilities and freedoms inside an institutional framework based on substantial private property rights, free markets, and free trade. In his own words, "the state's responsibility is to establish and then uphold an appropriate institutional structure for these behaviors" (Harvey, 2015, 10). Since the state's limited ability prevents it from intervening more since doing so would have a disruptive effect on the market, it maintains open borders, delegates regulation to multinational corporations, and must stay away from programs like tariffs/quotas. At first glance, this economic-political transformation, which seemed to be an application that would reduce the conflict between the state and the individual, has been pointing in the opposite direction for the last forty years and has placed this new approach and policies of the state in the main target of social movements. In other words, neoliberal policies and the new state model, which serves as its apparatus, are the targets of the new global movements referred to as both "global justice movements" and "anti-austerity movements."

Global justice movements are, by definition, global formations and comprise all of the responses to a given issue from people from various cultural and geographic backgrounds. However, transnational movements are not a phenomenon that occurred for the first time with global justice movements. There are two main approaches to studying international social movements. While the first generation of transnational movements included class-based social movements like the labor movement that occurred before the 1970s and social movements like the women's movement, the environmental movement, and the peace movement that occurred in the 1970s, the second generation of global movements' central organizational structure is much more passive, does not follow old social movement norms, and individual participation is much less prevalent (Chester & Welsh, 2011, 88-89).

Bennett describes the 1999 Seattle Protests, one of the critical events in establishing the global justice movements literature, as a social technology tale in terms of the interaction between the growth of technology and social movement organizations (Bennett, 2005, 205). In other words, the growth of technology and communication infrastructure has significantly increased the range of individual organizations and group activities that will take place in the global justice movements. Nevertheless, the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle between November 30 and December 3, 1999, are recognized as the movement's genesis (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 133). According to Della Porta, the primary distinction between the New Social Movements paradigm and the global justice movements is that the latter emerged from the coming together of a much more diverse community than the former, in a coalition of people with various social occupations, the unemployed, and both younger and older generations (Della Porta, 2015, 36). Moreover, contrary to previous analyses, transnational group dynamics in

global justice movements had taken the role of national analyses (Bennett, 2005, 213).

This later idea is opposed by the Political Opportunity Theory, which asserts that social movements are shaped by the political and institutional frameworks within which they operate. In this light, global justice movements are movements in which scale shifts have taken place and should be examined by elevating them from national analysis to global analysis (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 134). Simply put, despite the fact that the global justice movements are transnational in nature, its participants are aware of a political opportunity position at the national level. Della Porta disagrees with this assertion, arguing that insufficient consideration has been given to the analyses of the Political Opportunity Theory in post-2000 global movements, citing the example that even the left parties, which some people have historically viewed as allies of the protesters in the global justice movements can turn into rivals (Della Porta, 2017, 454).

2.7. Anti-Austerity Movements

The post-2008 Global Crisis era saw the most overt manifestation of anti-austerity movements, a general expression of protest actions with widespread participation in many regions worldwide. Anti-austerity protests started to take off after the emergence of demonstrators in New York's *Zuccotti Park* on September 17, 2011, and in Spain on May 15, 2011, that will subsequently be known as the *15-M Indignados* (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 135). Following the 2008 Global Crisis, anti-austerity demonstrations spread across the globe as a result of governments' cuts to public spending and budgets, restrictions on social assistance, health care costs, and

other public opportunities, and, most significantly, an increase in layoffs as a result of precautionary and budgetary measures. The 2008 Global Crisis fundamentally contradicted the neoliberal theory of limited market involvement; since most neoliberal states, including the United States, gave financial aid to businesses hit by the crisis. The states attempted to save giant firms and made public resources pay for this, infuriating people worldwide. The states withheld similar aid and subsidies from individuals to preserve the neoliberal market's operation (Harvey, 2015). The phrase "*We are the 99 percent*" that appeared at Zuccotti Park came to represent the people who refused to save the money that had been amassed by the top one percent of the world's population. This fury essentially serves as the definition of anti-austerity movements. Anti-austerity movements can basically be defined as a result of this outrage.

In this context, the relationship between global justice movements and anti-austerity movements, the structural factors influencing the formation of anti-austerity movements, the similarities, and the differences between participants in old and new social movements, are some of the crucial topics of discussion in the current literature.

First, global justice movements can be seen as the predecessor of anti-austerity movements, or - anti-austerity movements can be interpreted as a continuation of the movements that occurred in the late 1990s (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 136). The similarities between both movements and how they both arise in opposition to neoliberal policies are the main points of attention in the current literature (Della Porta, 2015, 38). Both groups' grassroots members' shared resistance to neoliberalism, and despite having commonalities and even collaborations in the

horizontally progressing democratic paradigm, there are significant areas where the two movements diverge.

First, contrary to global justice movements, anti-austerity demonstrations took place locally in response to the severe effects of the 2008 Global Crisis (Della Porta, 2017, 454). Second, global justice movements arose in the early 2000s, at the height of neoliberal expansion whereas anti-austerity movements arose in the aftermath of the financial crisis as a response to the fiscal austerity policies (Della Porta, 2017, 466). Third, despite being a movement led by citizens of economically advanced Western societies, global justice movements have embraced the objectives of ensuring a better life and the rights of "other" – distant people who are less fortunate than themselves; on the other hand, protesters against austerity measures take part in demonstrations on behalf of themselves, their families, close friends, and fellow citizens who are struggling economically (Fominaya, 2017, 5). Fourth, while both groups oppose neoliberalism, the global justice movement protesters have a structural critique of organizations like the IMF and the World Bank, anti-austerity protests oppose laws and choices that have negative effects on a single issue or the public's perception (Fominaya, 2017, 5). Thus, alongside neoliberal globalization, anti-austerity demonstrations get the nation-state and governments back on track (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 137). Finally, unlike the capability of the global justice movement to bring together groups with various objectives under one roof, anti-austerity protesters represent a less aggressive group in contrast to more peaceful protests like environmental movements (Giugni & Grasso, 2020, 136). This is one of the reasons a grotesque and carnivalesque symbol analysis of the anti-austerity demonstrations was to be conducted for this thesis. One may argue that those taking

part in the austerity demonstrations are the ones who are most obviously impacted by the issue they are protesting, and as a result, they react most strongly.

According to Della Porta, the previous theories and approaches to studying today's social movements are insufficient because anti-austerity movements are so dissimilar from even the global justice movements that occurred ten years prior. As a result, she contends, new theories in the age of neoliberal globalization are needed (Della Porta, 2017, 458). She further points out that a class analysis of anti-austerity demonstrations should be conducted and that capitalism should once again be reintroduced to social movements studies as a significant structural factor. She believes that social movements studies should be viewed as a sub-branch of the political-economic field (Della Porta, 2017, 454). She argues, "it is evident that, in contrast to today's research, social movement studies from years ago showed a surprising decline in interest in capitalism and class" (Della Porta, 2015, 30). The case that that is made here is that the groups most negatively impacted by neoliberal globalization and those perceived as losers joined the protests with feelings of insecurity and rage. She notes that the new capitalist strategies that emerged after the 2000s, particularly after the Global Economic Crisis, were the target of new social movements (Della Porta, 2017, 460). The social status and participant profiles are the basis for investigating the idea of class. Anti-austerity protestors include both blue-collar and white-collar workers who were earlier seen as shielded or advantageous, as well as individuals from many generations, including students, the unemployed, and pensioners who can congregate in one place. These movements all share the trait of being an alliance of aggrieved people adversely impacted by capitalism (Della Porta, 2017, 460-461).

One should look for the theoretical and practical significance of the current study herein. Della Porta states that "existing studies of European social movements should be more actively involved in the critical analysis of capitalist transformations and should be included in conversations regarding the particularities and linkages between the crisis and the social movements in various regions of the world" (Della Porta, 2017, 467). In this context, it is crucial to analyze relatively newer concepts, methods, and protest strategies that distinguish the anti-austerity movements in Europe and are unique to them (Della Porta, 2017, 467).





CHAPTER III

LITERARY THEORY OF BAKHTIN: CARNIVAL AND GROTESQUE

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) wrote *Rabelais and his World* (1984), influenced by the characters “Gargantua” and “Pantagruel” created by the French author François Rabelais in 1532 and 1534. Even though Bakhtin was seen as a literary and art theorist, he was able to express his views in secret under the Soviet censorship during his lifetime. Bakhtin has recently become a much more visible and important figure in academic studies in different disciplines such as Political Science, Social Movement, Sociology, and Literature. The concepts of folk culture, grotesque, and carnival played an important role in his growing appeal.

This study will focus on grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in social movements by bringing together the Social Movements literature and Bakhtin literature. For the sake of its clarity, the thesis discusses the social movements literature and revisits the current debates after having demonstrated the benefits that can be gained from scrutinizing the key concepts put forward by Bakhtin and other leading scholars. In the rest of this section, the concepts of humor, laughter, grotesque, carnivalesque, and their connection to Social Movements will be discussed accordingly.

3.1. Laughter

In this section, avoiding historical, philosophical and psychological explanations, only the importance of laughter and humor in Bakhtinesque literature on an individual and social basis will be explained. According to Craig Brandist, Bakhtin

was heavily influenced by Henry Bergson and Ernst Cassirer in terms of their views on the act of laughing. While Bergson refers to the collective and unifying nature of the act of laughing; Cassirer argues that laughter also includes a hierarchical element, and that it also has a structure that gives meaning to life and creates a spiritual freedom (Brandist, 2011, 192-208). Bakhtin adopted both ideas with different aspects and created a social and cultural theory on the act of laughing. For Bakhtin, the act of laughing has a unifying, relaxing and fear-removing function.

People resort to ways of mocking and laughing in order to get rid of their fears and escape from the things they fear. The vulnerability of man against nature and the fear arising from the chaos of nature brought the habit of mocking, trivializing and relaxing nature in folk culture (Bakhtin, 2019, 347). For Bakhtin, the act of laughing is not just an element related to humor. Laughter has a unifying power among human communities, and the collective reflex of discrediting and ridiculing the object of fear creates a unifying element of power and causes fear to disappear (İlim, 2017, 140). The act of laughing, which served people as an escape route from the earliest times, has preserved the same function up so far. Humor and laughter appear to be extremely useful tools to escape from the object of fear under authoritarian regimes (Hart, 2007, 2). In short, it is key to understand Bakhtin's thought to better evaluate the role of laughter in enabling individuals and societies to avoid the subject of fear and to reduce the hierarchical importance of being mocked. The concepts of grotesque and carnival come to the fore in attempts to comprehend the reflections and consequences of collective mockery and laughter.

3.2. Grotesque

Initially, the concept of grotesque gained momentum owing to unearthing of the paintings in which human, animal and plant elements are drawn. The excavation of

these paintings – that are dated back to the Roman times but unearthed in the sixteenth century –, began to draw attention from scholars in the twentieth century. In this regard, Wolfgang Kayser's *Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1957) gained enormous excitement among literary circles and art coteries (Halfman & Young, 2010, 2). Inspired by the contradictory, ugly and exaggerated nature of Rabelais' characters "Gargantua" and "Pantagruel", Bakhtin made a systematic definition of the grotesque. "The basic nature of grotesque is negative, inappropriate, exaggerative and caricaturesque" (Bakhtin, 2019, 319). The element of exaggeration in the grotesque acquires an hyperbolic and supernatural quality.

In this context, humor is a grotesque image. There is always satire in the grotesque. Discourses or behaviors that do not have a satirical orientation cannot be considered grotesque (Bakhtin, 2019, 319). There is laughter and ridicule in the nature of grotesque. Besides, as discussed in the first chapter, the feeling of relief created by laughter is expected to liberate the human mind and opens new windows into a new spiritual world far from seriousness (Brandist, 2011, 214). Bakhtin dubbed the centuries-long process of cumulating the folk culture – which is expressed in an imaginary language oftentimes –, as "grotesque realism" (Bakhtin, 2019, 45-56). The most important element in the concept of grotesque realism is the act of discrediting ostensibly superior, inviolable, and sacred subjects, who are exposed to mockery – including but not exclusively people in charge (Bakhtin, 2019, 46). Every individual whose reputation receives fatal damage through mockery ceases to be an object of terror and transforms into an ordinary element of everyday life.

According to Bakhtin, grotesque realism can best be embodied in the (exaggerated) body of the people, and the element of "grotesque body" occurs in the

moments of togetherness, where the folk culture is best reflected. The grotesque body is an imaginary expression of the people as a whole, collectively, and in which their cultural memories from the past have emerged (İlim, 2017, 162). The grotesque body is never of an individual character and rather created in the most sincere way of language; in addition to obscene gestures and jokes (Bakhtin, 2019, 352). There is a grotesque body under all praise, insults, jokes, curses, and everything that is ridiculed and discredited.

In its most basic form, the grotesque body embodies three elements: “Sexual intercourse, the pains of death (such as tongue hanging down, expressionless bulging eyes, suffocation, agony at death) and the act of birth” (Bakhtin, 2019, 364). A detailed definition of grotesque element can be made over the sub-categories of these three basic features. When considered in terms of sexual intercourse, the descriptions and jokes on the lower parts of the body should be considered as the first thing that comes to mind. In the vast folk culture, there are dozens of different word indexes and slang expressions on the genitals and reproduction. Curses expressed in the linguistic expression of the grotesque body were often associated with sexual intercourse or genitals. When we consider the category of pains of death, absurd bodily limbs, disproportionate body sizes, bloated and ugly body lines, and half-dead half-alive body symbols are some of the secondary characteristic features of the grotesque body. Finally, the act of birth constitutes an important element for the grotesque body, as it essentially characterizes reproduction such as death and birth, bringing down from the top, replacing the sacred with the earthly and ugly one.

The most important point in this Bakhtinesque line of thought is that both grotesque and the grotesque body are not culture-specific. In other words, they have universal features. Similar grotesque images, discourses and grotesque body features

can be found both in France, where Rabelais lived, and in the Soviet Union, where Bakhtin lived, as well as in other cultures. It is possible to come across grotesque images and grotesque bodies in every environment where folk culture and the language of the people can emerge freely and sincerely. The places where the grotesque symbolism and the grotesque body are best revealed are the carnival squares where the people are intertwined, and carnival areas, festivals and rituals are discussed in detail in Bakhtin's theory.

3.3. Carnavalesque

Carnivals in which grotesque images are brought forward by the public and the term carnivalesque, which these carnivals refer to, were first mentioned in Bakhtin's book *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929/1963), in which Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels and other works were discussed linguistically. Accordingly, carnivalesque elements of folk culture can be grouped under three main headings (Bakhtin, 2019, 30):

- (i) Ritual performances – performances in carnival parades and market squares;
- (ii) Funny, sarcastic, *mise-en-scène* and sarcastic verbal responses;
- (iii) “Nasty” genres and discourses – curses, flattery, defamatory speech.

According to Bakhtin, these three elements constitute the main components of folk culture. Firstly, in the Middle Ages, carnivals are at the forefront of special occasions that reveal the true way of life and spirit of the people. In many big cities of the Middle Ages, carnivals are spent on average three months a year, and the people live a life away from official life, liberating, away from hierarchy, and reflecting their own culture (Bakhtin, 1984, 129). The indispensable rituals and some

basic features of these environments, in which people reflect their own culture, can be summarized as follows:

- i. The dualist structure of the carnival – One of the most important elements of carnivals in the Middle Ages is that they contain contradictions and that the opposing sides are presented together throughout the carnival. There are different rituals that diverge from the ordinary and brings together the unusual. Symbols such as praise and curse, birth and death, old and young bodies glued together are some of the ritual images frequently used for the inversion process (Bakhtin, 1984, 126).
- ii. The disappearance of hierarchy – The most important effect of carnivals is the creation of an environment where all segments of the population have equal status. The disappearance of the binaries between the upside-down, young-old, rich-poor, educated and uneducated in carnivals and the creation of an environment where everyone can behave comfortably in an utopian way is an extremely important factor in the emergence of the real culture of the people (Bakhtin, 2019, 35-36). In carnivals, the king and the jester come together, and since people can camouflage themselves through masks, they have the freedom to act in whatever role and form they want to be/appear at that moment (İlim, 2017, 154).
- iii. Sincerity – Erosion of all norms and the suspension of prohibitions for a while enables the communication between people to gain more liberty. In doing so, an intimate contact between people begins, which is not possible under ordinary circumstances (Brandist, 2011, 208). After this sincere contact, a reasonable process emerges for all kinds of obscenity.

- iv. Coronation / dethronement rituals – In carnival squares, a king is chosen and a coronation ritual is performed. Afterwards, the process of taking back the crown is carried out with the figurative death-resurrection processes (Brandist, 2011, 208) In this part, the principle of dualism plays a very important role. Carnivals have common features in places where the jester can be the king and the king the jester, where death and life are always together, and which seems incomprehensible from the outside (İlim, 2017, 156). Rituals with short-lived kings and queens are encountered in every form of carnival (Bakhtin, 1984, 124).
- v. Desecration – The strong and authoritarian nature of the church in the Middle Ages could not provide the environment in which the people could reveal their true spirit during religious and public holidays. To Bakhtin, carnivals, which liberate people from the reckless caste system and abysmal hierarchical structure, should be recognized as actual feasts (Bakhtin, 2019, 34-36). In the carnivals, rituals of insulting and discrediting religions and sacred figures that are above and inviolable are frequently practiced, so that the overturning can be realized. In this way, everything can be brought down to the mundane level (Brandist, 2011, 209).
- vi. The act of laughing – Laughter has a very important place in the grotesque image of the body for Bakhtin, and carnival laughter is one of the most characteristic features (Bakhtin, 2019, 211). Laughter in the carnival is a type of laughter aimed at changing the order and turning the prohibitions upside down, and it has both a critical and destructive effect on the difficulty of laughing freely in the Middle Ages (Bakhtin, 1984,

127). According to Bakhtin, laughter is not only an emotional and humorous human reaction whereby societies get freer and become a common whole. It is also a form of action through which people can establish a common bond with their societies (İlim, 2017, 140).

- vii. Universal nature of carnival – Carnivals have no owner. “Anyone can participate in the large body of the public in the carnival arena without any privilege” (İlim, 2017, 159). In carnivals, there is no division between the artists and the audience, where each of the participants takes the stage, which belongs to the public, where a universal, second life is experienced (Bakhtin, 1984, 122-128). Carnivals bring quotidian life to the streets and reach a universal level by displaying a collective spirit.

The grotesque symbol, the grotesque body, and the carnivalesque elements cannot be separated from each other based on these concepts that reflect the expression of folk culture. The act of laughing has developed as a counter-reflex of folk culture's obligation to "cosmic horror" or to submit to nature. Cosmic horror, as a legacy of humankind since ancient times, is a concept related to the feeling of fear created by human desperateness and impotence in the face of nature's greatness and infinity (Bakhtin, 2019, 347). In carnivals, this reflex effectively emerges with tools of profanity, humor and discrediting, and carnivals become an arena where folk culture fights cosmic horror (Robinson, 2011). However, carnivals offer not only a relaxation/liberation mechanism against nature, but also a relaxation/liberation mechanism against the clergy, the sacred, and the rulers. Folk culture, purified from hierarchical features and norms, creates a counter-culture through which it confronts official culture. In this regard, carnivals are defined as the most extraordinary events that offer this opportunity to folk culture (İlim, 2017, 22).

Bakhtin believes that the ancient framework of carnivals has been weakened due to the fact that carnival and folk culture have taken place on state-controlled public holidays and rituals since the seventeenth century (Robinson, 2011). There is no denying that the emergence of the modern nation state structure has brought about innovations such as the formation of more systematic control mechanisms. Considering this, it could be concluded that the grotesque body and carnivalesque rituals are still maintained by preservation of their long pedigree. As this thesis puts forward, the jokes, praises, insults, and almost every characteristic feature in the grotesque body definition can be observed among protesters in contemporary social movements.

3.4. On Humor and Bakhtin Studies in Social Movements

Twenty-first century provides us with a large number of social movement examples that diverge from each other based on their different aims and aspirations. While some adopt more confrontational and aggressive strategies; others use humor and laughter as an instrument. Researchers corroborate the claim that some of these protests were successfully achieving their aims. From the 1960s to this day, studies on social movements have gained popularity. Studies that are published after 2000 have considered humor, grotesque, and carnivalesque ingredients in social movements as their subjects of inquiry. Both the main lines of arguments in these and a select number of examples that can be given to social movements – in which humor is used in a concrete way –, will be discussed in the following pages.

It appears that scholars vary in their views about the presence and function of humor in social movements. Joe Thorogood, in his article on humor and satire through the South Park series, argues that satire is generally political and grotesque humor is often used when voicing the mistakes of the person or institutions he

criticizes (Thorogood, 2016, 217). Kristin Marie and Kirstie Cole, on the other hand, take grotesque protests in a bodily sense and argue that they are unique in responding to the rulers (Marie & Cole, 2018, 8-9). Marjolein Hart draws attention to the fact that while today's cartoonists and humor professionals resemble fearless clowns in the Middle Ages, masked and costumed protesters in today's protests resemble carnival participants reflecting folk culture in ancient times (Hart, 2016, 3). Jul Sorensen emphasizes that humor is not a very powerful way for resisting authoritarian regimes and oppressive environments. Yet, it still has the potential to trigger a culture of resistance, bring people together, and finally eradicate oppression (Sorensen, 2008, 185). Andrew Robinson likens the laughter of protests to carnivals and old market places. He argues that carnivalesque humor differs from all other types of humor, because the carnivalesque activism style can reach uncontrollable levels and is the most powerful weapon that can reverse the ordinary or the normal with grotesque symbols and carnival rituals (Robinson, 2011).

One of the best forms of protest in which the shocking and remarkable nature of the grotesque can be displayed is naked protests. Naked protests, which aim to give a political message and can convey this purpose through bodies, generally take a carnivalesque form as the naked female body is displayed and creates a striking form of protest against the elements it criticizes (Fanghanel, 2020, 263-265). According to a group of scholars examining the emotions and participatory motivations of the protesters, the sharp and strong nature of the grotesque also shows us that these events can sometimes lead to frustrating results and damage the participation processes. Put differently, although grotesque and carnivalesque elements have created feelings of emotional relief and individual satisfaction due to the humor elements they contain, exposure to grotesque images may also have consequences

that may harm collective participation and social movement organizations (Ness&Effler, 2018, 414).

Together with "framing theories," grotesque and carnivalesque symbols can be considered. When examining their effects on the motivations of protestors to participate in social movements, it appears that these symbols can have both positive and negative effects on participation processes. The positive aspect of grotesque symbolism is that, since they are separated from social and everyday norms, they pose a strong threat to order and can be used as an offensive weapon in protests (Halfmann & Young, 2010, 3-4). Framing tactics and process – for now – can be defined as the act of keeping the individuals participating in the protests together and creating common and similar discourses in order to appeal to more participants. In this context, more grotesque symbolism can also be seen as a negative element that can break the framework. The ability of grotesque to contain disgust, fear, and opposing emotions together may cause confusion on the emotional thinking processes of the participants and may have a negative effect on their participation framework (Halfmann & Young, 2010, 5). However, participants who are heavily exposed to grotesque images may turn away with disgust from these images and find their protest actions manipulative (Halfmann & Young, 2010, 19). At this point, participants who use grotesque and carnivalesque elements in protests take risks because these elements try to attract more participants' attention and create stronger and more remarkable messages by expressing the ordinary or the normal in confusing and unusual ways (Halfmann & Young, 2010, 5-19).

Discussions about whether humor, satire and grotesque are useful do not consist only of discussions limited to framing processes and theories. Counter-arguments have also taken place in the literature that humor, satire, grotesque and carnivalesque

symbolism directed against authority cannot be a powerful weapon and will not always work. According to Christie Davies, while humor can be seen as an effective form of resistance for a number of researchers; according to other researchers, humor acts as a safety valve, which can have a positive effect on the survival of repressive regimes and those who consciously manage it have the opposite effect as a mechanism for relieving and discharging the ruled crowds, it is seen as an ineffective phenomenon that does not make a significant contribution to the forms of resistance (Davies, 2007, 300). Marjolein Hart suggests that humor is useless unless it serves social protests: Like Davies, she argues that humor can have an effect in favor of those who govern, that it does not have the decency to change the circumstances within itself, and that it can have a negative effect that can reduce discontent among those who govern (Hart, 2007, 7).

Roy Ladurie's views on the carnivalesque elements of the social movements underlie the main lines of arguments put forward by Davies, Benton, and Hart. Ladurie considers that carnivals are organizations created under state control with permission so that the public can vent humor or anger in them (Bruner, 2005, 139). In addition, he puts forward the idea that the people who are relieved after the carnival days when the rulers temporarily suspend the norms in order to keep the society functioning will be in a more functional state (Bruner, 2005, 139).

To mention a few specific examples within the framework of these arguments, the *Otpor* (Resistance) movement was able to use humor as a powerful element against the Slobodan Milošević administration in Serbia. Based on the question of what functions humor can serve in a situation of oppression, Sorensen conducted interviews with Otpor activists. He reached the following conclusions (Sorensen, 2007, 175): (i) Humor increases social assistance and mobilization at interpersonal

level with non-activist people; (ii) after having helped to build solidarity, it facilitates a culture of resistance and strengthens the participatory potential of individuals in these protests; and (iii) as the strongest potential – because it changes the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed – it subverts oppression (Sorensen, 2007, 175).

The Otpor case went down in history as a movement in which there was no leader at their head, small independent groups organized the action, fear was reduced by the effective use of humor, and humor was effectively used as an effective conflict method against the regime (Sorensen, 2007, 180). In another example, Christie Davies expresses the influence of humor in Estonia and Czechia under communist regimes. Philologist Juri Viikberg uncovered four thousand offensive and humorous anti-Soviet jokes used by the Estonian people in daily life between 1960 and 1986 and stated that Estonians took refuge in jokes as a form of relief and sometimes resistance against the oppressive regime of the Soviet era (Davies, 2007, 292). In the example given over the Czech Republic, it was stated that during the German occupation, the Czechs used jokes as a form of resistance that are capable of weakening the morale of the enemy soldiers (Davies, 2007, 300).

Taking into consideration more recent studies and unfolding events, it is seen that the role of humor and the Zapatistas and the events of *Seattle 1999* are given great importance in the literature of social movements. Gaining transnational fame in 1994 as an anti-globalization and neo-liberal movement, the Zapatistas used humor effectively. Subsequently, the “turtle brigade” for which the protesters gathered in front of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November 1999, received wide coverage in the media and much support from people who appreciated the effective use of humor, generating much more voice than violent protests (Hart,2007,18).

According to M. Lane Bruner, the Orange Alternative protests in Poland in the 1980s provides us with a perfect example where protesters utilized humor in the best possible way. Like the *turtle brigade* tactic in Seattle, this is yet another telling example that shows how carnival-like protest forms were formed (Bruner, 2005, 143).

In addition to the examples of social movements given through humor and carnival, it is possible to see protests in which grotesque images are used in intense and striking ways. For example, Alexandra Fanghanel in her work "On Being Ugly in Public: The Politics of the Grotesque in Naked Protests" evaluates a FEMEN protest in the context of grotesque elements. Today, FEMEN members who want to criticize the ordinary, reasonable and normal "sexy woman image and body" discourse, use an otherwise old, much fatter and nude female figures (Fanghanel, 2020, 271-272). An influence of themes such as death and life, the combination of beautiful and ugly, old and young bodies that are seen in Bakhtin is clearly visible here. However, the use of the shocking and compelling nature of the grotesque can also be explored in these acts.

Finally, with the proliferation of technological possibilities, the old protest forms and discourses have now been included in the fields of carnivalesque and grotesque, as well as the mobilization processes carried out over social media and the forms of protest created with hashtags. For example, following Donald Trump's election victory in 2016, a report claiming that he watched "golden pee" videos went viral. Shortly after that, Twitter users mocked Trump by opening the hashtags #PEEOTUS instead of tagging #POTUS (Bivens & Cole, 2018, 19). However, in the same years, accepted and normalized views on women's body size, body hair, menstrual periods and similar issues were protested by women on social media. Many women shared

posts on their profiles by going beyond the norms that are accepted as normal and reasonable. These posts that are resorting to grotesque symbols set example for the effective use of grotesque in protests on social media (Bivens & Cole, 2018, 21).





CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND CASE SELECTION

4. 1. Relationship Between Anti Austerity Movements and Bakhtin Literature

It is well known that following the 2008 Crisis, most European nations reduced their public spending and took steps to lessen the effects of the financial crisis. Instead of focusing on protests against climate disasters, world peace, or other issues with a broader scope, this study concentrates on social movements against government policies that directly affect people's daily lives, which are referred to in the literature as anti-austerity protests. It is aimed here to highlight the grotesque and carnivalesque imagery present in the protests under discussion from the perspective of Bakhtin and to categorize this imagery according to how frequently it appears in various social movements.

Due to the global economic crises and the excessive growth of neoliberal policies, the European integration process – described by Guglielmo Carchedi with the term "poverty amid wealth" – (Carchedi, 2009, 392-398) is a fertile laboratory for the anti-austerity demonstrations taking place in various European Union member states. In this regard, seven countries – six of which are current members of the European Union and one that is a former member – have been taken into account in this study: England, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Romania, and Greece. Romania and Greece are included as Eastern European nations; Italy and Spain represent the Southern regions, the UK, Germany and France as the developed Western European regions. The cultural variances between the chosen countries should be considered a significant factor in addition to the geographical dispersion.

Another crucial factor is the variations in the seven chosen countries' vulnerability to economic hardships during the 2008 Global Crisis and the rates of job cutbacks in these nations. Following 2008, nations with substantial economic problems were Greece, Italy, and Spain. Germany was also impacted by the crisis but did not endure the same severe public spending cuts or austerity measures as others. In this respect, the case of Germany serves as a crucial variable in highlighting economic disparities. The targeting of Germany and Angela Merkel, in particular by protests in various regions, can help find the resemblance between them. By highlighting Bakhtinesque universality, it will also be crucial to comment on the existence of comparable grotesque and carnivalesque components in a few cases, notwithstanding the distinctions between economic contraction and public spending cuts. Again, however, it is important to note that the concept of universality is used here rather loosely and the limits of the study permit to make a case selection between seven European Union countries to test it. The historical, linguistic and religious proximities among the selected countries are well known and anticipated; however, their ethnic, national and recent historical differences should still provide with a fruitful terrain of comparison within the confines of this thesis.

4.2. Anti-Austerity Movements in Spain After 2008

Spain is among the nations that have been most negatively impacted economically since the 2008 Global Crisis. The increasing pressure from the European Union forced Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and the Spanish government to adopt a set of measures on May 1, 2010. He made decisions regarding unemployment insurance, pension plans, and government spending (Beroud, 2014, 1). In 2011, a group of protestors known as *Indignados* (The Furies) or *15-M*, primarily composed of students, formed throughout Spain due to the country's economic austerity policies.

This title was chosen since May 15 marks the start of the protests. As it is in every anti-austerity demonstration, strong anti-neoliberal rhetoric was prominent in the 15-M demonstrations: "*We are not merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers,*" and "*the guilty ones should pay for the crisis*" are among the 15-M activists' most prominent slogans (Hughes, 2011, 408). Despite political parties, non-governmental organizations, political organizations, and the media not publicly supporting it, the 15-M movement's social media mobilization has been a critical component in its growth. The most fundamental and significant outcome of the demonstrations was the creation of the *Podemos* (we can do) Party in 2014, led by Pablo Iglesias, with representatives of the 15-M movement actively participating in politics. Spain's two major parties, The Partido Popular and the Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol, were challenged by the 15-M movement's national and worldwide influence. As a result, the Podemos Party was formed as an alternative to these two major parties (Kouki & Gonzalez, 2018, 127).

4.3. Anti-Austerity Movements in Italy After 2008

One of the nations where anti-austerity protests peaked in the years following 2008 was Italy. In Italy, where the repercussions of the crisis were severely felt, Rome has seen the majority of the protests by students, workers, and the general public against the government. The protests that began at the start of 2010, as seen in the cases of Spain and Greece, were long-lasting and periodically persisted until 2015. In these long-running demonstrations, protestors concentrated on their fundamental goals and desires. The student protests in Italy from 2008 to 2010 were essentially the inception of the anti-austerity demonstrations. With the slogan "*Non pagheremo noi la vostra crisi*" (we will not pay for your crises), college students were inspired to protest in 2008, and their two-year-long demonstrations gained

some traction (Zamponi, 2012, 417). The events in Italy can be broken down into three distinct waves, much like the three waves of anti-austerity protests that occurred in Greece. Following 2008, student movements led the first wave of anti-austerity protests. Although these protests in Italy began before the 15-M movement, the involvement of more radical groups in the second wave of protests (2010–2012) caused them to diverge from the anti-austerity rallying lines (Trere et al., 2017, 410). By the third wave in 2012 and 2013, *Occupy!* and 15-M had emerged (Trere et al., 2017, 411). After Silvio Berlusconi, a technocratic government led by Mario Monti took the office; the Italian austerity movement was unsuccessful since the demonstrations had a little immediate impact on the fiscal restriction policies that the government had implemented in the following periods (Zamponi, 2012, 421). The most significant outcome of the anti-austerity demonstrations occurred when *Movimento 5 Stelle* (MS5 or Five Star Movements) party, created by Beppe Grillo in 2009, gained support in the 2013 elections and won the 2018 election.

4.4. Anti-Austerity Movements in Greece After 2008

Beginning in May 2010, the Greek government, with the backing of the European Parliament, had taken steps to implement several public limitations. Regulations and limits were put in place following the decisions on matters including pay reductions, tax increases, and the imposition of specific consumption tariffs on items like cigarettes and alcohol (DW, 2010). Greece, the nation hit hardest by the 2008 Global Economic Crisis, was in danger of going bankrupt. Due to austerity measures and cuts to government spending, there was a significant increase in unemployment, which caused the poor to display discontent toward immigrants, the European Union, and mostly the government. The Greek government asked the IMF and the European Union for financial support to figure a way around the austerity measures (Euronews,

2015). Wolfgang Rüdig and Georgios Karyotis analyzed the protests in Greece between 2010 and 2015 by dividing them into three waves. In this context, the first wave of protests began in May 2010 as a result of widespread demonstrations against the government's austerity measures; the second wave was the result of social media and the 15-M movement in Spain; and the third wave was the wave of protests that started in 2012 under the leadership of the *Synaspismós Rhizospastikís Aristerás* (Radical Left Coalition-SYRIZA) (Karyotis & Rüdig, 2016, 159). Similarities may also be seen between these desperate young people protesting since the movement's inception and the 15-M protestors in Spain. During to this climate of protests, Greece's political organization and party election variations are mostly akin to those of *Podemos* in Spain. It is possible to frequently encounter criticisms of the European Union institutions and neo-liberal policies in all anti-austerity protests since 2010. In particular, the European Union technocrats, the Central Bank, and then German Chancellor Angela Merkel have been the focus of these criticisms.

4.5. Anti-Austerity Movements in Romania After 2008

Following the 2008 Financial Crisis, anti-austerity protests peaked in Romania in 2012. Between 2010 and 2015, Romanian towns and public spaces were filled with anti-austerity protestors who organized a series of demonstrations that sparked the ensuing demonstrations. After the *Romanian Revolution* in 1989, these protests that transpired in 2010 were among the largest. On May 6, 2010, President Mihai Băcescu announced several substantial cuts, including a 25% pay cut for public employees, the elimination of some social protections, and a 15% cut to unemployment benefits (Tatar, 2015, 72). In May 2010, the rate of those who believed that they were mismanaged rose to 85%, and confidence in political institutions fell from 50% to 10%. (Tatar, 2015, 72). Consequently, some people

participated in the protests due to their disdain for the political system and the government. As a result of Emil Boc's resignation as prime minister of Romania on February 6, 2012, there was a minor decline in the ongoing protests (France24, 2012). A sense of honor and dignity has been one of the protesters' primary driving forces. Due to the derogatory rhetoric of the state officials against the protesters, such as "worms" and "incompetent slum dwellers," many different groups such as pensioners, students, and workers who participated in the protest regarding problems of welfare and living off took to the streets (Volintiru, 2012).

4.6. Anti-Austerity Movements in the UK After 2008

The UK government implemented specific fiscal tightening measures following the 2008 Crisis. Due to the actions performed and the legislation passed, anti-austerity demonstrations took place throughout England and many other European nations. Numerous organizations, including students and worker unions, and the *Occupy! London* movement, have joined forces to stage anti-austerity demonstrations, which have persisted to this day. Workers, students, and the *UK Uncut* campaigners were the main driving forces behind the anti-austerity demonstrations in 2010 and 2011 (The Conversation, 2016). The *UK Uncut* movement was founded in October 2010 as a protest organization against the evasion or underpayment of taxes by big businesses and banks both internationally and domestically. The movement participants believe that anti-austerity policies are neo-liberal ideology-based measures rather than needs-oriented strategies (Craddock, 2019, 67).

The *Occupy! London* movements began to take shape in November 2011 and, in contrast to other movement organizations, teamed up with organizations like the *UK Uncut* to create a more diverse group identity. They have also adopted the slogan

"we are 99 percent" from the *Occupy! Wall Street* movement (Saunders et al., 2015, 182). Although the *Occupy! London* protests are based on anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal ideologies, they have brought together people from many different cultures and identities, including young people, seniors, women, and members of various minority groups, and have homogenized them by forming a single framework (Saunders et al., 2015, 188-190). Even though their intensity and severe exposure peaked in October and November 2011, technically, the austerity package of October 20, 2010, sparked the protests. The protests throughout 2015 were led by workers, housing activists, students, and anti-disruption protestors (The Conversation, 2016). Despite this, it is also seen that the 2011 protests did not produce any significant outcomes or dramatic changes, apart from bringing together various demands and voicing the frustration of people from a particular demographic with the implemented policies (Prentoulis & Thomassen, 2020, 352-353).

4.7. Anti-Austerity Movements in Germany After 2008

Despite Germany being one of the nations least impacted by the crisis according to economic reports, *Occupy!* movements have emerged in numerous German cities, including Berlin and Frankfurt. However, the "*Blocupy*" movement, which grew out of one *Occupy!* movement in 2012 and became more prominent in Frankfurt in 2015, grown to be the most significant development in Germany. Following 2008, most people in nations that adopted stricter measures blamed Angela Merkel and Germany. Both those impacted by the economic crisis and those who support other nations internationally have demonstrated against austerity measures within Germany. Retirees, students, and radical left groups participating in the 1968 Labor Movements participated in this protest against the global market and economic system (Fadée & Schindler, 2014, 786). With the slogan "*Wir zahlen nicht für eure*

Krise” (We Are Not Paying Your Crisis), nationally coordinated protestors held two rallies in 2010 in Berlin and Stuttgart, each drawing roughly thirty thousand participants. Overall, eighty thousand people attended the nationwide rally in October 2011 (Mayer, 2013, 15). Different groups, including the senior activists from the 1968 era, took part in the *Occupy!* movements in Berlin as the demonstrators congregated and set up tents in front of the *Reichstag*, where the German parliament met (Fadde&Schindler, 2014, 787). Activists in Frankfurt and Berlin connected with demonstrators in New York, Madrid, and London via Facebook and planned demonstration dates as part of global cooperation. Additionally, the movement's members believed that their power came from the unity and the close connection to the Spanish Indignados organization (DW, 2011A). The presence of banners and rhetoric such as "Occupy Berlin," "*Kapitalismus ist Krise*” (capitalism is a crisis), and "*Wir sind %99*" (we are the 99%) at demonstrations in 2011 indicates that The Wall Street and *Indignados* movements served as inspiration, hence the name "Occupy Frankfurt" (DW, 2011B).

The *Blockupy* movement was founded by left-wing political organizations, labor unions, and demonstrators from Podemos, Syriza, Die Linke, and *Occupy!* Frankfurt in Europe. It launched its first demonstrations in Frankfurt in 2011. Blockupy organized protests against the TROYKA system and practices in 2015, and hundreds of people participated in the event in Frankfurt's central square, Roemberg (CBC News, 2015). Together with members of *Blockupy*, Greek protesters carrying SYRIZA banners joined the demonstrations, sending a message of collaboration between the peoples of Germany-the lender and Greece-the borrower (NY Times, 2015).

4.8. Anti-Austerity Movements in France After 2008

Studies on the origins of the *Gilets jaunes* (*The Yellow Jackets/Vests*) movement have revealed that there was no prior infrastructure for the organization, no homogeneous groupings formed, and no organizational structure emerged during the early stages of the movement. In October 2018, a French citizen named Jacline Mouraud made a video criticizing Emmanuel Macron's economic policies. Soon after, truck driver Eric Douet's video titled "*Let us block France*" quickly gained popularity and was viewed by millions of users on French social media (BBC, 2018). Also, in 2019, a petition initiated by Priscillia Ludosky to oppose the increases in fuel prices was approved by 870,000 individuals nationwide and spread across the nation via social media (Euronews, 2019). Small-scale protest demonstrations soon began to occur in significant regions of the nation. A furious mob began protesting alongside the police on the *Champs-Élysées* in Paris on November 17, 2018, after seemingly feeling as though their opinions had gone unheard (Euronews, 2019B). It was not just the rising cost of petrol that contributed to its growth into such a significant uprising; economic policies and a sense of unfairness are among the main factors that contributed to the French people's outrage on the streets. Protesters from all backgrounds came together against Macron and the French government in response to decisions to make tax cuts for large corporations, end student rent benefits, abolish the wealth tax, create remedial laws for the upper class, limit workers' compensation, and many other similar decisions, in contrast, tax cuts are made from 37.3 percent of French citizens (BBC, 2018B). November 2019 marked the first anniversary of the *Gilets jaunes*. When the protests first began, more than 70% of the public backed the demonstrators, according to reports of public opinion

polls; after a year, according to the opinion polls of *ELABE*, the public continued to favor the protesters by 55% (DW, 2019).

4.9. Photograph Analysis and Selection

A photographic analysis was required to compare the symbols sought for during the social movements under question. The photographic analysis methodology employs quantitative and qualitative research techniques and has been used in various contexts. According to Roland Barthes, images can have empirical, rhetorical, and artistic meanings (Barthes, 1980, 4). On the level of empirical studies, there are viewpoints about carefully evaluating images to present proof for historical and documentary materials and proving their authenticity after numerous filters (Rosler, 2004, 224). Similar research has been done on whether or not images can be used as evidence in court cases or medical investigations (Tagg, 1988, 60).

The intense emphasis on photography as evidence is mainly due to the fact that images are open to manipulation. The "camera never lies" perspective and the idea that the media and press organizations intentionally produce biased images for commercial gain are also contested in the literature (Rose, 2016, 27). This study, which does not explicitly address images or photography art/craft, overlooks the production of the photographs utilized in the thesis by media professionals, pros, or amateur photographers. Similar to this, broad-perspective study fields such as content and cultural analysis are used to conduct quantitative and qualitative investigations by developing codes and data sets (Rose, 2016, 86). The compatibility of the chosen images with the research questions/assumptions is a crucial factor in this study (Rose, 2016, 88). After the digital photos to be examined have been gathered, any image related to the population of interest, regardless of how large, is appropriate for analysis (Rose, 2016, 99) Additionally, even though biased

photographing and image editing are always possible, the goal of press photographs is to show that a specific event genuinely took place (Çetin, 2019, 702). The images presented in this thesis have not been examined for technical photographic analysis. Instead, the goal of photograph gathering is to act as a tool for exposing the grotesque and carnivalesque imagery in social movements.

Despite the fact that the images used in the study constitute a cultural analysis, in a technical sense, it is not a photographic assessment analysis. According to Gillian Rose, the issue at hand will be resolved if the many cultural settings in the content are exposed and interpreted thoroughly (2016, 88). All the images chosen here have been given grotesque and carnivalesque interpretations, making the cultural and universal components in the content of photographs more understandable.



CHAPTER V

ANAYLSIS AND FINDINGS

In this section, an analysis will be made on the similarities of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in the anti-austerity protests that took place in the European continent after the 2008 Global Economic Crisis. In order to categorize the grotesque and carnivalesque elements, it is necessary to consider some elements that are clearly differentiated and that can be meaningful on their own in a separate category. In this context, the elements put forward in Bakhtin's theory can be classified as follows:

- 1) Fictitious body anatomies,
- 2) Masks,
- 3) The image of Satan,
- 4) The grotesque body – grotesque symbols that are created for the purpose of using the upper parts of the body such as the mouth, nose, and navel, as well as the lower parts and the reversal of hierarchy,
- 5) Grotesque images of the overcoming of fear through the symbolism of defecation and urination,
- 6) Ridicule, profanity, curses, and imitations for the purpose of discrediting.

Although each of the grotesque and carnivalesque symbols classified above are forms of behavior that are revealed to provoke laughter, ridicule, and overcome the fear, depictions such as the use of masks, the image of the Satan, and the revealing of

fictitious body anatomies are predominantly carnivalesque, whereas the other three categories focus on the definition of the grotesque and the grotesque body.

5.1. Fictitious Body Anatomies

Bakhtin's idea is founded on the close connection between the appearance of grotesque elements and folk culture. In the establishment of folk culture, common rituals, beliefs, discourses, and patterns of behaviors from the past are vital. The existence of abstract and imaginary depictions of bodies that are incompatible with reality is seen in art, literature, mythology and folk myths. Human communities in various regions of the world have created similar portrayals, from Ancient Greek mythology to Chinese mythology, Scandinavian mythology to Egyptian mythology (Rosenberg, 2017, 15-26). Half-human, half-animal god figures, giants, and other grotesque portrayals are well-known commonalities. In this sense, the grotesque, an obvious manifestation of folk culture, includes half-human, half-animal forms, strange human archetypes, and animal figures such as unicorns or the Phoenix (Bakhtin, 2019, 356).

In addition, examples of fables created in the Middle Ages also have a grotesque character in their nature for the purpose of criticism and satire (Güzel, 2016, 210); and the embodiment of human abilities in another being is part of folk culture, as in Gargantua, Pantagruel or other mythological examples. Finally, throughout the Middle Ages, Christianity had significant influences on folk culture. In the framework of fictitious body anatomy, Şebnem Pala Güzel's examples of the abstract beings seen on the ceiling of the Metz Cathedral in the twelfth century are crucial. Accordingly, human heads resembling birds, bodyless animals, and human figurines with four legs are utilized to depict the afterlife destination of those who died without baptism (Güzel, 2016, 216). In this respect, there is an important connection between

the religion of Christianity and the medieval folk culture, and this bond also affects the form of the grotesque.

Folk culture and grotesque images, which include similar abstract body depictions until the Middle Ages, are frequently used by the participants in today's social movements. In the anti-austerity protests after 2008, for instance, protesters living in different regions with different cultural characteristics on the European continent resorted to similar grotesque body anatomies.

Figure 5.1. Greece 2010



(Aljazeera, 2010)

This photograph, taken during the 2010 anti-austerity protests in Greece, exemplifies the grotesque of the pig-headed individual in folk culture. (Aljazeera, 2010)

Figure 5.2. UK 2016



Protesters wearing pig masks in Trafalgar Square during a march for 'Health, Homes, Jobs and Education' on April 16, 2016 in London. Credit: Chris Ratcliffe/Getty Images

(masharable.com, 2016)

The same image can be seen in the UK, in the anti-austerity actions in 2016, during the protests against the David Cameron government. The pig's head attached to the human body has a historical meaning. The carvings with abstract and monstrous depictions, expressed in the example of the Cathedral of Metz, were called “Gryllos” (piggy) in the following years (Güzel, 2016, 216) and the pig's head became an essential grotesque symbol. The main reason why the same symbols can be seen in social movements hundreds of years later could be linked to Bakhtin's analysis in the sense that folk culture did not vanish and the same symbols were used again and again, as well as in the carnival squares, where participants in a huge crowd could freely criticize the object of fear.

Figure 5.3. Germany 2012



(alamy, 2012)

Another example can be given through the protesters who gathered against austerity measures in Berlin in February 2012. In this photo, from right to left, it can be observed that four different protesters have joined the protest in different shapes of half-human half-animal costumes. Carnival is written on the tent at the back of the photo. As observed in many of the Occupy! protests, protesters set up tents in city squares.

Figure 5.4. Italy 2012



(alamy, 2012)

Anti-austerity protests were held in many regions of Italy in 2012. In this photograph from October 2012, former Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are shown as puppets tied to an octopus during the "No Monti Day" protest. Although the public's use of such a grotesque image on the level of satire and criticism is open to interpretation in different ways, it simply gives the message that the leaders of the European Union countries are managed like a puppet by an octopus. Germany's dominant position among the European Union countries due to its economic superiority has made Germany the main target in the austerity measures in the countries seriously affected by the crisis. Therefore, in the protests in many different European Union countries, Merkel was targeted more than the protesters' own leaders.

With the advancement of technological capabilities, the grotesque figures drawn on walls, cave ceilings, and church roofs of the past are brought to life in the costumes, models, and other protest materials of today's social movements.

Figure 5.5. Spain 2011



(*elmundo.es*, 2011)

Another grotesque symbol created on the puppet theme occurred in Spain in November 2011. The 15-M protesters criticize the country's rulers with the rhetoric that "politicians are market puppets". The criticism was made with the costumes and masks of the "Cookie Monster" and "Buddy" characters of Sesame Street, which has been broadcast on American television since 1969. In particular, the cookie monster figure appears as a grotesque, absurd, and imaginary character.

Figure 5.6. Romania 2018



(casazicasa.ro, 2018)

In 2018, the ruling party PSD (Social Democratic Party) in Romania was severely criticized for poverty, corruption and rising wages in protests attended by thousands of people. The banner in the above photo is a monstrous face figure and the text below it reads “Remember this is your face PSD”. This criticism, in which those in power are likened to frightening monsters, has a completely grotesque character. The recirculation of folk culture was effective in the formation of this criticism against the object of fear.

5.2. Masks

The mask is essential for the re-production of grotesque illustrations, according to Bakhtin, because when the public reject their own appearances and overstep borders, humorous and parodic elements can arise, the playful elements of life arise, and the essence of the grotesque is created (Bakhtin, 2019, 65). The disappearance of self by appearance means that individuals can assume the role they want and act more freely. The usage of masks lessens anxiety, and the freedom experienced by

individuals leads to ecstasy, thereby contributing to the creation of folk culture. In social movements, too, it is observed that protesters often resort to the use of masks.

Figure 5.7. France 2018



(thejournal.ie, 2018)

In 2018, it is possible to observe that the *Gilets jaunes* protesters often used masks in the demonstrations. A protester disguised as French President Emmanuel Macron is seen posing for the cameras in a very relaxed manner with his mask, making an inappropriate hand gesture. The mask's freedom of movement and the euphoria it creates facilitate to perform behaviors and actions that are difficult or frightening to perform under regular circumstances.

Figure 5.8. Greece 2011



(gettyimages, 2011)

Another protest, in which state officials were targeted and criticized for using masks, was photographed in Greece in November 2011. Hundreds of thousands of people protested the austerity measures for an extended period in 2011 in front of Syntagma Square and the Greek Parliament. The mask worn by the second person from the left in the photo above is Lukas Papadimos, an economist who temporarily served as Prime Minister in 2011. The mask worn by the protester on one right of the Papadimos mask indicates former Prime Minister George Papandreou, who resigned from his post on November 11, 2011. The mask of the protester on the far right symbolizes the then-Finance Minister Giorgos Papakonstantinou. The mask on the far left symbolizes Louka Katseli, the then-Minister of Labor and Social Security. Finally, the red-dressed protester points to Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou, the then-Minister of Health and Social Solidarity and Member of the Greek Parliament responsible for European affairs. The protest of the ministers with the theme of dance, which is directly related to the cuts in the economy, health, working life, and

social security, is an example of the use of laughter and satire in this protest, which arise the nature of the grotesque.

Figure 5.9. Germany 2011



(alamy, 2011)

Movement participants do not just use the faces of government officials, heads of state, or economic bureaucrats they target as masks in protests. The image above is from the anti-austerity protests in Berlin in 2011. The banner carried by the protester reads: "The people are not from the government; government should be afraid of the people" this is a discourse of V, the protagonist of the movie *V For Vendetta* (Warner Bros., 2005). *V For Vendetta* has become a mask symbol frequently used by participants in many different anti-austerity protests in different parts of the world, as it contains criticism against the global economic system, banking system, neoliberalism, and capitalism.

Figure 5.10. Italy 2012 B



(alamy, 2012)

Numerous anti-austerity protests were held against Mario Monti and Silvio Berlusconi in 2012 in Italy, which went into budgetary constraints on education expenditures. Similarly, the use of the *V For Vendetta* mask can be seen in this photo of December 2012.

Figure 5.11. Romania 2012



(alamy, 2012)

This photograph, taken in Bucharest in January 2012, shows Romanian citizens protesting the then-Prime Minister Emil Boc and government officials. In the same period, the use of masks in a similar way in different parts of Europe shows the common presence of grotesque elements in anti-austerity protests.

Figure 5.12. Spain 2013



(alamy, 2013)

We see the same mask worn in this photo taken in May 2013, on the second anniversary of the 15-M movement. Just like the representation of the grotesque body formed in the carnival environment and everyone in the carnival belonging to the carnival, it is seen that the masked protesters got rid of the feeling of fear as a whole with the discourse of "Si Se Puede" (Yes We Can).

Figure 5.13. UK 2012



(alamy, 2012)

The public response to the British government's austerity measures is riddled with images that are both ludicrous, discrediting, and historically connected grotesque. This image, taken during the anti-austerity protests in London in late 2012, is an excellent example of the frequent use of different grotesque images. Two pig-masked protesters accompanying the masked person closely, Nick Clegg, the then-Deputy Prime Minister, represent greed with their mouths, eyes, and money. At the same time, the bloody knife in their hands symbolizes cuts.

5.3. The Image of Satan

The Satan figure stood out as an essential element in medieval carnival squares. The reason the figures of hell and demons are a crucial grotesque element in the carnival is the public's need to make the subject of fear an object of entertainment. (Bakhtin, 2019, 115) In Bakhtin's depiction, the grotesque imagery of Satan has a friendly and playful character (Bakhtin, 2019, 66). The appearance of hell and devil

figures as a comic element in carnival squares and the public making these figures an object of ridicule address an implicit reaction of folk culture to the hierarchical rigidity of the Christian belief in medieval Europe. Centuries later, it can be observed that in today's social movements, protesters frequently use the Satan figure as a reaction and sometimes as an entertainment element.

Figure 5.14. UK 2019



(gettyimages, 2019)

An adapted version of the hell car and a cheerful Satan image that appeared in the carnival square depicted by Bakhtin to this day reappeared at the anti-Brexit protests in London in 2019.

Figure 5.15. UK 2009



(Alamy, 2009)

Before the G-20 conference, on April 1, 2009, a demonstration against poverty and employment issues was held in front of the Bank of England. The Satan and skull symbols in this protest, as described by Bakhtin, create a happy and connected aspect to the public.

Figure 5.16. Italy 2011



(Bolognatoday, 2011)

In 2011, a group called "Rebel Dragons" (Draghi Ribelli) attracted attention during the anti-austerity protests that took place in many cities of Italy. This group, which includes students, the unemployed, and numerous individuals badly affected by austerity measures, has a dragon with a devilish appearance as its symbol.

Figure 5.17. Italy 2021



(Alamy, 2021)

Although there is a ten-year gap between this image and the first one before the G-20 summit in 2021, the grotesque symbols used in both images are similar, demonstrating the grotesque's enduring qualities and the fact that it is still used in protests.

Figure 5.18. Romania 2009



(alamy, 2009)

The public presentation of the symbols of the Satan and the skull at the anti-austerity protests in Bucharest, Romania in November 2009 seems to be in line with previous examples.

Figure 5.19. France



(Twitter)

The Satan's image was frequently utilized in France during the Gilets jaunes protest demonstrations. The Satan costume and yellow vest are linked in the protest photo above, creating a grotesque symbol which the government cannot be prepared for.

Figure 5.20. Germany 2011 B



(alamy, 2011)

In November 2011, anti-austerity protests were held in Berlin, Germany, called the "Carnival of the Furious" (Karnival der Empoerten), regarding "Indignados" in Spain. The Indignados and 15-M protests are the same and represent the anti-austerity protests that started in Spain on May 15, 2011. The photo above shows a protester wearing a *V For Vendetta* mask with a demonized face protesting together using grotesque symbols. Since the name of the protest against austerity is the carnival of the angry, such images were mainly applied. The connection between folk culture and grotesque and carnivalesque symbols were also proven with this protest.

Figure 5.21. Spain 2012



(RT, 2012)

A police officer was seen on camera at the anti-austerity demonstrations in Spain in November 2012. It can be understood from this example that not only the public, the unemployed, and young students, but also public officials often resort to grotesque and carnivalesque images in protests.

Figure 5.22. Greece 2015



(alamy, 2015)

The Satan is portrayed in the public in a variety of ways, including as a pleasant or humorous figure. This protest poster from Greece in 2015 shows a banker who has been demonized. Thus, the Satan's image is used in today's protests in both absurd and humorous contexts as well as in critical circumstances.

5.4. Grotesque Body Elements and the Reversal of Social Hierarchies

In this section, the grotesque body and the reversal of social hierarchies are discussed together. According to Bakhtin, since carnival signifies the celebration of the demolition of the old world and the birth of the new one, paradoxes, purposefully disproportionate expressions, and the tendency to turn everything upside down are inherent to carnivals (Bakhtin, 2019, 419). In the grotesque body, depictions such as people with monstrous navels (Bakhtin, 2019, 339), ridiculous depictions of the lower parts of the body (Bakhtin, 2019, 47), open mouths, genitals, disproportionate nose contact (Güzel, 2016, 30) are frequently used. The nose represents the phallus, and the intestines and genitals are frequently shown as expanding beyond their normal size (Bakhtin, 2019, 328-329). When the focus is on objects that are used privately for carnival, there is the logic of bringing the private to the public space in the context of the logic of reversing, and bringing out the objects in the private space or inside the house. In this context, the transformation of household objects into weapons in carnival areas and the use of objects such as kitchen utensils are also in question (Bakhtin, 2019, 419). By this way, the representation of social hierarchies is reversed.

Another way of showing the new and old worlds together is the depiction of unified bodies. Mating, pregnancy, displaying dead and living bodies together, all kinds of elements that contrast with the combination of old and young bodies belong

to the grotesque body (Guzel, 2016, 51). Since the social logic of the reversal element is that every unreachable and hierarchically superior phenomenon in the heavens is brought down to the ground, and its reputation is destroyed, the element of contrast that appears everywhere is vital in terms of the grotesque body and carnivalesque.

Figure 5.23. France 2018 B



(alamy, 2018)

This photo of the *Gilets jaunes* protests in 2018 is an example of an exaggerated nose structure and the slogan "Macron Resignation" (Macron demission), revealing both the exaggeration and mockery, as well as the criticism and satire aspects of the grotesque.

Figure 5.24. France 2015



(gettyimages, 2015)

Another example of resorting to the grotesque symbol through France emerged in 2015 during a protest against increased taxes and prices in pad products. This protest, which was conducted while wearing a costume of female genitalia, is compatible with the grotesque symbolism.

Figure 5.25. Germany 2014



(blogs.pjstar, 2014)

The photo above belongs to the "Rose Monday" (Der Rosenmontag) carnival, which is extremely important for German culture, held in Cologne in 2014. Although it is not from an anti-austerity protest per se, the image above of this carnival, which is essential in terms of understanding the connection between carnivals and protests and the continuation of the atmosphere created by the austerity measures, is the depiction of fatted Angela Merkel, which symbolizes the growth of the German economy, and the depiction of François Hollande, which represents the shrinkage in the French economy. It contains many grotesque images such as contrast, reversal, monstrous belly, and simultaneous use of combined bodies.

Figure 5.26. Germany 2009



(*Duesseldorf.blog.de*, 2009)

In this image from 2009, a depiction of Merkel named "The Submissive She-Wolf" (Die Kapitulierende Wölfin) is made with reference to the word capitulation. Babies fed by Merkel represent economic elements such as bank aids and incentive packages. This criticism is directed at the incentives and aid packages that Germany, under the leadership of Merkel, offered to other European nations following the 2008 Global Crisis. This image is a crucial illustration for understanding how the grotesque is used in protests since it combines a variety of grotesque symbolic aspects, including exaggeration, inflation, a monstrous figure, absurdity, and nudity.

Figure 5.27. Greece 2015 B



(Alamy, 2015)

This banner, which appeared during the 2015 anti-austerity demonstrations in Greece, condemns both the then-Greek Economy Minister Ioannis Varoufakis and German Chancellor Angela Merkel harshly. Numerous components have an incredibly ludicrous and disparaging tone, like the representation of Merkel's lower body, the use of the Nazi insignia as an insult, and the placement of the Greek flag on the banner. Due to the carnival-like atmosphere that the masses produced, this poster, which represented the sense of freedom and the breakdown of hierarchical equilibrium that Bakhtin noted, appears to have emerged without any difficulty.

Figure 5.28. Italy 2011 B



(Gettyimages, 2011)

Mario Monti, the then-Prime Minister, was frequently criticized during the anti-austerity demonstrations in Rome in October 2011. Politically seeking a vote of confidence is symbolized by the slogan "Seeking Confidence" (Cerco Fiducia). A grotesque representation of Monti with a large mouth may be seen in the image above. This is how Mario Monti has been criticized for the difficulties he faced in politics in line with austerity measures.

Figure 5.29. Italy 2012 C



(agefotostock, 2012)

In an anti-austerity demonstration in Rome in 2012, criticisms of the cuts in public school spending and the worsening of working conditions were built with grotesque symbols. The red banner reads "Multiple and Aggravated State Rape" (Stupro di Stato Plurimo e Aggravato). Different grotesque symbols, such as the half-dead, half-alive human body and the emphasis on the lower parts of the body, provide intense criticism material in this protest. In the middle banner, the message "Public School with Patches on the As*" (La Scuola Pubblica con le Pezze al Culo) appears, and the patches represent the devastation caused by austerity measures and the poverty that will consequently arise. Finally, the banner on the leftmost half-dead, half-alive human figure reads "The Cadaver School" (La Scuola Cadavere), and the schools' financial difficulties are depicted with these three different representations. Different grotesque symbols, such as the half-dead half-alive human body, and the emphasis on the lower parts of the body, provide intense criticism in this protest.

Figure 5.30. UK 2015



(Alamy, 2015)

Tens of thousands of people participated in the anti-austerity movements in Manchester in 2015. The female protester above, who participated in the protests with a (Never Kiss A Tory!) banner, highlights the grotesque attitude with a drawing of Conservative Party leader David Cameron and a pig kissing. The critique here, together with the combination of human and animal bodies and the use of its sexuality-based symbolism, creates a new grotesque element.

Figure 5.31. UK 2019 B



(Dreamstime, 2019)

The anti-Brexit demonstrations in London in 2019, although they are not from an anti-austerity demonstration, can be evaluated in this section because it contains an economy-based criticism. While the portrayal of Theresa May, the then-Prime Minister, as Pinocchio constitutes an element of criticism in itself, the symbolizing that a long nose killed the British economy presents the importance of the nose in the grotesque body.

Figure 5.32. UK 2018



(Shutterstock, 2018)

In this image taken from the same protest, the fusion of the bodies of Theresa May, the former Prime Minister David Cameron, the future Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and Brexit Party Chairman Nigel Farage in a collage brings together many grotesque images such as ugly and absurd body structures, a fat belly element, a nose, and nudity.

Figure 5.33. Romania 2011



(Alamy, 2011)

This protester at the anti-austerity protests in Romania in 2011 wears a mask of the then-Romanian President Traian Băsescu. The grotesque, with its absurd and ugly nose structure, a half-dead, half-alive face, and an absurd mouth structure, were the main elements of this protest.

Figure 5.34. Spain 2012 B



(Alamy, 2012)

In this image from 2012 in Barcelona, Spain, there is a protest against Artur Mas, the then-President of the Government of Catalonia. In the photo, Mas has the body of a pig and cuts off his genitals. While the scissors symbolize the austerity measures,

Mas's trap set by these measures is imagined, and this image is shown on a phallic plane. This image exemplifies the tendency of the grotesque to descend to the lower parts of the body.

Figure 5.35. Spain 2012 C



(Gettyimages, 2012)

In this image, which emerged in Madrid in 2012, there is an example of domestic materials being carried to the street and used as a weapon. In the context of creating a contrast, symbolic elements such as moving the private to the public and the public to the private are used here by masked and unmasked participants. In addition, the participant, who hits the car in his other hand with the spoon in his hand, uses the sound he produces as a "weapon".

Figure 5.36. Greece 2011 C



(Gettyimages, 2011)

A similar image emerged during the Athens protests of May 2011. Pots, pans, spoons, and similar kitchen utensils in the hands of the protesters directly refer to the carnivalesque images Bakhtin mentions.

5.5. The Symbols of Defecation and Urination

For Bakhtin, defecation is a symbol used for the representation of funny bodies, but it is also a symbol that serves to discredit things that are exalted and superior (Bakhtin, 2019, 170). Similarly, the symbolism of peeing is used in the context of transforming fear into laughter and creating a space of freedom (Bakhtin, 2019, 346). The meaning of individuals urinating under fear to discredit and humiliate the object of fear means that not only the fearful person but also the fear object is humiliated and this constitutes an element of criticism against the medieval hierarchy (Güzel, 2016, 27).

When evaluated in the context of Bakhtin's approach, the symbolism of defecation and urination is not frequently used in today's social movements. This is also true in the plane of anti-austerity movements.

Figure 5.37. France 2018 C



(Twitter)

Nevertheless, such symbolisms are found in a few examples. The photo of the above balloons, which were created from excrement and launched as a weapon at French law enforcement officers, was found during the 2018 *Gilets jaunes* protests. As such, it is far from being an action made out of fear in terms of meaning; instead, it aims to discredit.

Figure 5.38. UK 2022



(Shutterstock, 2022)

This is taken in London in April 2022, with a protester in a stool suit protesting the rising cost of living and economic problems. As in the example of the *Gilets jaunes*, it is impossible to see the purpose of mocking, humiliating, and laughing against the element of fear in these photographs. The banner at the protestor's hand, "No Sh*t Life! Stop Caring!" (Stop Sh*t Living! Stop Giving A Crap!), exaggerates the level of impoverishment.

5.6. Insults, Curses and Imitations

For Bakhtin, insult is a fundamental element in the context of discrediting and bringing down the phallic power to the earth (Bakhtin, 2019, 54). Obscene, funny, and satirical parodies are one of the main features of folk culture (Bakhtin, 2019, 365). While the grotesque always contains an element of satire, it takes actions to extremes and unexpected places (Bakhtin, 2019, 319). Ridiculous and inappropriate

jokes result from the daily use of language and the emergence of the culture it contains (Bakhtin, 2019, 352). While the carnivals in the marketplaces constitute a fundamental element of rebellion against the ideological system and hierarchical structure, one of the essential elements in destroying the hierarchical structure is the element of imitation (Güzel, 2016, 207). The grotesque elements that appear in carnivals are generally intended to humiliate, and there is always the presence of imitators (Güzel, 2016, 28).

Insults, ridicule, humiliation, and imitations are also frequently encountered in the anti-austerity protests in Europe in the post-2008 period. Humiliating acts against political leaders, institutions, or general austerity measures also reinforce the use of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols.

Figure 5.39. Greece 2015 B



(Alamy, 2015)

Going through the example of Greece, it has been observed that both the anti-austerity protests in 2015 and all the anti-austerity protests in Greece after 2008 were

targeted at German politicians rather than their local leaders. For the Greek people, Germany and its politicians are the main subjects of fear and criticism. The financial aid given mainly by Germany and the austerity measures offered as a prescription by German politicians drew the reaction of the Greek people. The restrictions, cuts in public expenditures, and financial prohibitions have led Greek people to use insults, curses, mockery, and imitation, especially against Angela Merkel. The person represented in the wheelchair with the austerity syringe in his hand in the photograph above is Wolfgang Schauble, the then-German Finance Minister. The imitation of Doctor Merkel and the finance minister's forced injection of austerity measures into Greece with her syringe in hand are presented in a grotesque context.

Figure 5.40. Greece 2015 C



(Alamy, 2015)

In another frame of the same protest, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, German Finance Minister, and Merkel face each other. Against the austerity syringe, Tsipras holds a pair of scissors, symbolizing cuts. As can be understood from the

smile on the faces of the people behind, a street theater takes place through the leaders, and the people show their criticism through imitations.

Figure 5.41. Greece 2012



(Alamy, 2012)

Another example from Greece is the depiction of Merkel hanging herself during the anti-austerity protest in 2012 with curse saying, "Angela, Save the World, Kill Yourself." Many protests from the same year featured humiliating and ridiculed images of Merkel as a clown. It is possible to see curses, swearing, imitation, and all kinds of discrediting behavior towards Merkel in many more examples to be given over Greece.

Figure 5.42. Germany 2013



(ifex.org, 2013)

The photo above is from demonstrations in Berlin in 2013, showing a dancing figure of Merkel with an absurdly large head and Edward Snowden, a former CIA employee of the time, alongside. After Snowden leaked secret CIA documents, Merkel, who is in this frame, presenting a criticism of the allegations that Germany and the United States had illegal connections at that time, was seen as a direct mockery and humiliation object of many anti-austerity protests in her country.

Figure 5.43. France 2018 D



(Radiofrance, 2018)

In the case of the *Gilets jaunes* in France, the primary target has always been Emmanuel Macron. Since the French people see Macron as the leading actor in all austerity measures and economic problems, they have directed almost all their ridicule, insults, and curses toward him.

Figure 5.44. Italy 2011 C



(Gettyimages, 2011)

This image, which was taken during the protests in Rome in 2011, carries an element of criticism and discrediting of not a single leader but the whole Italian government. Italian politicians represented in a pornographic cartoon were tried to be humiliated in front of the parliament building with the message of "Porn State" (Il Porno Stato).

Figure 5.45. Italy 2012 D



(Businessinsider, 2012)

Prime Minister Mario Monti, depicted as a vampire, is seen on this banner, hung on the Vittorio Emanuele II Monument, one of the important symbols of the Italian nation, by students protesting the austerity measures in Rome in 2012. The slogan "No Barons in Government" (No A Governo Dei Baroni!) also helps symbolize Monti's financial corruption.

Figure 5.46. Spain 2012 D



(Alamy, 2012)

Another example of the ridiculous nature of the grotesque is this photograph from the 15-M movements in Spain. In Madrid, the banner in front of the demonstrators who took to the squares naked at the anniversary protests of the 15-M protests in 2012 reads "Against the Cuts" (Contra Los Recortes). Taken together with the scissors symbol, the austerity policies are symbolized by cutting the male genitalia. It is given as a threat message that if cuts are made, the "ugly" and places that should not be seen will be revealed by using parodic and cynical tone and this is an apparent use of grotesque imagery in the context of folk culture.

Figure 5.47. Romania 2015



(Digi24, 2015)

In a demonstration held in Romania against corruption and austerity regulations in 2015, former Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Liviu Dregnea, convicted of irregularities in the 2016 elections, is featured. The depiction of Dregnea wrapped in toilet paper and dressed in a prisoner's outfit is a prominent example of the use of grotesque elements in the context of ridicule and humiliation.

Figure 5.48. Romania 2012 B



(*Economist*, 2012)

In the protest, where thousands of protesters gathered in Bucharest against austerity measures in 2012, Romanian President Traian Basescu tried to be humiliated by mocking him as a pirate and looter.

Figure 5.49. UK 2016 B



(*i-d.vice.com*, 2016)

At the anti-austerity protests in London in 2015 and 2016, then-Prime Minister David Cameron often appeared as an object of ridicule. During an anti-austerity demonstration in London, Cameron was portrayed as a "War Pig" by a protester wearing a pig costume and a David Cameron mask.

Figure 5.50. UK 2015 B



LONDON, ENGLAND - MAY 09: Anti-government protesters gather outside Downing Street during a march down Whitehall on May 9, 2015 in London, England. After the United Kingdom went to the polls on Thursday the Conservative party were confirmed as the winners of a closely fought general election which has returned David Cameron as Prime Minister with a slender majority for his party. (Photo by Rob Stothard/Getty Images)

(NME,2015)

Lastly, using curses and swearwords such as "F*ck the Cuts" and "Scumbag Conservatives" (Tory Scum) were seen in 2015 in London during the anti-austerity protests attended by tens of thousands of people who are against the cabinet of the Conservative Party.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the concluding chapter, the results of all preceding analyses will be provided and discussed. First, a general discussion will be conducted by summarizing the topics handled in the previous chapters. Then, the limitations of the thesis within the aforementioned context will be identified, and implications for future studies will be briefly proposed. Finally, the thesis' contributions to the literature on social movements will be elaborated.

This thesis holds that common grotesque and carnivalesque symbols observed in different anti-austerity protests staged in European countries following the 2008 crisis reveal the accuracy of Mikhail Bakhtin's theoretical understanding of these symbols. In this regard, anti-austerity protests organized in Germany, France, Italy, England, Romania, Greece, and Spain are examined through a comparative approach to test the validity of this argument. Overall, it could be put forth that the findings of a photographic analysis corroborate the aforementioned claim.

Prior to the 1960s, it was not conceivable to speak about a systematic field of study for social movements. However, following 1960, social movements studies began to emerge in the disciplines of Sociology, History, and Political Science. In Literature Review, the literature on social movements from the 1960s to the present has been analyzed chronologically. The recurring question patterns have been posed in every period throughout the past six decades. Questions of why and how social movements emerge, the motivations of social movement participants, and how social movements are organized are further examined.

Four macro-social movement classifications were developed by identifying the major dividing lines based on the class identity of the members, their motivations for participation, and the organizational structure of the movements. In the old social movements category, working-class-based movements within the framework of materialistic values were analyzed. In contrast, middle-class-based movements within post-material values were analyzed in the new social movements category. In this framework, the working class movements of the 1960s and earlier are classified as old social movements. In contrast, the women's rights and environmental movements of the 1970s are classified as new social movements. During these years, approaches and theories such as Resource Mobilization Theory, Political Opportunity Theory, Framing Analysis, and Materialism vs. Post-Materialism contributed to the expansion of the social movements literature. With the acceleration of globalization in the 1990s, social movements began to evolve into a transnational identity. At the end of the 1990s, the movements in which people from different classes came together in many parts of the world to protest against neoliberal policies were called global justice movements. In these years, Donatella della Porta proposed that structural elements of the global system be incorporated into the study of social movements, and research on the impact of capitalism on social movements gained momentum. In the aftermath of the 2008 Global Crisis, national-level protests against neoliberal policies and governments' financial tightening decisions were called anti-austerity movements. This thesis seeks to integrate the concepts of grotesque and carnivalesque from a Bakhtinesque perspective into this latest literature that is currently developing.

Bakhtin's concepts of grotesque and carnivalesque are explained in the theory part of the thesis. The act of humor and laughter introduces theoretical explanations since

these concepts are crucial to comprehending the nature of carnivals and the grotesque body. Laughing is not just a behavior that emerges in moments of happiness and joy. From the earliest times, the act of laughing has been used as a reflex developed against fear and the source of fear/authority and as a tool to suppress it. The element of humor is one of the most effective tools for the emergence of the act of laughing. Much like the act of laughing, it does not appear only in moments of joy and happiness; but also emerge as a critical element, continues to exist as a political criticism and satire, supported by numerous historical examples.

The main components in the formation of the grotesque are the act of laughing and the humor of the people. Considering the grotesque elements and folk culture reveals the Bakhtinesque grotesque body feature. The grotesque body appears in its simplest and most full form in carnival squares. These rituals that are unique and distinctive are classified as carnivalesque. This thesis establishes a connection between carnival squares and squares where present-day social movements occur; between carnivalesque elements and banners in these social movements; between the concept of the grotesque body and the integral appearance of protesters; and between the grotesque elements and the behaviors/patterns of protesters.

In the second half of the theory chapter, after studying the conceptual components of Bakhtin's theory, the compatibility between social movements and the humor element is examined. Afterward, a discussion was held on using humor in social movements and what it causes in line with historical examples.

In the final section of the theory chapter, examples are provided to demonstrate how the use of humor in social movements has evolved into grotesque. The examples provided about the employment of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in social

movements in various European countries are meant to serve as an introduction to the remaining sections of the thesis.

In the methodology and case selection chapter of the thesis, two specific questions that must be answered are elucidated. The first question is why the anti-austerity protests that arose in seven countries in Europe after 2008 were explicitly chosen. The anti-austerity protests in a variety of European Union nations serve as a suitable laboratory for the intense emotions of the vast majority of people who have become impoverished as a result of the 2008 global financial crisis. Second, the existence of cultural differences between countries provides an opportunity to test the universality of the grotesque and carnivalesque elements. Third, it will provide the opportunity to test the presence of similar grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in countries with different economic indicators, especially with the addition of Germany to the analysis.

The second question is why photographs were used to analyze selected cases. It is imperative to include a visual element in the analysis to see the manifestation of the grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in the anti-austerity protests under consideration. In this context, the moments captured by amateur or professional photographers, scanned from internet sources, are considered historical evidence and analyzed. In the thesis, photographs are intended to serve as evidence-gathering tools as opposed to a method of content analysis through photographs. In the findings and analysis section of the thesis, photographs of anti-austerity protests that took place after 2008 in Germany, Italy, England, Spain, Romania, Greece, and France were analyzed through a Bakhtinesque framework. The contents of the photographs sought evidence of the existence of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols. As a result,

similar grotesque and carnivalesque symbols were observed in each of the seven anti-austerity protests in different countries.

The encountered symbols were categorized into six different groups. In Bakhtinesque theory, the features of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols are defined broadly. Therefore, a more systematic analysis needs to classify grotesque and carnivalesque characteristics in terms of their similarities and differences while examining social movements through the lens of Bakhtin. Although the concepts of grotesque and carnivalesque are intertwined and difficult to separate, the first three categories, which include fictitious body anatomies, the use of masks, and the image of the Satan, are suitable for the definition of the carnivalesque as the most fundamental and defining characteristics of carnival areas. The other three categories were evaluated in accordance with the grotesque and the grotesque body. It is essential to keep in mind that all of these elements in both broad headings have been employed to make people laugh, discredit, and overcome their fears. Moreover, the depicted elements are related to folk culture. In this thesis, these elements, evaluated in the context of the emergence of folk culture, are managed to be associated with social movements.

It was noted that the first category factor, fictitious body anatomies, appeared in a similar fashion in seven separate cases. Here, an example is provided by descending into subcategories on the plane of half-human, half-animal figures, pig-headed human figures, and monstrous face figures. The 2010 anti-austerity protest in Athens (figure-1) and the 2016 protest in London (figure-2) show the similarities of the swine-headed human figure (figure-2). With the development of technological possibilities, the example of the protesters symbolizing fictitious body anatomies through costumes and puppets is given in figure-4 and figure-5. The examples of

Berlin in 2012 (figure 3) and Romania in 2018 (figure 6) demonstrate examples of monstrous anatomy.

The use of masks was evaluated as the most intense carnivalesque element in terms of quantity. Within the scope of this thesis, although a limited number of photographs were included to demonstrate a few pieces of data for each case, it was observed that protesters employed masks extensively. The usage of masks in anti-austerity protests has been defined in two specific subcategories. First, it was observed that masks of the iconic character "V" from the movie *V for Vendetta* were worn in all anti-austerity protests. As exemplified separately in Figures 9-10-11-12, protesters frequently used the "V" mask as a grotesque and carnivalesque symbol. The second subcategory is the use of protesters' masks symbolizing the faces (with exaggerated images, as expected) of state administrators and policymakers for the purpose of criticism, ridicule, and humiliation. Figures 7-8 and 13 are primary examples of this subcategory.

The third category addresses the employment of Satan symbolism during protests. The Satan figure is a unique and distinctive feature of carnival celebrations. In Europe, the Satan figure, which the people adopted for criticism and relief against the oppressive and authoritarian church structure of the middle ages and the Christianity religion, was frequently observed in the anti-austerity protests. For Bakhtin, the Satan figure is described as a funny, cheerful, and friendly being; in anti-austerity social movements, it is sometimes portrayed as a cheerful and funny, sometimes scary and evil element. Therefore, examples of the use of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols for entertainment and laughter, as well as criticism and satire, can be seen in the Satan image sub-title. Figures 15, 17, and 22 criticize neoliberal

institutions and the global capitalist system in the context of marginalization and demonization through the image of the Satan.

In the fourth category, the features of the grotesque body and the reversal of social hierarchies were examined together. Based on these two elements is the manifestation of all kinds of contradictions that are unexpected, exaggerated, and incompatible with what is considered to be “the normal.” The aim is to bring down every person, institution, and object that is feared and respected, appearing high in the hierarchy, with the theme of contrast and ridicule, and overthrow their position. In this context, all kinds of contradictory dilemmas, exaggerated body measurements, and manifestations of the lower body are included in this category. The 2018 *Gilets jaunes* (Figure-23) and 2019 Brexit (Figure-31) protesters reveal an important symbol of the grotesque with their exaggerated depictions of the noses of their leaders. Figure 25 and Figure 32 depict the symbols of united bodies and the contrast of bodies. The 2011 Athens (Figure-36) and 2012 Madrid (Figure-35) protests exemplify a dichotomy by transporting residential material (private) to public places. Figures 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 34 constitute an exaggerated representation of sexuality, descent into the lower parts of the body, disproportionate body lines, and the criticism and satire that arises in this way.

The weakest part of the analysis is about the symbolism of defecation and urination under fear, which is discussed in the fifth subheading. Aside from a few instances, no grotesque or carnivalesque features expected by the confines of the theory were identified in the practical context of the cases examined. It has been observed that protesters do not behave in this manner during anti-austerity protests against the object of fear and authority.

In the final category, mockery (Figures-42 and 44), profanity (Figure-43), curses, and imitation were analyzed altogether. In the anti-austerity protests in seven countries after 2008, these four grotesque features were seen intensely and frequently. In the cases of Germany, Italy, France, England (Figure-49, 50), and Romania, while the elements of mockery (Figure-47), profanity (Figure-48), and curses are more intense; In the case of Greece, with the presence of the other three elements, the element of imitation (Figure-39, 40) emerged more intensely. In Spain, elements of mockery and discredit are more prevalent (Figure 46).

When seven cases of austerity protests are analyzed, Angela Merkel, the European Union institutions, national leaders, and neoliberal features of the global system emerge as the four most prominent enemy images. The protesters became angry with these people, institutions, and actors, whom they saw as responsible for the impoverishment and fiscal tightening measures, and they expressed their anger by resorting to grotesque and carnivalesque symbols.

Angela Merkel is one of the main targets of the anti-austerity protests in Europe after the 2008 Crisis. Due to Germany's political and economic leadership within the European Union, it is generally accepted that the fiscal tightening policies of other European Union countries have influenced the decision-making processes. In this context, a parallel has been constructed between Germany's strong position in the Union and the drive of anger against authority in the protests. In the case of Greece in particular, the protesters reacted more against Merkel than against their political leaders.

The European Union and its institutions, which the protesters described as criminals and directed their anger at, came to the fore as another authority and fear

figure. Due to the supranational structure of the European Union, the European Central Bank influences the national economic policies of the Eurozone countries. This is the main reason for the protests directly against the European Union and its institutions in the anti-austerity demonstrations in Greece and Italy.

In England, Romania, and France, anti-austerity protesters directly targeted national politicians. In all the anti-austerity protests that took place in the UK between 2008 and 2017, the Tories (Conservative and Unionist Party) (Figure-32, 50), David Cameron (Figure-30, 49), and Theresa May (Figure-31) were seen as the main targets and criminals. Anti-austerity protests in Romania have primarily targeted President Traian Bășescu and Prime Minister Emil Boc. Emil Boc resigned in 2012 as a result of intensified protests and turmoil. Emmanuel Macron was the primary target of the *Gilets jaunes* protests. Numerous discrediting (Figures 7, 23, and 43), grotesque and carnivalesque symbols (Figures 7, 23, and 43) were employed by the protesters against Macron.

The cases of Germany and Spain are examples of anti-austerity protests where it seems that the global system and capitalism are the major targets of the demonstrators. The depiction of *Sesame Street* puppets (Figure-5) and the rhetoric that "politicians are the puppets of the market" or the extensive use of the "V" mask (Figure-12) in anti-austerity protests in Spain are examples of criticism of the global market system. *Indignados* in Spain (2011), *Occupy! Berlin* (2011) and *Blockupy Frankfurt* (2015) movements in Germany are directly related to the *Occupy! Wall Street* (2011) protests. Additionally, the protesters of the *Carnival der Empoerten* (Carnival of the Indignant) in Berlin (2011) see themselves as kin to the *Indignados* protesters, providing evidence for the universality of the carnivalesque element.

Finally, in the context of the thesis's scope, a general discussion should be conducted on its shortcomings and how it can be improved in future research. Theoretically and methodologically, two parts stand out as lacking. The theoretical element is the scale mismatch between the emphasis on universality attributed to the grotesque and carnivalesque by the Bakhtinesque theory and the data set analyzed. According to Bakhtin, the grotesque and the carnivalesque appear in similar ways every time – wherever there is folk culture. The scope of the thesis, however, is limited to the European continent and even seven countries within. Secondly, the scope of the thesis allows us to consider only the anti-austerity protests that took place after 2008. In short, the thesis is the result of a study on a constrained data set, both in terms of time and the inability to incorporate diverse sorts of social movements.

In the methodological context, the shortcoming is only the effort to prove the existence of similar grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in the thesis. In the thesis, in-depth photographic analysis and comparative cultural analysis were not made by applying quantitative and qualitative research methods. On the basis of the argument on the similarity of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in anti-austerity protests in Europe, the element of similarity was highlighted, and the similarities discovered served as evidence. In this regard, another aspect of the thesis that can be expanded upon is the comparative analysis of imaginary differences that may arise from cultural, historical, and regional variations.

Taking into account the scope, theoretical framework, findings, and limitations of this thesis, four recommendations are provided for future research of a similar nature:

- (i) Grotesque and carnivalesque symbols should be analyzed in anti-austerity protests in other parts of the world, which would also do more justice to the testing of universality principle that Bakhtin mentioned and broaden the scope of a future study.
- (ii) A similar analysis should be conducted not only in the anti-austerity protests but also in the categories of old, new, and global justice movements, and a comparative analysis should be carried out on four different categories of social movements accepted in the literature.
- (iii) The similarities or differences of grotesque and carnivalesque symbols in social movements should be examined via historical, cultural, and regional research.
- (iv) The dominant theories and approaches in the social movement literature from the 1960s should be compared within a Bakhtinesque framework. In the context of the reasons and motivations of individuals to participate in social movements, a different perspective on approaches such as *Resource Mobilisation Theory*, *Political Opportunity Theory*, and *Post-Materialism* should be reconsidered through the assumptions of irrationality formed by folk culture, carnival life, and the feeling of ecstasy created by crowds. Likewise, studies on the organizational structures, strategies, and tactics of social movements and approaches such as *Framing Analysis* can also be reconsidered within the framework of the grotesque and carnivalesque.



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