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The Dynamics of Party-Based Euroscepticism during the Economic Crisis in Greece

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Introduction – (Research Question)

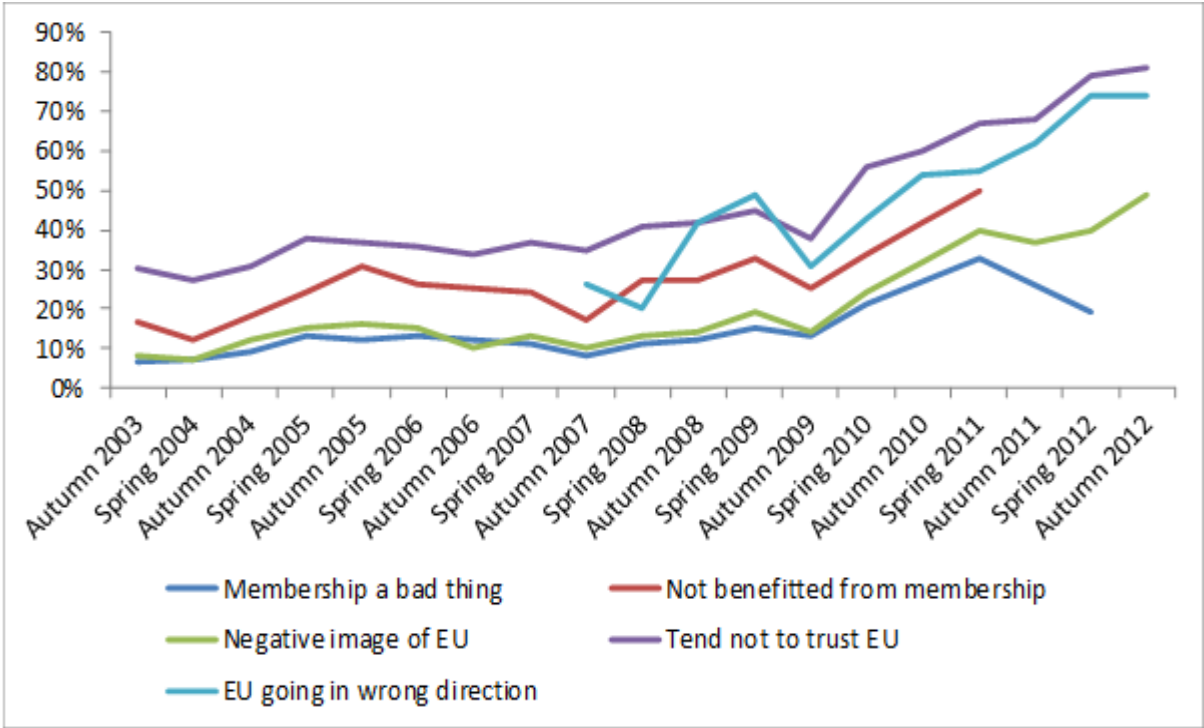
The economic crisis that has been escalating in Europe since 2009 has created a dismal social, economic and political situation in Greece, making its political system look like a powder keg ready to explode at any moment. In 2010, Greece became the first member-state of the European Union to accept an EU/IMF bailout package. The acceptance of the bailout package created political turbulence within the country, which was translated into an enormous electoral upheaval that to some degree disintegrated the established party system of the country. The traditional two-party incumbency lost its electoral power and radical, Eurosceptic parties emerged, often “accused” of gaining power by taking political advantage of the economic situation of Greece (Bosco and Verney, 2012: 130-131, 148).

Historically, Greece has enjoyed an interesting love-hate relationship with the EU, given that since its accession (1981) there have been mixed feelings in the political parties and the Greek public opinion on 'Europe' and the role of Greece in it. Eurosceptic dynamics existed in the Greek politics since 1959, when the Greek Government applied for the first association agreement with the EC (Verney, 2011: 51). However, any dynamics of Euroscepticism before 1959 were rather in their infancy, since the relationship of Greece with European integration became essential only after June 1959. Nonetheless, after the late 80s, Greece followed the European Union with its evolution, integration and monetary unification.

During the Eurozone crisis and mainly after 2009 when the economic crisis became critical in Greece, public Euroscepticism increased. An important fact is that “before the crisis, Euroscepticism was a minority viewpoint in Greek public opinion” with the majority of the mainstream parties and the Greek citizens being in favor of the European integration (Nanou and Verney, 2013).

As the following public opinion data from the Eurobarometer indicates, the economic crisis has caused many supporters of the EU in Greece to become sceptics or even critics after 2009. The below figure shows the evolution of the Greek public opinion towards the EU from Autumn 2003 to Autumn 2012, by using indicators that show the negative evaluations of the Greek public towards the EU and its process of integration.

Figure 1: Indicators of attitudes towards the European Union (negative responses)



Source: Eurobarometer surveys¹.

According to the figure, after Autumn 2009 with the onset of the Greek sovereign debt crisis, the Greek public has become more sceptical towards the EU. Taking this general picture into account, this research project will conduct a different analysis aiming to examine how Euroscepticism affected Greek parties. Scholarly literature² offers two main explanations on

¹ See the Eurobarometer Survey. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm and in Nanou and Verney, 2013.

² Extensive reference in the scholarly literature will be provided in the following section of this study.

what causes party-based Euroscepticism. The first explanation suggest that party-based Euroscepticism is a product of the ideology of a party and the second one suggests that strategy determines party positions on European integration.

The aim of this research project intends to examine *whether party-based Euroscepticism in Greece has been enhanced due to ideology or electoral strategies during the Greek debt crisis (2009-2012)*. To this effect, the subsequent chapters will define the concept of Euroscepticism, offer the explanations discussed in the scholarly literature, present the methodology that will be used in this study, the importance of studying the Greek case and finally the analysis of the Greek parties.

Chapter 1

Defining and Explaining Euroscepticism

1.1 Introduction

In the current literature, there has been a variety of definitions of the concept of Euroscepticism offered by many scholars, who tried to understand the nature, scope and content of the phenomenon. Euroscepticism has been mainly treated as a relatively new phenomenon, that is usually located in the periphery of society and the margins of the party system and it has been explained as the product of ideology and strategy of parties. Section 1.2 examines the definitional controversies and the various approaches in the current literature and explains how party-based Euroscepticism will be conceptualized for the sake of this study. Section 1.3 reflects on the academic debate on what causes party-based Euroscepticism and offers the explanations made by scholars, who give priority to either ideological-programmatic reasons, or strategic-tactical positioning causing party-based Euroscepticism. The same section will additionally provide the hypotheses of the study. Finally, section 1.4 will present the methods that will be used in this study.

1.2 Definition of Party-Based Euroscepticism

The concept of Euroscepticism must be defined before one embarks on with studying the phenomenon and its dynamics in domestic politics. Cecile Leconte (2010: 3) argues that “Euroscepticism is a term that originated in a specific context, that of British public debate on the EC the mid-1980s.” The first attempt to define party-based Euroscepticism has been made by Taggart (1998: 366), who in looking at Western Europe defined the phenomenon as ‘the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and qualified opposition to the process of European integration’.

Szczerbiak and Taggart (2001a) thereupon, based on Taggart's initial observation, made a distinction between two types of Euroscepticism, 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism, by refining Taggart's definition with a specific reference to East Central Europe. 'Hard Euroscepticism implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001a: 10); soft Euroscepticism, in contrast, is defined as involving 'contingent or qualified opposition to European integration' (ibid, 2001a: 10).

It is important to make clear what Euroscepticism is not. According to Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003: 12), the dissatisfaction with one or several EU policies does not particularly equate with Euroscepticism. EU policies should be distinguished in 'core' and 'peripheral' policies. For example, while opposition to EMU or to the most important treaties of the EU can be equated with Euroscepticism, opposition to policies that are less central, such as the CFSP or the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), cannot be perceived as Euroscepticism. However, categorizing policies as core or peripheral is something subjective for each country. Furthermore, opposition to EU enlargement does not necessarily denote Eurosceptic orientations.

Aside Taggart's and Szczerbiak's influential contribution to the literature on the conceptualization of Euroscepticism, there have been more contributions that responded to their Hard-Euroscepticism and Soft-Euroscepticism distinction. The most important criticism/response on the Hard and Soft distinction has been provided by Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde (2002) who identified certain weaknesses in Taggart's and Szczerbiak's initial definition. Their concerns have been mainly based on the fact that the concept of soft-Euroscepticism is defined in such a broad manner that inevitably every opposition or disagreement with any policy decision of the EU will fall into this definition. Moreover, they have emphasized that the criteria used to separate the two forms of Euroscepticism are not

adequate nor clear and as a consequence it becomes difficult to offer explanations of why different forms of Euroscepticism might appear. Furthermore, Kopecký and Mudde underlined that the phenomenon of Euroscepticism as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak is too inclusive and thus it wrongly ascribes to parties that might be pro-European or totally anti-European (ibid 2002: 300).

Hence, Kopecký and Mudde (2002: 301-303) went on with suggesting an alternative, less inclusive way of defining Euroscepticism. Their definition of Euroscepticism is a fourfold distinction between Euroenthusiasts, Eurorejects, Eurosceptics, and Europragmatists. Euroenthusiasts are defined as “groups or parties that support the European Union’s general positions and its ideas on the integration project and believe that the EU is or will soon become the institutionalization of these ideas”, Eurorejects “subscribe neither to the ideas underlying the process of European integration nor to the EU”, Eurosceptics “support the general ideas of European integration, but are pessimistic about the EU’s current and/or future reflection of these ideas” and finally Europragmatists “do not support the general ideas of European integration underlying the EU, nor do they necessarily oppose them, yet they do support the EU” (ibid 2002: 302-303).

The critique made by Kopecký and Mudde has been assessed by its receivers, as an important one, as it moved the debate on party-based Euroscepticism forward in a significant way. The above criticism has been positively evaluated by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008, v.2: 242) who accepted that their definition of Soft party-based Euroscepticism might have indeed been too encompassing and too broad, by including parties that were clearly in essence pro-European integration.

Their later altered definition of the concept suggests that: “Hard Euroscepticism is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies

towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived” (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, v.1: 7). A party would presumably mobilize against the EU if it were opposed to it on principle, according to the authors. On the other hand, “Soft Euroscepticism is where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU’s trajectory” (ibid, 2008: 8).

Hard-Eurosceptic parties will oppose the EU mainly because they see it as an enemy. Communists for example see the EU as the embodiment of capitalism, whereas the Right sees the EU as the embodiment of socialism, EU means bureaucracy for populists and is characterized by supranationalism according to nationalists (ibid, 2008: 8). All the above party perceptions of Europe are inherently enclosed in the nature and the ideology of each party. On the other side of the coin, soft-Eurosceptic parties find that the EU becomes problematic whenever its development opposes issues or policies that they support (ibid, 2008: 8).

Other definitions of Euroscepticism include Wessels (2007) three point-scheme of ‘adamant Eurosceptics’, ‘Eurosceptics’ and ‘critical Europeans’ as well as Conti’s (2003) categorization of hard Euroscepticism, soft Euroscepticism, no commitment, functional Europeanism and identity Europeanism. Wessels has tried as Kopecký and Mudde, to capture the category of those who are currently opposed to European Union’s policies, but are positive towards integration in principle; what has been generally assessed as the main problem in Taggart’s and Szczerbiak’s initial broad definition.

For the sake of this study, Euroscepticism of Greek parties will be studied in their anti-European rhetoric in their manifestos, principle documents, interviews, public speeches delivered by their leading members, the voting against the bailout package accompanied by

the austerity measures and the European policies implemented in Greece since 2010. However, the definition of Euroscepticism provided by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008) will be adopted in this study. The primary reason for adopting Taggart's and Szczerbiak's definition with whichever constraints and criticism it has faced, lies behind the fact that it is probably the most-applied and widely known definition of the concept of Euroscepticism. Furthermore, the majority of scholars and researchers that dealt with Euroscepticism in their studies used the conceptualization made by the two authors. Susannah Verney for example, in her study "An Exceptional Case? Party and Popular Euroscepticism in Greece, 1959–2009", comparable study to this one, used the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak. Therefore, I will also apply it in my study and rely on their widely referenced analytical framework of party-based Euroscepticism.

In this study, as Hard-Euroscepticism will be considered the intense and principled opposition of parties towards the EU and the policies agreed with Greece during the crisis. Soft-Euroscepticism will be where parties occasionally and mainly because of the context of the crisis, presented oppositional rhetoric against the EU and the measures implemented in Greece but did not have any strong ideological predispositions towards rejecting the EU project (principled objection to European integration). Finally, the parties that did not oppose the policies agreed between Greece and the EU, voted in favor of the Memorandums of Understanding and managed to form a coalition government during the crisis, will be considered as not Eurosceptic³.

³ Although the party of New Democracy voted against the first memorandum dictated by the EU, it is considered a non-Eurosceptic party, for reasons that will be explained in the party analysis section of this study.

1.3 Explanations of Party-Based Euroscepticism

This section introduces the main theories that explain why parties are, or become, Eurosceptic. A major issue in understanding the phenomenon is trying to answer what causes it. The question of causality of party-based Euroscepticism finds answer mainly in two approaches in the literature. The first suggests that party-based Euroscepticism can be a product of strategic factors, and the second suggests that ideological-programmatic factors cause the phenomenon. In addition to these two factors, a combination of both ideology and strategy might also explain party-based Euroscepticism.

Strategy causing Euroscepticism

Strategy of parties is a major factor that causes parties to be Eurosceptic. The strategic factors are mostly seen as the tactic of parties in trying to gain power and electoral support. Sitter (2001: 25, 2002: 5) argues that party-based Euroscepticism is mainly a question of strategic positioning of a party. He further expands his argumentation in explaining that strategic positioning aims to oppose and that often parties use the European issue as a channel for taking strategic positions (Sitter in Szczerbiak and Taggart (eds.), 2008: 346). The above tactic might be a constant process of strategy of parties or an opportunistic switching of their programmatic positions.

“Euro-scepticism is a product of party competition – and is, both in its origins and development, the ‘politics of opposition’” (Sitter 2001: 22). Strategy of parties is seen as something that depends on one party’s relationship to executive power and government. A party that participates in government is less likely to be seen as a party that could develop anti-EU positions or even strong Euroscepticism. The reason for that is that the governing party/parties evaluate the costs of a potential exit from the EU as huge and being in office they deal with the reality of EU membership. Furthermore contact with EU officials and other

European governments might have a 'socializing effect' on government officials, mitigating thus strongly Eurosceptic positions (Leconte, 2008: 106). Additionally, parties that do not wish to reach office and gain access to it do not mitigate their Eurosceptic position, in order to be 'Euro-compatible'.

Further explanations on how party strategy causes Eurosceptic dynamics have been provided by Cecile Leconte. Leconte (2008: 107) classified parties according to three distinctions. The first distinction includes parties of government that as mentioned before tend to be Europhile and protest-based parties that tend to be Eurosceptic which is 'the most pervasive form of party-based Euroscepticism in Western Europe' (Taggart 1998: 372). "For protest-based parties, Euroscepticism is a useful strategic resource in their anti-system opposition to the political establishment" (Leconte, 2008 :107). As regards the second distinction, Leconte distinguishes incumbent parties from opposition parties. This distinction highlights the oppositional status of Euroscepticism, as that of 'the politics of opposition' (Sitter 2001). The third distinction is that of office-seeking parties versus vote-seeking and policy-seeking parties. With the third distinction Leconte analyzes party attitudes towards the EU according to Strom and Mueller's (1999) typology of office-seeking, vote-seeking and policy-seeking parties⁴. Office-seeking parties will moderate Euroscepticism in order to be considered for coalitions, while vote-seeking parties might rely on Euroscepticism to gain electoral power. Finally policy-seeking parties will either remain Eurosceptic or will moderate their Euroscepticism depending on the circumstances. Therefore, strategy will play a different role in creating Eurosceptic policies, depending on the aforementioned types of parties.

⁴ The definitions of the office-seeking, vote-seeking and policy-seeking parties are provided in the book of Strøm, K. and Mueller, W. (1999): "*Policy, offices or votes? How political parties in Western Europe make hard decisions.*" Pages 5-9.

Ideology causing Euroscepticism

Kopecký and Mudde (2002: 319-320), have attempted to explain why party positions might be determined by strategy and ideology. According to their argumentation, ideology determines the views a political party presents towards European integration in principle. These views and attitudes are most of the times relative constant. On the other hand, strategy will determine whether a party will support a current trajectory of the EU or not. Their analysis suggests that *ideology plays the main role* in Eurosceptic positions of parties, as “ideology determines a party’s support for the ideas underlying the process of European integration, whereas strategy can play an important role in explaining a party’s support for the EU” (ibid, 2002: 319-320).

When one analyzes party positions on European issues, one should view party positions in more programmatic/ideological terms. In other words, the position of a party on a European issue (EU policies) can be assessed from its more general ideological identity (Marks and Wilson, 2000).

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008, v.2: 255) noted that certain kind of parties always have ideological predispositions when adopting a Eurosceptic position or not. A clear example of parties that have an ideological predisposition in adopting Eurosceptic positions are the nationalist parties, while parties that would not take a Eurosceptic stance are the social democratic and the Christian democratic parties. According to the explanation of ideology determining a Eurosceptic stance, there is also a tendency that the most Eurosceptic parties are supposed to be located on the peripheries or extremes of party politics (ibid, 2008: 255).

Other studies (Hooghe et al. 2002: 971; Ray 2007: 163-164), have confirmed the correlation between ideological extremism of parties and Euroscepticism. The closest a party is positioned – according to its ideology – in the center of the political spectrum, the less likely it is to be Eurosceptic. On the other hand, parties that are located in the extremes and margins

of the political spectrum of domestic politics are likely to display different kinds of Euroscepticism, according to their ideological predisposition and the political circumstances.

The extreme right and extreme left parties share Euroscepticism in the sense that both resort to extreme policies but mainly because “Euroscepticism has long been a peripheral phenomenon. Its natural domain has been the edges of the party system” (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2013: 17). On the other hand, parties in the middle including most Liberal, Conservative, Christian Democratic and Social Democratic parties are generally much more supportive of the European integration and the ideas and policies the EU is generally promoting (Hooghe et al., 2002: 968).

A combination of strategy and ideology

In addition to strategy or ideology unilaterally explaining Eurosceptic stances of parties, there is also the explanation that a combination of both can affect party positions on Europe, depending on the type of the party or the situation.

The position that a party will adopt on the issue of European integration is determined by two factors: firstly, the values and the ideology that form a party and, secondly, the perceived interests of its supporters. Hence, the above two factors are determined by two types of parties, either the parties that are based on ideology, which are named value-based goal-seeking, or the office-seeking parties that hold a more pragmatic stance on politics (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008, v.2: 256). A goal-seeking party that has a clear ideological project on mind, will base more importance on ideology, while the office-seeking party will call forth clientelism in order to promote the interests of its supporters and “undertake a cruder economic cost-benefit analysis of how European integration is likely to benefit its supporters” (ibid, 2008 : 256).

What is important and must be noted here, is that “there is no straightforward linear relationship between general party ideology and party position on Europe”, however important party ideology can be in forming party opinions and positions on Europe (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008, v.2: 257). This means that one should not tell what a party’s position is, solely by relying on the ideological family that it belongs to. An explanation to this is that many parties, as mentioned above, are office-seeking and therefore for them ideology will be a secondary factor in determining their positions. In addition to Taggart’s and Szczerbiak’s argument, Flood (2002: 7-11) argues that some parties define their ideology in a broad and flexible way and thus their broad ideological identity leads them to a range of outcomes in terms of party positioning. Moreover he emphasizes, that the ‘European project/issue’ is extremely malleable, meaning that every party can use it however it wants, and for the purposes that suit its interests, depending on the type of party (conservative, nationalist, social democratic, etc.).

Taking as an example Greece, membership of the EU is strongly opposed by two parties, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the fascist Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi). Both parties seem to be ideologically against the European project but the steep rise in the electorate of Golden Dawn the last years might also mask strategically planned policies that grasped the overall ‘political opportunity’ that Greece offers during the crisis. In any case, the above parties demonstrate Euroscepticism that falls into the extreme left- and right-wing locations on the political spectrum.

The PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), being the incumbent party, was the only party to support both the first bailout package and the mid-term plan while most of the parties opposed the austerity measures dictated by the Eurozone and the IMF (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012 :17). Among these parties the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) which has been always advocating anti-European policies, even withdrawal from the European Union

(Verney, 2001). During the early years of membership in the EU, after 1981, the socialist party PASOK and the Communist party KKE remained opposed to Europe and the ideas that it was promoting, reflecting thus part of the Eurosceptic public opinion that has not yet been persuaded by the European ideals. Other parties have been traditionally Eurosceptic but have never demonstrated intense Eurosceptic positions before the crisis and the austerity measures.

The theory that this project intends to adopt, is that ideology, or strategy, or both to different degrees each are anticipated to have enhanced party-based Euroscepticism in Greece during the economic crisis.

Hypotheses

Given the above explanations, the first hypothesis of this study will be that: Ideology determines party-based Euroscepticism. In certain parties public statements have not changed during the Greek crisis (signaling the significance of ideology in enhancing Euroscepticism). Aligned with this view, strategy might have been called forth to some degree in order to boost up the already existing ideology. An example is the Greek Communist Party (KKE) which saw the crisis as a confirmation of the Hard-Eurosceptic positions that it has been always advocating - as many parties during the Greek crisis tried through strategy to present the rightfulness of their ideology -. KKE and Golden Dawn are expected to have been Eurosceptic because of their ideology. The two incumbent Greek parties, ND and PASOK on the other hand, are expected to have been not Eurosceptic during the crisis, also because of their ideology. The second hypothesis will be that: Strategy determines party-based Euroscepticism. There are some parties that pursued pre-electoral strategies to manifest and thus enhance Euroscepticism (e.g. Independent Greeks). The rationale behind the supposed Eurosceptic rhetoric was to gain votes and electoral support and was not based merely or at least clearly on wider ideological positions, which were against the EU. It is thus quite

important to see whether strategy and ideology still hold in times of crisis, to what an extent each, and whether policies and speeches of parties were aligned with their respective ideological positions.

1.4 Methods and Sources of the Study

The below study will use qualitative case studies of Greek parties to find out whether ideology or strategy have enhanced party-based Euroscepticism, by using a general qualitative method. It will focus on political parties as they are ‘key gatekeepers in the process of political representation’ (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, v.1: 2). The independent variables are strategy and ideology of parties, (as operationalized below) and the dependent variable is party-based Euroscepticism (as described above). In this study the theory is related to the phenomenon of party-based Euroscepticism as expressed during the Greek economic crisis.

In the following sections, I will try to measure and analyze the nature of Euroscepticism in political parties during the period of the austerity measures, by focusing on official party positions, manifestos and by analyzing their public statements, statements of the leading members of the Greek parliament in the parliament, the media or in given interviews. In doing so I will mainly rely on key-words and key-phrases reflecting Euroscepticism. An example will be words such as “exit from the Eurozone or the EU”, “EU dictatorship”, “fourth Reich policies imposed on Greece”⁵ and more. Party programs/manifestos in any case will be, primarily, the most important source of measuring my dependent variable of party-based Euroscepticism.

⁵ Implying that Germany’s supposedly dominant position in Europe imposes the austerity measures on Greece.

As there has been the issue of a ‘Grexit’, indicating that Greece could leave the Eurozone and readopt its former currency, the drachma, Euroscepticism can be identified in party support or opposition towards the single European currency. If for example a party was at the time in favor of Greece remaining in the Eurozone that would show a general support towards EU policies. If a party has been advocating withdrawal from the currency under specific reasons this could be an indicator of Eurosceptic position that needs further explanation as to whether it has been developed. Strategy, ideology or a mixture of both might be the answer.

Given that the issue of Europe has been prevalent in the national politics of Greece since 2009 and has played a key role in the national elections of the country, there is the need to examine whether political parties adopted Euroscepticism as part of their broader underlying position on salient issues on Europe, or whether they used Europe, as an issue of contestation for electoral purposes.

In Greece, as mentioned above one of the major parties, the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) was shifting positions towards European integration. In 1974 when it was founded, its main position was to oppose Europe, but in the late 1980s and onwards, when it took office, it shifted to a pro-EU position. PASOK remained solidly within the pro-EU consensus of European social democratic parties (Verney, 1996) and still supports readily the European policies and the remaining of Greece within the European ‘embrace’. It is interesting to examine whether such a shift occurred during the Greek crisis in any of the Greek parties. By conducting a qualitative case study, this study intends to examine all parties within the Greek political system that have been elected in the national parliament in the elections of May and June 2012⁶, and present dynamic for examining Euroscepticism.

⁶ There were two consecutive elections because of the inability of the parties to reach consensus and form a government in the elections of May 2012.

One could claim that ideology of parties is something that can be easily examined and is more or less distinguishable and clear. How does one though examine strategy and measure strategic changes of party positions? A simple answer is that we can examine and analyze the gap between ideology and what parties say and do.

In doing so, this study will examine the ideology of all the political parties that were elected in the Greek parliament in June 2012, in order to draw conclusions as to whether they have been historically, ‘inherently’ Eurosceptic or have resorted on Eurosceptic policies and strategies during the past years (since 2009). Did opposition or government position of parties influence specific policy strategies towards pro-European or hard-Eurosceptic policies?

Strategy will explain party-based Euroscepticism where there is deviation between parties’ ideology and what they say and do shortly before and after the crisis. If for instance, in their electoral campaigns, debates and interviews, parties say something that is not followed in the parliament, or later in their policies, then we could assume that strategy prevails. As mentioned above, strategy will be also explained by the analysis of the phraseology of parties.

If ideology determined Euroscepticism of Greek parties during the crisis (2009-2012), then KKE and Golden Dawn are expected to have been Hard-Eurosceptic whilst Independent Greeks and SYRIZA Soft-Eurosceptic and Demar, PASOK and ND not Eurosceptic. If, however, strategy explains Eurosceptic positions during the crisis, then opposition/government positions of parties and the type of each party: vote-seeking, policy-seeking and office-seeking, will explain the degree and the nature of party strategy during the crisis, towards the European issue.

Chapter 2

The Case of Greece

Studying the dynamics of Euroscepticism in Greece since 2009 will contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of Euroscepticism and its manifestation in times of an economic crisis. The economic crisis as a cause for the enhancing and cultivation of party Euroscepticism in a country, seems to be a potentially fruitful avenue of research for drawing conclusions that have never been drawn before in the relevant literature.

As mentioned before, the intention to study the Greek case can be seen as an effort to reach conclusions on what explains party Euroscepticism in times of crisis more broadly. There could not be a better example of Euroscepticism in Europe than that of Greece, for *two* main reasons. First of all, Greece's reported political chaos, financial burdens and economic instability have been frequently seen as risking tearing Europe apart socially, politically and economically. Second, the Eurozone crisis has led to a rise of Euroscepticism across Europe (France, Netherlands, Hungary, and Denmark), questioning the legitimacy of the process of integration within Europe as well as the political representation of the citizens in the Member States (Nanou and Verney, 2013). Hence, examining how extensive this increase in Euroscepticism has been, Greece offers a particularly interesting case.

Another important fact is that the bailout project of the Greek economy has been designed by the European Union, and hence also the austerity measures. Consequently, the policies that were planned to address the economic crisis and the memorandums have been directly associated with the European policy; a policy that has been mainly seen as the policy of memorandums and austerity, and thus has been easily questioned and criticized.

Furthermore, many of Greece's economic (and by extension political) problems are common to most of the countries of Southern Europe, despite the fact that in most of the countries of the South the crisis has not reached the same levels as it did in Greece. This means that these

countries: Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal, face more or less the same economic problems, which might differ in their degree and cause, but can potentially have the same impact on party positions towards the EU and generally on party-based Euroscepticism.

There have been three factors that have seen to increase interest in the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in the relevant literature. Firstly, moments of interest in the dynamics of Euroscepticism have come about when referendums on European issues have been voted against, an example of this being the stalling of the project of the Constitutional Treaty in 2004, after rejections in the referendums of France and the Netherlands. Secondly, a factor that has stimulated academic interest on the phenomenon has been the tendency in the European integration project, to resort to referendums in order to ratify treaties, enhancing thus Eurosceptic voices. Lastly, conversations regarding the enlargement of the EU have invigorated interest in the phenomenon, as new states have been brought in, with different political perceptions and scopes on the European issue (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, v.1: 3).

In the relevant literature, not much has been written, barely anything, on the dynamics of Euroscepticism in times of the current economic crisis in Europe. It is thus quite stimulating to understand and explain Euroscepticism during the Greek crisis and the extent to which the crisis has influenced domestic party policies and views on European issues by enhancing Euroscepticism. Hence an additional factor can be added, that enriches the already existing literature on Euroscepticism, aside from the three factors that Szczerbiak and Taggart already mention - the factor of a crisis (economic crisis in this study) increasing levels of Euroscepticism in a country. "In the case of Greece, the ongoing crisis has meant that the context is both having the effect of potentially redefining the meaning of Euroscepticism and, at the same time, is too much of a moving target" (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2013: 19).

To summarize, this research project intends to examine party-based Euroscepticism in Greece during the Greek economic crisis (since 2009) and answer to what an extent ideology, strategy

or a combination of both has played a role in the enhancing of Eurosceptic positions and policies of parties. In doing so, the following chapter will delineate the context of the economic crisis with the main, most important resolutions of the Greek parliament that have been highly connected to the future of Greece within the European Union and the Eurozone.

2.1 The chronicles of the economic crisis in Greece - “Rescuing the baby from the discard bath waters”

“The only surprise about the economic crisis of 2008 was that it came as a surprise to so many”
(Joseph E. Stiglitz, 2010)

The debate around the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in Greece is highly related to the traumatic experience that the country faced being at the epicenter of the crisis in Europe (Pagoulatos, 2012). Things started in late 2009 in Greece, when the newly elected government of PASOK admitted that there was a huge public deficit in the economics of the country. It was only then that the relations between Greece and its European partners started deteriorating, disrupting a hale long-term partnership and cooperation that had begun in the late 80s. The crisis came as a bolt from the blue that few could expect and by the beginning of 2010 when the European sovereign crisis became critical, Greece was already the weakest link in the Eurozone. PASOK government realized that the debt of the country was out of control and thus it negotiated a bailout package of loans with ‘troika’, a tripartite committee led by the European Central Bank (ECB), the representatives of the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Greece has been seriously suffering from public indebtedness and fiscal deficit for years, because of the clientelistic use of public-sector jobs and the chronic intractable problem of tax

evasion (Kaplanoglou and Rapanos, 2012). In the years before the outbreak of the crisis, Greece was the fastest growing country in the Eurozone, presenting a sharp reduction in unemployment (Pagoulatos and Triantopoulos, 2009: 36). However, with the onset of the crisis, the country was unable to meet its debt obligations and thus had to negotiate the bailout project with ‘troika’.

The first bailout project was agreed in May 2010 between Greece and the so dubbed ‘troika’, entailing a €110 billion loan, on condition that the country would implement austerity measures in order to structurally reform the public sector, improve competitiveness and prevent bankruptcy, which could potentially have a domino effect on other European countries (Bosco and Verney, 2012: 134). The government of PASOK brought the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ‘troika’ to the parliament where out of 159 PASOK MP’s present, 156 voted it, and three abstained⁷. Along with the MP’s of PASOK, the radical right Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) has also voted in favor of the memorandum. The remainder of the parties in Parliament; the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), the Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA) and the conservative right party of New Democracy (ND) – traditionally the most Pro-EU party in Greece - voted against the memorandum. The only MP of ND that voted in favor, Dora Bakoyannis, was subsequently expelled from the party (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012: 7). Antonis Samaras, leader of ND, the main opposition party after the elections of 2009, has clearly made strategic considerations by opposing PASOK policies during the crisis and finally voting against the first MoU⁸.

After the first bailout project the country was falling deeper into recession. Unemployment was steeply rising and popular dissatisfaction and frustration against the government of PASOK and the policies dictated by the EU was increasing. Thereby, extremist and populist

⁷ Altogether the members of the Greek parliament are 300.

⁸ The strategic considerations of Antonis Samaras and the party of ND will be extensively analyzed and discussed in the following section of this study, where strategy and ideology of parties during the crisis is examined.

parties within the Greek political stage took the opportunity to seize upon these sentiments, while uncertainty and fears on a potential Greek default enhanced the dynamics of Euroscepticism within the Greek political system. Within a year from the first memorandum, there were created visible fissures inside the parties of the parliament. With the exception of KKE, where ideological unity among its members has always been noteworthy, both ND and SYRIZA have experienced splinters that have challenged the strategy that the parties adopted during the crisis and specifically when voting against the first MoU (ibid.: 11).

The aforementioned splinters were either pro-EU forces within the parties, that were not eager to adopt Euroscepticism as an easy way to denounce the memorandum because of their parties given strategic lines, or forces that took advantage of the crisis and became Eurosceptic in order to differentiate and evade public's outcry. The most important splinter occurred within Synaspismos (SYN), the largest party of the SYRIZA coalition. This splinter formed a party in June 2010, which was named Democratic Left and it included four Pro-EU MPs of SYRIZA that seceded from the party. SYRIZA in the meantime, "once a fringe group of the far-left, it has now been catapulted to the center stage of the Greek politics"⁹, because of its firm and tenacious opposition to the bailout and the austerity measures.

With this in mind, PASOK government brought into parliament a new package of austerity measures, also known as 'Midterm Fiscal Plan', in June 2011. The 'Midterm Fiscal Plan' was mainly aimed at privatizing the Greek problematic public sector, creating a lower-tax free threshold and reducing salaries and pensions¹⁰. With massive public opposition and demonstrations all over Greece, the midterm fiscal plan managed to pass with a narrow majority of 155 votes in favor and 136 votes against, out of the total 300 MPs. This time

⁹ See Chrysoloras, N. (2012?) "Greece's Economic Despair Gives Rise to anti-European Sentiment" [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/chrys1.pdf> [Accessed on 27 April 2013].

¹⁰ See the newspaper 'The Guardian', "Greece austerity vote and demonstrations - Wednesday 29 June 2011". Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2011/jun/29/greece-austerity-vote-demonstrations> [Accessed on 27 April 2013].

PASOK was the only party to vote in favor of the plan, as LAOS voted against, changing its strategy while being influenced by populist perceptions and trying to invest in the indignation and resentment of the public. The rest of the parties remained firmly opposed to the anti-popular measures and voted against the midterm fiscal plan by “reading” successfully the popular pulse and the public opinion, which has turned violently against the memorandum and the PASOK government that was implementing it.

Another package of austerity measures on October 20 of the same year has followed the same voting patterns to those of the midterm fiscal plan, making PASOK extremely unpopular in the opinion polls (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012: 13). Party-based and popular Euroscepticism at this time rose further¹¹, as it can be generally assumed that the EU had been seen as the *uninvited patron*, who at its effort to rescue - the otherwise unassisted - Greece from the discard bath waters of the crisis was rather pushing it deeper into the “manhole”.

Subsequently, after finally voting in favor of the midterm fiscal plan and the austerity measures, and without the support of the rest of the Parliament, Papandreou announced to the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias, his intention to form a coalition government. Loucas Papademos, a technocrat economist and a former vice-president of the ECB, was finally appointed to lead the coalition government¹² with the support of PASOK, LAOS and this time the conservative party of ND, which has strategically changed its policy¹³.

A second bailout loan with more austerity measures followed in February 2012. The coalition government of Papademos brought in Parliament the second memorandum, which was voted

¹¹ See Nanou, K. and Verney, S. (2013). “*The Eurozone crisis has increased soft Euroscepticism in Greece, where Greeks wish to remain in the euro, but no longer trust the EU*”. Available through LSE: <http://bit.ly/WsTZNS> [Accessed on 23 April 2013].

¹² See the newspaper *Spiegel*. “Agreement in Athens: Papademos to Lead Greek Unity Government”. (Last updated November 10, 2011). Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/agreement-in-athens-papademos-to-lead-greek-unity-government-a-797068.html> [Accessed on 29 April 2013].

¹³ Again, the change of ND’s strategy at that time will be examined in more detail in the following section of this study.

with 199 votes in favor and 74 votes against. PASOK and ND were the only parties to vote in favor of the memorandum. “22 PASOK MPs and 21 ND MPs voted against the memorandum or abstained. Papandreou and Samaras expelled all 43 of them within minutes from the conclusion of the procedure. Ironically, Samaras expelled his MPs for exactly the opposite reason for which he expelled Bakoyannis about two years before” (ibid: 16). Meanwhile, in November of 2011 Panos Kammenos, MP of ND, has been expelled from the party for voting against the party line. After the second memorandum of February 2012, Kammenos created a new party called Independent Greeks, with the collaboration of nine from the MPs that Samaras has earlier expelled from ND.

Since the memorandum has divided Greek politics and society and given that popular dissatisfaction towards the austerity measures and the political parties was increasingly growing, the fascist organization Golden Dawn (Chrisi Avgi) took the opportunity to present its Hard-Euro-sceptic voice to the Greek public. Golden Dawn took advantage not only of the reaction to the EU, but mostly of the reaction and frustration towards the politicians who brought the country to this situation; the institutional corruption and the incompetence of politics. In the elections of May 2012, Golden Dawn campaigned with the slogan “we are against everyone” (Carras, 2012: 4) and finally managed to get elected. So did the populist party Independent Greeks and the pro-EU Democratic Left, both parties that were created after splintering from ND and SYRIZA respectively, as mentioned above.

Given the time frame of the crisis it seems that the two hypotheses of strategy and ideology enhancing party-based Euro-scepticism, still hold in different parties, and for different reasons in each of them during the Greek crisis. The role of strategy and ideology in enhancing party-based Euro-scepticism during the Greek crisis will be discussed and examined in the following section of this study.

Chapter 3

An Analysis of Party-Based Euroscepticism during the Crisis in Greece

Introduction

The parties that will be examined in this chapter are the seven parties that have been elected in the Greek parliament during the elections in Greece which took place on Sunday 17 June 2012. These are the parties that the Greek parliament is currently composed of. The first party is the party of New Democracy (ND) that took 30% of the votes and 129 seats in the parliament. The second party is the Coalition of the Radical Left – Unitary Social Front (SYRIZA) that took 27% of the votes and 71 seats, the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) that took 12% of the votes and 33 seats in the parliament, Independent Greeks (ANEL) with 7.5% of the votes and 20 seats, Golden Dawn (XA) with 7% of the votes and 18 seats, Democratic Left (DEMAR) with 6% and 17 seats and finally the Communist party of Greece (KKE) with 4.5% and 12 seats.

In the following sections the analysis will be focusing firstly on the perceived as Hard-Eurosceptic parties (KKE, Golden Dawn), then on the Soft-Eurosceptic parties (SYRIZA, ANEL) and finally on the parties with a pro-EU position that finally formed the coalition government (ND, PASOK, DEMAR). The goal of the analysis is to reach conclusion and answer whether ideology or strategy or both have enhanced Euroscepticism of parties during the crisis. With this in mind, the last three parties that formed the coalition government (ND, PASOK, DEMAR) - given the fear of a Euro-exit in the June 2012 elections - are also included in the analysis, as it is quite important to see not only why Euroscepticism appeared in certain parties but also why it did not affect others during the Greek crisis. Firstly, the evolution of each party's position on European integration will be described and then it's positions on 'Europe' during the crisis will be assessed, examining whether they have been formed because of ideological or strategic factors.

3.1 The Hard-Eurosceptic Camp

3.1.1 Communist Party of Greece (KKE)

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) has been always ideologically against European integration and has always been advocating a consistent criticism towards European integration within the broader ideological context of rejecting liberalism and the values and policies that Europe defends. It is a vivid and representative example of what consistent and “stubborn” hard-Euroscepticism means not only in Greece, but also in comparison to other European domestic political systems. Its anti-capitalist left political identity has always been connected and correlated to its dissent with the European project, making it thus the *par excellence* dissent party against Europe in Greece. As a typical protest party, its Eurosceptic identity is better illustrated by what Paul Taggart (1998) has famously named ‘a touchstone of dissent’, characteristic of protest parties. KKE though has not only been simply a party of protest against the European project; it has vigorously rejected the current model of European integration altogether, whenever it had the chance to do so. Clear examples of that are the party’s “voting against” in all the major European Treaty Ratifications such as: the Single European Act, the Treaty of European Union, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Treaty of Nice, the Treaty establishing a European Constitution and the Treaty of Lisbon (Verney, 2011: 8). All the above denote a clear Hard-Eurosceptic position of the party throughout all its history.

An Explanation of Ideology

Trying to track changes in the ideology of KKE, both its manifesto and positions in official Congresses, offer a good example of how consistent its rejectionist hard-Eurosceptic

position/character has been. The Party's 18th Congress in 2009¹⁴, coinciding with the emergence of the crisis in Greece, and the last 19th party's Congress in 2013¹⁵ during the actual frame time of the crisis show a particular consistency in its ideological Hard-Eurosceptic identity.

The European Union is referred to as a union for capital, where exploitation of man by man prevails, as well as poverty, social injustice and imperialistic wars. Furthermore it is accused of being the new imperialist order – an order of capitalist globalization – which participates actively in aggressive plans against peoples, particularly against the countries of the Mediterranean¹⁶. European Union is seen as an anathema that widens gaps and creates injustice, rather than promoting justice and prosperity for the peoples of Europe.

KKE is calling on the labor-popular movement in Europe, in its positions in the 18th Communist Congress of 2009, to become a movement of rupture and subversion of the EU. In its 19th Congress, it is still calling for opposition to the memorandum and not only it advocates an exit from the Eurozone, but it also calls for a complete release and withdrawal of Greece from the EU. It is important to note that the arguments of KKE – that the EU is undemocratic, imperialistic, capital union and counter-revolutionary – have not changed during the economic crisis and KKE's 18th and 19th Congress. This highlights the strong ideological character of the party and its irreversible hard-Eurosceptic positions on the EU project.

The opposition of KKE towards the EU is an ideological opposition, which results from the basic ideological principles of the party that considers itself a Marxist-Leninist party along the

¹⁴ See the positions of KKE in its 18th Congress. [online] Available at: http://www.kke.gr/18o_synedrio/theseis_ths_ke_toy_kke_-_gia_to_18o_synedrio?act=3&morf=1&tab=1 [Accessed on 29 April 2013].

¹⁵ See the positions of KKE in its 19th Congress. [online] Available at: <http://www.rizospastis.gr/page.do?publDate=12/4/2013&id=14540&pageNo=16&direction=1> [Accessed on 29 April 2013].

¹⁶ See the KKE's "Joint statement in face of the European Elections" in 2009. [online] Available at: <http://inter.kke.gr/News/2009news/2009-05-join-euelections> [Accessed on 1 May 2013].

lines of the old soviet model ("Soviet Marxism"). The party is based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the idea of the dominance of the party of the working class and the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, its ideology is incompatible with the political philosophy, the ideas and the principles that constitute the institutional organization of the EU. Its monolithic and rubric rhetoric are better understood through the consistency of its ideology - a Marxist-Leninist analysis of politics, the state and the class struggle - which has insistently rejected the underlying socio-economic structure of Europe and its values and practices, before and during the crisis. According to the party, the EU is a capitalist union of urban regimes that the working class and its party, KKE, should battle. Hence, the EU is seen as an enemy and the opposition of KKE towards it is assessed as *an opposition of ideology*¹⁷, linked to civic ideals including anti-westernism and anti-imperialism (Kalyvas and Marantzidis, 2002).

Moreover, the opposition of KKE towards the EU, as any other radical left EU opposition can be explained by what Hooghe et al. (2004: 128) describe as the opposition that is 'rooted in the perception that European integration fundamentally threatens cherished radical left goals', given that EU is thought to be in favor of neoliberal policies. Ideologically, KKE seeks independence and emancipation from the European Union and its suffocating bonds, which are perceived to be exploitative of the popular classes¹⁸. For the radical left KKE, the EU project is a clear product of imperialism. According to statements of *Aleka Pappariga*, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of KKE, in a cross-channel press conference in June 2012, KKE denounced the EU memorandum and promised to do its best to try to overturn it. She furthermore suggested that Greece should leave the Eurozone and the EU

¹⁷ See the ideological manifesto of KKE published by G. Marinos, member of the political bureau of KKE, in the official newspaper of the party "Rizospastis". Available at: <http://www.rizospastis.gr/page.do?publDate=21/10/2012&id=14246&pageNo=11&direction=1> [Accessed on 15 July 2013] (Translated from Greek). KKE clearly states that its strategy and tactic is attached to its ideology, namely the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the class struggle.

¹⁸ See KKE's Electoral Declaration for the June 2009 Elections of the European Parliament. [online] Available at: <http://inter.kke.gr/News/2008news/2008-07-euelection/> [Accessed on 2 May 2013].

since “it is not the same thing to be kicked off by the EU and to leave willingly”¹⁹. Crisis according to KKE has been clearly formed because of the capitalist system of each country and specifically because of the capitalism that the EU is promoting. Therefore, as a product of capitalism, the economic crisis cannot be solved within a capitalist union such as the EU.

KKE is a good example of a protest-based party (Leconte, 2008) that is policy-seeking/opposing and during the crisis it would not moderate its Hard-Eurosceptic position in order to be considered for coalitions. Since ideology clearly explains the Hard-Eurosceptic position of the party towards Europe during the crisis, it is quite difficult to explain the role strategy has played in its Hard-Eurosceptic position. The fact that the Communist Party refused any election or post-election cooperation with any other party despite being invited by SYRIZA – its most cognate party – to cooperate in order to formulate a coalition government, highlights its persistence on its ideological line and purity that rejects any compromise for electoral purposes. This means that KKE’s strategy during the crisis has been always unfolded in accordance with its own ideology and has fully served its 'pure', 'monolithic' ideological line.

The strategy of KKE during the crisis aimed only at using the ideology of the party to further consolidate its hard-Eurosceptic positions during the crisis. Through the protesting and denunciatory phraseology it strategically aimed to highlight the rightfulness and the solidity of its ideology. “We told you the truth about the economic crisis . . . don’t accept the bill for the crisis; you are not responsible for it . . . don’t wait for solutions from the EU, it is part of the problem, it has solutions which serve only the oligarchy”²⁰. Hence, the Hard-Eurosceptic

¹⁹ See the cross-channel press conference of Aleka Pappariga, the General Secretary of the central Committee of KKE. [online] Available at: http://www.kke.gr/arthra_-_synenteykseis_-_boyleytikes_2012/diakanalikh_synenteyksh_toy_kke_-_h_eishghtikh_omilia_ths_gg_ths_ke_toy_kke_alekas_paparhga_13/6/2012 [Accessed on 2 May 2013].

²⁰ See again the KKE’s “Joint statement in face of the European Elections”, 2009. [online] Available at: <http://inter.kke.gr/News/2009news/2009-05-join-euelections> [Accessed on 1 May 2013].

stance of the party lies in its ideology; the key component of its dissent with the EU before and during the crisis. *Its opposition is ideological and clearly a matter of principle.*

3.1.2 Golden Dawn (XA)

Golden Dawn is an extreme party of the *far right*. “The term *far right* is usually used to describe persons or groups who hold extreme nationalist, xenophobic, racist, religious fundamentalist, or other reactionary views. Typically the term is applied to fascists and neo-Nazis, although subscribers to left-wing views sometimes use the term very liberally to describe any group on the right of the political spectrum whom they disagree with.” (Carlisle, 2005: 694). Being a party of the far right, Golden Dawn has been consistently opposed to the project of European integration and it has always highlighted with its ‘ethno-centric message’ (Hainsworth 2008), the need for resistance against external threats and the European Union. Golden Dawn was founded in 1985 by *Nikolaos Michaloliakos* and was officially recognized as a political party in 1993²¹. With the outbreak of the economic crisis in Greece, Golden Dawn used xenophobia to raise and cultivate an anti-immigrant sentiment and thus managed to win a seat on the Athens City Council in 2010²².

Thereafter, the party entered the Greek parliament in the elections of May and June 2012, mainly due to their concerns about the economic crisis, austerity and the high unemployment rate of the country and by using extreme anti-immigration and hard-European rhetoric. In the June 2012 elections it gained an electoral foothold in the Greek parliament, with 18 seats, winning almost 7% of the vote.

²¹ See Boukala S. (2012). “*Grammars of enmity: a Golden Dawn of contemporary Greek democracy?*”. Available through: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/salomi-boukala/grammars-of-enmity-golden-dawn-of-contemporary-greek-democracy> [Accessed on 2 May 2013].

²² See Wheeler W. (2012). “Europe’s New Fascists” in *New York Times* [online]. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/opinion/sunday/europes-new-fascists.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

Furthermore, Golden Dawn has exploited the popular frustration and denial towards the political system and the politicians who led the country into the financial crisis and towards the system of corruption in Greece. The public vote towards Golden Dawn should be mainly assessed as a reaction vote coming from the frustrated Greek citizens that could not show any more faith in the political system of the country²³. Public inclination to this ultranationalist party/movement should be also seen as an exclusionary reaction against immigrants that has been evoked by cultural and economic threats (Sniderman et al 2004, Sniderman and Hagendorn, 2007, cited in Lucassen and Lubbers 2012).

It is finally important to stress that prominent academic figures such as Mazower²⁴ and Ahrweiler²⁵ have pointed out that Golden Dawn is the greatest challenge for Greece and its democratic stability - an even greater challenge than the economic crisis itself²⁶.

A Simple Matter of Ideology?

Hard-Euroscepticism of Golden Dawn is rooted in its ideology which is located on the extreme margins of the political spectrum where parties easily form extreme positions against the European project (Hooghe et al. 2002: 971; Ray 2007: 163-164). Golden Dawn's Hard-Euroscepticism is strongly linked to the opposition to immigration and to the defense of the Greek nation and culture against foreigners. As a radical party of the far right – that even reaches the limits of Nazism, given that its compatibility with the principles of democracy is

²³ See Alderman L. (2012). "Right-Wing Extremists' Popularity Rising Rapidly in Greece" in *New York Times* [online]. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/world/europe/amid-greeces-worries-the-rise-of-right-wing-extremists.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1& [Accessed on 3 May 2013].

²⁴ Mark Mazower is a British historian whose expertise is in Greece, the Balkans and, more generally, 20th century Europe. He is currently a professor of history at Columbia University in New York City.

²⁵ Helene Arhweiler was first vice-president in 1970-1973, and in 1976-1981 president of the University of Paris1 Pantheon-Sorbonne, the first woman to hold that post.

²⁶ See Maglinis E. (2013). "Mazower on the rise of Greece's political extremes" in *Kathimerini* [online]. Available at: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite4_1_08/02/2013_482566 [Accessed on 29 May 2013].

discussed and questioned at a European level²⁷ – it defends Greece’s homogeneity and promotes the exclusivity of its history and culture. The EU is seen by definition as an entity that comprises a variety of cultures and nations and therefore it is presented as heterogeneous and counter to the ideology of the party, which defends and promotes the uniqueness and the specificity of the Greek nation²⁸. The Hard-Eurosceptic position of Golden Dawn has always been the same and it did not change during the economic crisis. Instead, Golden Dawn used the crisis to establish and present its ideology to the “vulnerable” - because of the austerity and the crisis - Greek electorate. Although existing before as a fringe party, the Greek crisis has given it the opportunity to enter the Greek Parliament²⁹.

The Hard-Eurosceptic position of Golden Dawn is associated with its ideologically inherent nationalism³⁰, which could be criticized according to relevant literature, as an irrational doctrine with a fanatical vision and a propensity towards violence (Kedourie 1960). In 2010 when Mihaloliakos was elected to the Athens City Council, he stated that "We will continue our struggle for a free Greece, free from foreign loan sharks and a Greece that is independent and proud, without the slavery of the bailout". In addition to his Hard-Eurosceptic statements he has also stated that "Greece belongs to Greeks, and that foreigners must get out of Greece" and "All the illegal immigration out! Out of my country, out of my home!"³¹. Hard-Euroscepticism of Golden Dawn can be better explained by that fact that the mission and the

²⁷ See Halikiopoulou, D. and Vasilopoulou, S. (2012). "Greece's response to austerity has been to say "no to the Fourth Reich" but yes to the neo-Nazism of the Golden Dawn." Available through LSE: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2012/10/15/greece-golden-dawn/> [Accessed on 3 May 2013].

²⁸ See the ideology of Golden Dawn. Available at the official website of the party: <http://www.xryshaygh.com/assets/files/ideologia.pdf> [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

²⁹ See Protagonistes (13.5.2012). "Who is Golden Dawn", TV Emission in *Mega Channel*. (translated from Greek).

³⁰ See Smith's (2010: 9) definition of nationalism. Nationalism is 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential "nation"'.

³¹ See Behrakis, Y. and Babington, D. (2012). "Greek far-right leader savors electoral success" in *Reuters* [online]. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/06/us-greece-election-farright-idUSBRE8450D820120506> [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

priority of radical right wing parties are to protect the nation against foreign influences and hence their policies are mostly directed against immigration (Hainsworth, 2008).

Immigrants in the context of the Greek economic crisis have been used by Golden Dawn - given its ideological predispositions - as the “scapegoat”. Greece has been portrayed as a nation that must be saved “from cosmopolitan, decadent, alien and anti-national influences”, an idea that is generally followed by the extreme right in Western Europe (Hainsworth, 2008: 66). Here we should note that Greece’s geographical position along with EU regulation that allows member states to return illegal immigrants and asylum seekers to the country in which they first entered Europe, “have turned Greece into the ‘storehouse’ of illegal immigration to Europe”³². Hence, as Golden Dawn is ideologically opposed to the EU and its policies, it used the problem of immigration in Greece to strengthen its Hard-Eurosceptic rhetoric.

When *Nils Muižnieks*, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Greece, from 28 January to 1 February 2013, reported that immediate action should be taken against the neo-Nazi³³ political party Golden Dawn and its intolerance and hate crimes against immigrants in Greece³⁴, *Nikolaos Mihaloliakos* responded aggressively to his report by saying that “Muižnieks will not tell us what to do in Greece; To hell each and every Muižnieks”³⁵.

³² See Kasimis, Ch. (2012). “Greece: Illegal Immigration in the Midst of Crisis”. Available through: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=884> [Accessed on 4 May 2013].

³³ Golden Dawn is characterized as a neo-Nazi party in Pappas, T. (2012). *The Extinction of the Greek Dinosaurs?* Available through: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/> [Accessed on 1 May 2013] and in Smith, H. (2013). “Greece's neo-Nazi Golden Dawn goes global with political ambitions”, in *the Guardian* (online). Available through: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/01/greece-golden-dawn-global-ambitions> [Accessed on 3 June 2013].

³⁴ See the report by Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Greece, from 28 January to 1 February 2013. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2053611&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=B9BDEF&BackColorIntranet=FFCD4F&BackColorLogged=FFC679> [Accessed on 5 May 2013]. (In his report, Muižnieks also characterizes Golden Dawn as a neo-Nazi party).

³⁵ See the response/reaction of Nikolaos Mihaloliakos, leader of “Golden Dawn” to the report of Nils Muižnieks. Available at: http://news247.gr/eidiseis/politiki/n_mixaliakos_sto_diaolo_o_kathe_mouiznieks.2212723.html [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

Although Hard-Euroscepticism of the party derives from its aforementioned general principles; thus from its own ideology, it is important to refer to its strategic calculations during the crisis, that make the distinction between strategy and ideology of the party slightly indiscernible.

Firstly, Golden Dawn used its extremist ideology and its Hard-Euroscepticism during the crisis to get votes from the Greek disorientated electorate. During the economic crisis Golden Dawn had strong strategic electoral incentives to remain strongly opposed to the EU. Given that the economic crisis is largely seen as the main reason to “resurrect” nationalism against Europe, and since the economic instability has the tendency to create nationalistic rhetoric (Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012), Golden Dawn therein grasped the opportunity to unfold its strategic opposition to the EU. Sitter (2001: 27) suggests that radical right parties are 'driven largely by their opposition or protest strategy'. The economic crisis seems to have not only influenced Euroscepticism of already existing parties in Greece, but gave the opportunity to fringe movements-parties, such as Golden Dawn, to publicly express themselves through their opposition strategy.

Golden Dawn has acted in a similar way with KKE, by pointing out the consistency of its Hard-Euroscepticism before and during the Greek crisis. The difference though between the two parties is that while the Communist Party has a history of decades in the Greek political arena and since its legalization after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 it has always participated in the Greek parliament, Golden Dawn is a 'new political product', *creation* of the economic crisis. Before its first representation in the Greek Parliament after the elections of 2012, it was only a small group of unknown people that were espousing a nationalistic and neo-Nazi ideology, which nobody would pay political attention to. Its ideology, a clear nationalistic one, encloses an opposition to any logic of supranational organizations, such as the EU that limits national sovereignty, 'transfers power' from Athens to Brussels and

overlooks or completely underestimates the national specificities³⁶. However, the fact that Golden Dawn 'declared' its political presence only when it finally became a party of the Greek Parliament, having received an important percentage of the Greek votes for the first time during the crisis, shows that it took advantage of certain situations, such as the economic crisis and the resentment of people against the austerity measures that were imposed to them. Hence it turned against the EU, in order to strengthen and promote its ideology. Hereby, the *economic crisis* was 'used' as a fertile ground to strengthen the nationalist ideology of the party and therefore as a part of its inmost strategy.

An example of the above, Christos Pappas, one of the most prominent members of Golden Dawn and member of the Greek Parliament, writing in his official blogspot: "Golden Dawn for at least 20 years has been warning Greek people about the catastrophic decision policies of the EU on Greece. Back then they thought we were extremes, now they know that we were only saying the truth" and "We say no to subjection, no to slavery, no to loan sharks"³⁷, indirectly indicating the European Union. All the above denote that Golden Dawn's Hard-Euroscepticism has been strategically called forth during the crisis to "awaken" Greek people, "protect" them, and allegedly "save" them from the austerity and the measures imposed by the EU³⁸. It is only in the context of the economic crisis that Golden Dawn managed to gain electoral success and establish its presence in the Greek political stage.

³⁶ See again Protagonistes (13.5.2012) and the ideology of the party, available at: <http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/kinima/ideologia> [Accessed on 18 July 2013]. "We believe in Nationalism. We do not believe in Liberalism, either new or old, nor in Marxism, new or old... We reject the tyranny of profit against patriotism, the tyranny of the material against the spirit! The tyranny of the elite of money against the fighters of virtue." The above moralistic and nationalistic style of political ideology shows an indirect ideological incompatibility with the EU. It must be noted, that even though the party explicitly says that it reverses both capitalism and liberalism of the markets, indirectly pointing at the EU, it does not expressly refer to it. (translated from Greek)

³⁷ See Pappas, X. (2013). "Golden Dawn: Greece into Light". [blog] 16 April. Available at: http://xristospappas.blogspot.gr/2013/04/blog-post_1310.html [Accessed on 4 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

³⁸ See Alderman, L. (2012). "Right-Wing Extremists' Popularity Rising Rapidly in Greece", in *New York Times [online]*. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/world/europe/amid-greeces-worries-the-rise-of-right-wing-extremists.html?pagewanted=all&r=1&> [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

In brief, Golden Dawn's Hard-Euroscepticism should be principally seen as a product of its *ideology*. Strategy was called forth whenever the party took advantage of the public frustration and people's "mayhem" for the European Union during the crisis and the so perceived "corrupted" political parties in Greece and also whenever it managed to present itself as the party-movement that "finally" keeps its actions on the same track with its commitments, ideology and promises.

Both KKE and Golden Dawn, being radical parties, share elements of nationalist ideology (civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism respectively), leading to a common Eurosceptic stance (Halikiopoulou, Nanou and Vasilopoulou, 2012: 505, 510-511). Therefore, I have classified both parties into the same 'Hard-Eurosceptic camp' where Euroscepticism in both parties is formed because of strong ideological factors, incompatible with the EU principles. European integration for both parties is seen as a threat to the identity, unity and autonomy of the nation. KKE expresses it from a 'predominantly civic perspective', while Golden Dawn expresses it from a 'predominantly ethnic viewpoint' (ibid: 506).

3.2 Shades of Soft-Euroscepticism

3.2.1 'Independent Greeks'

Launched by Panos Kammenos, a New Democracy MP that was expelled from the party when he voted against the terms of the EU-IMF loan deal³⁹, the party of 'Independent Greeks' is clearly *another political product of the economic crisis*. It is a party that expresses the populist right that ideologically derives from the conservative Pro-European party of New Democracy, founded by *K. Karamanlis* who led Greece into the EU. 'Independent Greeks' is a populist party. The term 'populism' is often "employed in loose, inconsistent and undefined ways to denote appeals to "the people" as a receptacle for new types of parties whose classification we are unsure of" (Wiles, 1969: 166). Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (2008: 3) define populism as "an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice." 'Independent Greeks' view Europe and specifically Germany during the crisis - as the 'dangerous others' who aim to deprive Greece.

Ideologically 'Independent Greeks' is not – or does not seem to be – a Eurosceptic party. However, being a populist party, it developed Eurosceptic views due to the financial crisis in Greece - by presenting to the Greek people an easy anti-memorandum rhetoric of the bad European-moneylenders who oppress economically southern European states and particularly Greece. The party itself is mainly a mixture of populism and mild nationalism, which along with the oppositional tactics of exaggeration and denial – common phenomenon of party oppositional logics in Greece – formed its strategically Eurosceptic identity; identity that

³⁹ See Anon (2012). "Ousted New Democracy MP starts own party", in *Kathimerini* [online]. Available at: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_24/02/2012_429676 [Accessed on 3 May 2013].

would have never existed outside the fertile ground of Euroscepticism that the financial crisis cultivated.

The Strategic Euroscepticism of 'Independent Greeks'

As a new populist party created during the crisis, 'Independent Greeks' goal has been to differentiate itself from mainstream parties. The party does not have any clear ideology that would allow us to see whether it is clearly Eurosceptic or pro-European. Its potential ideological Euroscepticism lies in the fact that it accepts “Europe of peoples”, but opposes “Europe of Germans”⁴⁰. Kammenos’ propaganda, is “largely directed against Germany and the EU” (Carras, 2012: 4). 'Independent Greeks' should not be perceived as a party that is ideologically against Europe, as it believes in a “united Europe of solidarity and cooperation, where all member states are equal by preserving their national status and dignity”; it denies however, “the logics and practices that have turned the EU into a vehicle of interests of the most powerful countries and the global banking system”⁴¹. Given the above, one should definitely recognize aside from the “opportunistic” Euroscepticism of the party, that there is potential for a positive orientation towards the EU.

'Independent Greeks' Euroscepticism emanates clearly from the crisis and the memorandums that according to the party humiliate the Greek nation and lead it to international isolation. Its political status is based on populism and a strong anti-memorandum policy which in view of the crisis takes an anti-European character. Independent Greeks mostly adopted *politics of opportunism* against Samaras and ND’s policies, rather than a clear ideological

⁴⁰See the “Manifesto of the Independent Greeks for Europe of Nations”, Available at: http://news247.gr/eidiseis/politiki/kommata/manifesto_twn_aneksarthtwn_ellhnwn_gia_eyrwph_twn_ethnw_n.1920306.html [Accessed on 3 May 2013].

⁴¹ See the founding declaration of “Independent Greeks”. Retrieved from the party’s official website: <http://anexartoiellines.gr/diak.php> [Accessed on 3 May 2013].

direction/position towards the European project. As the party does not have a real program, “it feeds off hurt pride and the rhetoric of punishment” (Carras, 2012: 4).

Panos Kammenos has stated that: “We believe in Europe of nations, in Europe that has countries – partners, not countries – courtesans”⁴² highlighting thus that for the party, Europe with its current policies is perceived to be an oppressive force. 'Independent Greeks' during the crisis has been a vote-seeking party (Leconte, 2008), as it relied on Euroscepticism – as an expression of populism in view of the austerity measures imposed by the memorandum – in order to gain votes and electoral support. All things considered, it is a party created because of the economic crisis and one which formed its Euroscepticism while trying to find ideological substance and *raison d'être*. Its Euroscepticism should be seen as a product of strategy since ideology of the party does not justify its dissent with the EU.

⁴² See Aeras Y. (2012). “*Panos Kammenos: Europe wants countries courtesans and not partners*”, Available through: <http://www.alithinapsemata.gr/greece/greece-news/greece-politics/2931-kamenos-agiasmos.html> [Accessed on 5 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

3.2.2 Coalition of the Radical Left – Unitary Social Front (SYRIZA)

Syriza is a coalition party that consists of left-wing and radical left parties originally formed in January 2004⁴³. Its leader is *Alexis Tsipras*, president of Synaspismos (SYN), the largest party of the coalition, who led Syriza to electoral success in the elections of May and June 2012. Syriza is a complicated case, given that the recent coalition of different forces of the left within it, presents different kinds of Euroscepticism. Syriza's ideological position has not been consistent and hence it is hard to examine and ascertain the kind of Euroscepticism it advocates. SYN voted in the past in favour of the Maastricht Treaty and during the consideration of the Nice and Amsterdam Treaties it declared its 'presence', meaning that it has been present in the voting but abstained from it (Verney, 2011: 8).

The party has projected a strong belief in the past that European integration must go forward, and that Greece should be a part of the EU, without this meaning that the party was fully pro-EU, as it has often accused the EU of being neo-liberal, monetarist and at times, US-dominated (Charalampous, 2011: 308). During the financial crisis in Greece Syriza has "maintained a vehement anti-austerity stance and has been very critical of the European Union" (Malkoutzis, 2011: 2). The party has overall appeared to be soft-Eurosceptic about the current EU trajectory and its Euroscepticism has been changing according to the context and the political circumstances.

Finally, it is important to highlight that Euroscepticism of Syriza during the crisis is mostly "a virulent opposition to 'the Memorandum' and 'Merkel's policies' that incorporates elements of economic nationalism" (Pagoulatos, 2004). In any case when assessing the party's positions and strategy during the crisis, one should bear in mind the main political currents that "fought" within the party. The first current, the so-called "Renewalist", emphasized on

⁴³ See the article from the Greek edition of the BBC, "Manifesto of Synaspismos". Available through: http://www.bbc.co.uk/greek/domesticnews/story/2004/01/040115_syn.shtml [Accessed on 7 May 2013](translated from Greek).

the party's pro-EU orientation. The second current with a communist ideology, fully denies the EU, based on the ideological analysis of the Marxist crisis of capitalism⁴⁴ and finally, the last current, the so-called "Leftist" (Left Platform), tried to build a radical left identity, adopting thus a Soft-Eurosceptic stance during the crisis⁴⁵.

Syriza's Euroscepticism - "Solving the Rubik's Cube"

Understanding Syriza's Euroscepticism during the crisis requires solving its ideological and strategic puzzle first. Syriza, shortly before the elections of 2012, promised to keep Greece in the Eurozone, while at the same time denouncing the Memorandum of Understanding with all its austerity measures. *Alexis Tsipras* campaigned in 2012 with the slogan that the loan agreement terms are barbaric and that "we are sending a message to Europe". He has furthermore taken a hard line against EU-IMF "neo-liberalism" and encouraged civil disobedience" (Carras, 2012: 3).

The SYN Congress of 2010 talks about an "overall refoundation of the economic and political architecture of the EU"⁴⁶, as the party believed and still believes that the current economic trajectory of the EU is problematic. Yet the same Congress makes clear that SYN is in favor of Greece's EU and EMU membership. Although the official leadership of Syriza has never considered a withdrawal from the EU, some components within the party, such as the

⁴⁴ The Communist Trend within Syriza is opposed to the EU, and the capitalistic system that it promotes. See the positions of the Communist Trend of Syriza. Available through the official website of the party: <http://synedrio.syriza.gr/theseis.php?id=48> [Accessed on 23 July 2013].

⁴⁵ The 'Left Platform' of Syriza, ideologically, has a more radical position towards the EU, which potentially reaches a radical contestation against it. The 'Left Platform' talks about a "German Europe" and the discharge of Greece from a "peculiar and myopic "Eurocentrism", which is often exclusively confined to Western Europe and its beautification", while it supports a European and Arabic Mediterranean. It furthermore talks about a "Greece which will dare to come into conflict with the policy of 'troika', the Memorandums, the Eurozone and the German EU." (translated from Greek). See the aforementioned positions of the 'Left Platform' of Syriza, available through the official website of the party: <http://synedrio.syriza.gr/theseis.php?id=30> [Accessed on 22 July 2013].

⁴⁶ See the SYN Congress (2010). Available through SYN official website: <http://www.syn.gr/gr/theseis.htm> [Accessed on 5 May 2013].

Communist Organization of Greece (KOE), clearly speak of “another Greece in another Europe; in a Europe without the European Union”⁴⁷.

Before the elections of 2012, Syriza was a party which received just 4% of the votes. In the elections of May 2012 it quadrupled its number of seats by increasing its share of the vote to almost 17%⁴⁸ and in the second elections of June 2012 it further increased its share of the vote to almost 27%⁴⁹, becoming thus the main opposition party. The increased share of the vote that the party achieved in the elections changed the nature of the party from a contestation/protest party, to the main oppositional force against the coalition government of ND, PASOK and DEMAR that was formed in the elections of June 2012.

It has been mentioned above in the previous sections of this study that Euroscepticism might be the politics of opposition explained mainly by the strategy a party adopts (Sitter 2008). Syriza’s Euroscepticism during the Greek crisis must be understood as such. Without strong and clear ideological predispositions denoting intense Euroscepticism, the party used the context of the crisis to consolidate soft-Eurosceptic positions. The unclear ideological position and the ambivalence of Syriza towards the EU can be confirmed by the Eurosceptic statements, made occasionally by senior executives of the party. *P. Lafazanis* MP of Syriza and representative of the left-radical wing within the party, has stated that “the position of Syriza towards the Eurozone and the EU certainly needs revision”. He has later stated that “Syriza had never adopted a position towards a Greek exit from the Eurozone” and another MP of Syriza, *P. Skourletis* has stated that “no one in Syriza supports a Greek exit from euro”

⁴⁷ See Karagiannis M. (2012). “The positions of Syriza on foreign policy” in *Kathimerini* [online]. Available at: http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_columns_3_10/05/2012_481694 [Accessed on 6 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁴⁸ See the results of the Greek national elections of 6 May 2012: <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012a/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}>

⁴⁹ See the results of the Greek national elections of 17 June 2012: <http://ekloges.ypes.gr/v2012b/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}>

and he later stated “No sacrifice, not even for the Euro”⁵⁰. In addition to the above, *P. Lafazanis*, stated before the elections of 2012 that “we talk about a ‘left exit’ from the Euro in a total conflict with the European Union” while another prominent MP of Syriza *M. Glezos* stated that “for us money does not have home, we do not care if we stay or leave the Eurozone”⁵¹.

Furthermore, when invited in an event organized by the Greek Observatory of the London School of Economics (LSE) in London on “Greece’s exit from the crisis”, *Alexis Tsipras* mentioned in his speech the following: “We are not an anti-European party. We are a party that believes in the European idea, since solidarity lies in the core of the European idea. Ms. Merkel is the one that has currently the most anti-European policy in Europe”⁵².

Syriza has clearly defined its ideology in a broad and flexible way as it often changed positions on the Euro by exploiting the “plasticity” of the ‘European project’ and thus using it according to its interests, which were mainly to gain electoral support and strengthen its opposition towards the government. Being a protest-based opposition party, it used the context of the financial crisis in Greece to make clear to the electorate that it does not support the current trajectory of the EU. Euroscepticism of Syriza is mainly *a product of strategy* and not ideology, as it has been changing and adjusting to the party’s needs. Intense before the elections, mitigated in between and again intense after the elections of 2012, when the party became the main opposition party, its Euroscepticism would be rather characterized as superficial, what we could alternatively call *‘Euroscepticism of style rather than substance’*.

⁵⁰ See statements of MPs of Syriza, on the positions of the party on Euro. Available at: <http://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/632680> [Accessed on 5 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁵¹ See the article “Comparison of ND and SYRIZA positions in 10 key issues”. Available at: <http://www.antinews.gr/2012/05/30/163677/> [Accessed on 6 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁵² See the newspaper *Kathimerini*. Tsipras: “We are a party that believes in the European idea”. Available at: http://portal.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_kathbreak_1_15/03/2013_487923 [Accessed on 5 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

The ideological position of Syriza has not been consistent, because its structure and membership have been constantly changing (Halikiopoulou, Nanou and Vasilopoulou, 2012: 534). Its opposition against Europe lies mostly in its anti-memorandum policy. It seems that Syriza does not appear to contest Europe. However, it strongly denies the European policy on the Greek economic crisis, the policy of Memorandums and generally the European policy that "marginalizes" the countries in the European South. Tsipras, in his recent speech (10.07.2013), in the new founding conference of Syriza, where the independent components-currents within the party are expected to be dismantled promoting thus the unification of the party, declared Syriza's strong opposition to the Memorandums, underlining the need for their repeal and annulment⁵³.

All things considered, ideologically Syriza is still looking for its identity and hence also for a clear position towards the EU. There are trends within the party with a clear anti-EU profile, which however is not fully adopted by the official position of the party that is somehow narrowed down to a generalized faith in 'Europe of Peoples', in 'Europe of the South' and the abolition of the Memorandums. For the above reasons, Syriza is often blamed for lack of clear positioning and thus it is forced to say that it is not against the EU, as it perhaps senses that an ultimate opposition to the EU would not electorally help it, given the popular fears of a 'Grexit' from the EU and the Euro zone.

⁵³ See Syriza's positions in its 1st Conference. Available at: <http://synedrio.syriza.gr/theseis.php?id=5> [Accessed on 22 July 2013]. "The central objective of Syriza today is the overthrow of the domination of the forces of neo-liberalism and the memorandums"..."our Europe is the very opposite of the Europe of neo-liberalism, of the imperial aspirations of some states and the growing authoritarianism" (translated from Greek). European Union is indirectly accused of implementing wrong policies and thereby, on these perceived as "wrong policies", Syriza bases its opposition.

3.3 The Pro-European forces of the Coalition Government

In this section of the study, reference will be given in the three parties that managed to form the coalition government after the elections of June 2012. The first party that will be assessed is the Democratic Left (DEMAR), then the analysis will continue with the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and lastly with the party of New Democracy (ND). It is important to note that it is the first time in the history of the country after the fall of the Greek military Junta of 1967-1974 – if one excludes the cooperation of ND and KKE against PASOK of Andreas Papandreou, which had a provisional character and a specific mission; to bring “clearance” in the country – that there has been a bipartisan or tripartite government. The three parties that will be analyzed here remained pro-EU, with the exception of ND that presented at times soft-Euro-sceptic stances during the crisis.

3.3.1 Democratic Left (DEMAR)

Democratic Left (DEMAR) was created in 2010 after some of its members seceded from the party of Synaspismos (SYN) with the aim of adopting a more moderate opposition to the government and a more Pro-European stance (Malkoutzis, 2011: 2). The issue of European integration was particularly important for the so called seceding ‘*Ananeotiki – Renewalist*’ faction of SYN, as they believed that SYN policies were ‘compromising the party’s longstanding Europeanism’ (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012: 9).

The party believes that the financial crisis in Greece should be addressed through the strengthening of European integration and a robust economic governance of the EU, while Greece, according to the party and Fotis Kouvelis, the leader of the party, should definitely

remain inside the European Union and the Eurozone, and especially during the crisis⁵⁴. Fotis Kouvelis has criticized SYN and Syriza for not being able to formulate and organize the social forces and for failing to offer an alternative proposal and he has further accused them of complaining without any results, while only suggesting solutions that would bring Greece out of the EU and the Eurozone⁵⁵.

Similarly to the party of the Independent Greeks, Democratic Left was created inside the context of the financial crisis in Greece after seceding from another party (Syriza in the case of DEMAR), and it presented pro-European positions while trying to differentiate from the potential ‘parental influences’ of Syriza. Assessing its manifesto and founding declaration, we can see a clear Pro-European policy/ideology of the party towards the remaining of Greece within the EU and the Eurozone. The following sentences denote the aforementioned Pro-EU identity of the party: “With founding the Democratic Left we want to become the modern, democratic, Europeanist, reformist, ecological Left”; “We are the Europeanist Left that firmly believes that the serving of the popular interests even in their national dimension coincides with the global trends of consolidation rather than fragmentation, with the strong and active position of Greece in the European Union (EU)”; furthermore, its manifesto speaks of a “single European economic governance in a progressive direction”⁵⁶.

Although the party is firmly positioned in favor of Greece’s remaining in the Eurozone, believing that any talks on a Greek exit from the Euro would equal to disaster for both Greece and the EU, it strongly criticizes the most conservative forces within the EU, which with “extreme neoliberal choices, undermine the political unification of Europe for the sake of

⁵⁴ See Galiatsatos, P. (2010). “Democratic Left with surprises” in *Kathimerini* (online). Available at: http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_politics_2_29/06/2010_406264 [Accessed on 7 May 2013](translated from Greek).

⁵⁵ See Tsatsis, Th. (2010). “Democratic Left, with criticism for everyone”. In *Eleutherotopia* (online). Available at: <http://www.enet.gr/?i=issue.el.home&date=28/06/2010&id=177787> [Accessed on 7 May 2013](translated from Greek).

⁵⁶ See the founding declaration of the Democratic Left, retrieved from its official website: <http://www.dimokratikaristera.gr/oi-theseis-mas/i-idrytiki-diakiryksi> [Accessed on 8 May 2013].

short sighted and narrow economic interests”⁵⁷. Such a critic though, only aims at improving the current EU structure and policies and should be assessed as a positive one.

As an office-seeking party that promoted and suggested cooperation among parties during the crisis, Democratic Left aimed at being considered for a coalition government. For this reason, it has moderated all the potential Eurosceptic stances that it could carry as a ‘detached element’ of Syriza. Democratic Left objected to Syriza’s hard line tactics and should be assessed as a “pro-European party, noted for its commitment to civic liberties, pro-immigration ideas and environmental consciousness” (Carras, 2012: 3). Since though ideology determined the pro-EU profile of Demar, it should be also seen as a policy-seeking party. Strategy of the party is better understood by the explanations section of this study, which suggests that strategy of parties depends on their relationship to executive power and government. Being thus a component of the coalition government, Democratic Left is seen as a party that would less likely develop strong Eurosceptic positions, not only because of its ideology but also because of strategic factors of remaining a component of the coalition government. *Ideology of the party however, should be seen as the clearest explanation to its pro-EU character.*

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The Question of 'either, or'

Before this study proceeds with the analysis of the two traditionally Pro-EU parties of the Greek political scene (PASOK and ND), we should note that the question of '*either ideology or strategy*' determining party positions on 'Europe' in Greece should be sometimes rather treated as an issue of '*more or less*', ideology and strategy.

Specifically, Vernardakis⁵⁸ emphasizes on the "multicollectivism" of the Greek parties, what Kirchheimer (1966) has formerly described with the term 'catch-all party'. Vernardakis describes Greek political parties as 'loose ideological constructs', which aim at attracting as many voters as possible. For this reason Greek parties can be often easily characterized as policy-seeking, office-seeking **and** vote-seeking, since they "altered into a mosaic of political, ideological and cultural currents." It is thus difficult to distinguish Greek parties' EU stances based clearly on either their ideological character or their strategy, since strategy and ideology of parties always run counter each other, while trying to create a coherent system of political, economic and ideological views⁵⁹.

Consequently, ideology and strategy should not be treated as two contrasting terms but rather as overlapping. When ideology is vaguely presented with notions/ideas such as: 'Europe of People', 'Europe of the South', or as a generalized dissent to 'Europe of Germans', it facilitates the *convenient management of politics*. Hence strategy finds the opportunity to fit into ideology, presented as *materialized ideology*.

⁵⁸ See Vernardakis, no date. 'Political parties and 'middle ground'. The ideological, political and cultural coordinates of the current political forces'. page 11. [pdf] Available through: http://www.vernardakis.gr/uplmed/11_partis%20politiques%20et%20espace%20intermediaire.pdf [Accessed on 16 July 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁵⁹ For example, parties' programs before elections, are rather roughly written and mostly focus where there is electioneering interest. According to Otto von Bismarck, "Die Politik ist die Lehre von Möglichen" ("Politics is the art of the possible"). Hence, given that the parties have the ability to form and "play" with this 'possible', their strategy often becomes part of their ideology since their ideology is expressed with generalizations, ambiguities and abstractions, purposely leaving space for strategy to operate.

With regards to PASOK and ND, it is difficult to find specific positions on European policy in their electoral programs for the following political reasons:

1. Both PASOK and ND have ruled the country during the post-dictatorship era and ever since the entry of Greece in the EU, and never questioned the European perspective of Greece. Moreover, both parties have been ideologically pro-European (PASOK since its shift, when it took office in 1980).
2. While exercising power, both parties managed European money and subsidies, and thus they also fulfilled their electioneering objectives.
3. The Greek people in their large majority were in favor of the EU and therefore the two parties had no reason to question this choice of the public.

3.3.2 PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)

A historical overview of PASOK reminds us that the socialist Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, founder of the party and father of George Papandreou, was a very important Eurosceptic actor in the 1980s (Vasilopoulou, 2013: 158). His politics were known as the politics of national ‘exceptionalism’ that have only adjusted to the European policy orthodoxy in the 1990s (Pagoulatos, 2004) and were mainly a mixture of national Socialism with strong populist elements. Papandreou was particularly stressing the element of national independence then, interpreted as the emancipation of the country from the then European Community (EC). PASOK adopted in its early years an anti-European and somewhat erratic policy but later changed and by the end of the 1980s it placed Greece at the forefront of European integration (Spourdalakis and Tassis, 2006: 498). Since then, PASOK has remained a clearly pro-EU party.

PASOK won the elections of 2009 with its leader George Papandreou bringing the party to its last moment of glory (Pappas, 2012), given that in the elections of 2009 the party received a 43.9% share of the popular vote. However, as soon as the financial crisis in the Eurozone hit Greece in 2010, the party lost popular support and finally saw its vote share shrinking to 13.2% in the elections of May 2012 and 12.3% in the elections of June 2012⁶⁰.

The simplest argument would suggest that PASOK during the sovereign debt crisis in Greece remained strongly pro-EU simply because it has been the incumbent party that introduced and consequently supported the first bailout package, the mid-term plan and the second bailout package. Hence, it did not have any other option other than to keep its policies in accordance to the trajectory that it had been already following. Having kept a pro-bailout stance and supporting an unpopular austerity program, PASOK has seen a dramatic decline in its popular support. However, it evaluated the costs of a potential exit of Greece from the Eurozone as huge, remained stable in believing that Greece should abide by the Eurozone and the European Union and therefore considered that the policies dictated by the EU should be faithfully followed and implemented.

The political trajectory of PASOK during the crisis has been clearly pro-European. Having ruled the country with three consecutive incumbencies of Andreas Papandreou (1981-1989 & 1993-1996) and the modernizer and especially Europeanist Costas Simitis (1996-2004), PASOK has championed and voted in Parliament in favor of all the European legislation that shaped the current status of the EU. Furthermore, the developmental strategies that have been implemented in Greece by the PASOK governments of 1984 - 1990, were based on community funds, from which PASOK has particularly benefited, receiving electoral support

⁶⁰ See the results of the Greek national elections of 6 May 2012, Available at: [http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012a/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}",](http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012a/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}) [Accessed on 8 May 2013].

⁶⁰ See the results of the Greek national elections of 17 June 2012, Available at: [http://ekloges.ypes.gr/v2012b/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}",](http://ekloges.ypes.gr/v2012b/public/index.html#%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:{}) [Accessed on 7 May 2013].

from the satisfied Greek public. Therefore, since the early 1990s, the policies of PASOK have been Pro-European and maintained as such with George Papandreou in 2009, when he became the Prime Minister of Greece.

Evangelos Venizelos replaced George Papandreou as PASOK president on 18 March 2012, and led the party in both the elections of May and June 2012.⁶¹ Since then, the positions of the party still remained clearly pro-European. Namely, Venizelos has stated that “Greece’s future lies within the political Union of Europe” and that “a deep problem of mentality, values and social cohesion has been revealed during the crisis in Greece that can only be confronted in accordance with the European standards, as the EU and the Council of Europe suggests”⁶². Furthermore, Venizelos speaks of a “strategic remaining of Greece within Europe” and that “the views of the European Socialists and the European South should prevail in Europe”⁶³. Any PASOK’s critic during the crisis towards the EU and its problems has only aimed at improving its policies, institutions and values⁶⁴.

Hence, before and during the crisis, the position of the party on the EU and the European perspective of Greece did not change. PASOK as a one-party government, handling the crisis alone, but also as a member of the tripartite government, voted in favor of all the Memorandums and the austerity measures that have been imposed by the EU and never promoted the idea that the financial crisis can be confronted outside the EU. This highlights its pro-EU position, which ideologically since 1980 but also strategically, managed and still

⁶¹ See “Greek socialists vote for finance minister as new leader” (2012). In *Kathimerini* (online). Available at: http://ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_18/03/2012_433433 [Accessed on 30 May 2013].

⁶² See the statements of Evangelos Venizelos, president of PASOK in Thessaloniki (2013). Available through the official website of the party: <http://www.pasok.gr/declaration/item/1192-diloseis-venizelou-sti-thessaloniki.html> [Accessed on 30 May 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁶³ See the speech of the president of PASOK, Evangelos Venizelos in the Regional Units of Piraeus and Islands (2013). Available through the official website of the president of PASOK, Evangelos Venizelos: <http://www.evenizelos.gr/el/politicalspeeches/speeches2013/4070-piraeas> [Accessed on 1 June 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁶⁴ There are not many statements of party members and MPs of PASOK on Europe, since the party has a clear strategic and ideological European orientation. Its manifesto did not change during the crisis. Its pro-European identity is part of its general identity and therefore there is no need for the party to stress it all the time, as it results from its general policy and its active participation in the European Parliament.

manages the crisis within the European institutions and norms, believing that Greece as a member of the EU will solve its problems within the EU.

3.3.3 New Democracy (ND)

New Democracy has been since its founding by Konstantinos Karamanlis in 1974, a clearly pro-EU party that led Greece into the then European Community at the beginning of the 1980s (Verney 1994). The party of New Democracy has been the ‘initiator’ of the European orientation of the country⁶⁵ and it guided the progress of the rest of the Greek parties towards their neighboring European ones (Konstantinidis, 2009: 138-139). Being one of the two incumbent parties of the two-party system in Greece along with PASOK, it has enjoyed governing the country for many years (2004–2009 the most recent occasion). In the elections of October 2009, ND lost to their rivals PASOK with a reduced share of vote to 33, 47%⁶⁶, thus suffering its ‘worst defeat in parliamentary elections since 1974’ (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012: 8).

After the elections of 2009, when George Papandreou (leader of PASOK) was elected as Prime Minister of Greece, the deficit of Greece appeared to be much higher than originally expected. ND, being the opposition, has voted against the memorandum of understanding that was brought to the Greek Parliament in May 2010 and the midterm fiscal plan of June 2011, thus presenting a firmly oppositional character against the policies of the incumbent PASOK (Pappas, 2012: 2). How therefore should one assess New Democracy’s vote against the memorandum dictated by the EU? Would it be possible to argue that ND has contextually

⁶⁵ The party of New Democracy was the first party in Greece that joined in any of the partisan formations of the European Parliament; in the European People’s Party (EPP), in 1983.

⁶⁶ See the results of the Greek national elections of October 2009: <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2009/pages/index.html?lang=en> [Accessed on 10 May 2013].

become Eurosceptic during the crisis? The answer would be a resounding **NO**. ND has not adopted Euroscepticism, it has rather made strategic considerations in order to strengthen its oppositional voice during the crisis. Kostas Gemenis and Roula Nezi (2012) suggest that ND, being an office-seeking party and as the main oppositional party after 2009, has ornately ‘orchestrated its opposition to the bill’. Having voted against the first Memorandum of May 2010 and the midterm fiscal plan of June 2011, it stood firmly opposed to the perceived anti-popular measures introduced by the government of PASOK and ‘troika’.

Samaras’ strategy became further comprehensible when he later supported the government of Lucas Papademos - a former vice-president of the European Central Bank - with the promise that the government would not last more than six months in order for elections to be held thereafter. Samaras had radically changed his strategy and lowered the anti-memorandum banner by adopting a more pragmatic and responsible political attitude. Hence, he expected that in the following elections he would win without carrying any “blame attributions” (ibid: 14) from participating in the government, and thus he tried to “minimize the electoral cost associated with incumbency during times of crisis” (Nezi 2012) by asking all his MPs to resign their seats from government portfolios (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012). Thereby, strategy of Samaras followed a concrete trajectory; that of leading the country into elections, where he could serve as the Prime-Minister of an ND government or a coalition government with ND as the leading party.

With both PASOK and ND supporting the coalition government of Papademos, the second memorandum was brought in through Parliament in February 2012, with PASOK voting in favor, as well as ND this time. Samaras changed strategy as he must have seen that supporting the coalition government was the best thing to do, given the potential policy dilemmas that he would also face as an incumbent (ibid: 8). After the elections of June 2012, ND became the first party, by receiving 30% of the votes. Being unable to form government itself, it

consented with PASOK and DEMAR to finally form a coalition government. If no consensus had been reached among the three parties, the country would have been driven to a third consecutive election, which would have had disastrous repercussions at both the economic and political levels.

Samaras after the elections of 2012 when ND received the majority of the Greek votes mentioned that “Greece’s position within Europe will not be doubted” and that the “Greek people have voted today for the European course of Greece and its remaining in the Eurozone”⁶⁷. All things considered, strategy of the party explains both its initial ‘Euro sceptic’ position and its later ‘compliance’ with the EU and IMF policies during the crisis. Its ideology has always been pro-EU believing that “Greece can ensure the prominence and happiness of its people within Europe, where it belongs”⁶⁸.

In the game of politics it is rather obvious that when a party is office-seeking, strategy will always play an important role in the formation and alterations of its policies. As described above, ND held an oppositional stance in the beginning of the crisis towards the then incumbent PASOK and the measures dictated by the EU and the IMF, but as it faced the dilemma of potentially winning the elections - and having to carry the “political onus” of forming a government - it changed its policies and thus continued implementing the policies of PASOK that it had been formerly, firmly opposing. However, the party’s pro-European character⁶⁹, a clear ‘coalescent’ and ‘innermost’ characteristic of its general identity, managed to successfully vanquish its occasional, strategic "Euro scepticism" during the crisis.

⁶⁷ See the statements of Samaras after the elections of June 2012. Available at: <http://euractiv.gr/ekloges-2012/ekloges-nd-diloseis-samara> [Accessed on 6 June 2013] (translated from Greek).

⁶⁸ See the founding declaration of the party of New Democracy in October 4, 1974. Available at the official website of the party: http://arxeio.nd.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=29 [Accessed on 5 June 2013].

⁶⁹ See ND's official positions from its 8th regular conference in 2010, titled: "Greece in Europe and the world" (translated from Greek), available through the official website of the party: <http://www.nd.gr/web/secretary-international-relations> [Accessed on 25 July 2013]. ND believes that Greece during the crisis should promote cooperation with Europe and contribute to it. See also the 2009 program of the party, "We deal dynamically

Conclusions

The economic crisis in Greece has completely changed the political landscape for the Greek political parties. New parties were born in the Greek political stage, others disappeared, some splintered, the incumbent parties namely PASOK and ND, lost a significant number of their supporters – an unusual occurrence from one election to another - and finally Syriza's share of votes rose drastically, changing the identity of the party from a protest party to the main opposition power. These dramatic changes, characteristics of an ongoing crisis, were definitely associated with the general questioning of the European policies and the EU as a whole.

Party-based Euroscepticism during the economic crisis in Greece should not be myopically assessed, as a product of only ideology or strategy, but should rather be seen as a combination of both in most of the party cases analyzed above. In the extreme parties of the left and right political spectrum for example, Hard-Euroscepticism has always inherently existed in their ideology, for reasons that have been analyzed above. Hence, during the crisis their dissent with the European policies should be merely explained as an ideologically driven reaction to the austerity measures and the memorandum. For KKE and the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, a return to the drachma and an exit from the Eurozone would be the most suitable solutions to the deadlock of the Greek economy. Nevertheless, both parties have been advocating withdrawal from the EU before the outbreak of the crisis and thus remained consistent and firm to their Hard-Euroscepticism during the actual timeframe of the crisis.

The nationalist party Independent Greeks appeared ambiguous on the subject since its dissent with the EU was based on the current economic trajectory of the Union and not on its general ideas and ideals. Hardly anyone would detect strong ideological predispositions of dissent

with the present, we responsibly plan the future". (translated from Greek), October 2009, Athens. The policies of the party are presented always in accordance with the EU principles. European policies and European institutional frameworks are seen as the means to solve the crisis.

with the EU in the party, which has been mostly a product of intra-party disputes within the conservative Pro-EU party of ND and its transition from an anti-memorandum rhetoric to a “memorandum-implementing” policy. Independent Greeks’ is clearly a vote-seeking party that made strategic considerations when adopting Euroscepticism, in order to take advantage of the engulfed by a tidal wave of political and economic reforms Greece, and present its populist identity to the disorientated public.

SYRIZA, being once an electorally weak party of the far-left, managed to become the main opposition voice during the economic crisis. With this in mind, it used the power that it acquired to oppose the Memorandum of Understanding, the PASOK government and later the tripartite coalition government of ND, PASOK and DEMAR. Its Euroscepticism during the crisis can be seen as a virulent opposition to the memorandum than a principled ideological opposition. The incoherence that prevailed in it has increased the confusion regarding the strategic direction of the party, as it appeared to advocate withdrawal from the Eurozone at times and then the remaining of Greece within it at others.

On the contrary, the parties of the coalition government of the June elections of 2012, remained solidly Pro-EU with the exception of the party of ND, where disagreements and opposition of the party have been expressed only during the first memorandum and the mid-term fiscal plan, but only as a strategic position of the party in opposing the PASOK government. In essence, the party made an opportunistic switch while trying to oppose PASOK’s policies by following a populist trajectory that changed as soon as the party realized that it could win the elections and carry the burden of implementing the policies dictated by the ‘troika’.

It is important to note that before the economic crisis in Greece, the right-wing Hard-Euroscepticism was a rather minor component of Euroscepticism in the country. The dynamics of Euroscepticism in Greece during the crisis should not be simply equated only

with the rise of the far right and populist party-based Euroscepticism. Party-based Euroscepticism at this time must be seen as the effort of some parties to express the public frustration and opposition to the policy of the EU, the European Commission, the Euro group and the so perceived 'suzerain' Germany that 'threatens with predatory austerity' Greece and all the Southern European countries. Aside from the dynamics of hard or soft Euroscepticism in the Greek political scene denoting an oppositional character to the current trajectory of the EU, the enhancing of Eurosceptic voices in general, could also mean more 'Europeanism' in the sense of a positive critic that aims to improve the EU's political and economic trajectory.

Overall, the economic crisis in Greece revealed a general crisis in the political system of the country. Firstly, the two main parties that ruled the country for decades electorally shrank, especially PASOK that was ruling the country during the outbreak of the crisis. Secondly, the economic crisis facilitated the establishment of new opportunistic political alternatives such as Golden Dawn and 'Independent Greeks' and finally revealed the weaknesses and the inability of all the parties of the Greek political system, to independently form government after the crisis. The most important outcome of the economic crisis though, might be the collaborative culture that the Greek political parties managed to adopt for the first time, by forming a coalition government. Time will show whether this culture will remain and be successful in the Greek political scene, or whether it will fade away as Greece falls deeper into the crisis.

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*(All the used scholarly literature is offered here, in the above bibliography section of this study. However, scholarly articles from newspapers, parties' manifestos, statements of leaders and MPs and articles offered at online databases are referenced in footnotes, in order to be easily accessed and assessed by the readers of this study).