Chapter 11. Populism, Party Politics and the Economic Crisis in Greece: a Comparison with the Case of Portugal

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Abstract

Among all South European countries, Greece underwent the most severe economic crisis in the 2010s which gave rise to dormant populist reactions, which combined with diffuse political discourse and the political party system.

In contrast to the comparable case of Portugal, populism in Greece was reflected in the emergence or strengthening of populist parties on the Left and the Right, the adoption of populism as political discourse by an otherwise radical left-wing party (Syriza), and its rise to power in 2015 on the wave of social reactions to austerity policies. Populism was also manifested in the adoption of populist governing policies during Syriza's government rule, in coalition with the nationalist right-wing Anel party, in 2015-2019.

The spread of populism and its rise to power in Greece are analyzed in the light of the opposite experience of Portugal and are attributed to following causes: legacies of democratic practice after the 1974 transition to democracy, traditions of political culture and the polarization of the party system, in addition to the gravity and long duration of the recent economic crisis which was a catalyst for the sea change in Greek politics in 2011-2019.

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1. Introduction

Populism in Greece has been nurtured by long term historical legacies of political exclusion, distrust of political institutions as well as acute polarization in a two-party system. It has been sparked by the harsh austerity measures which followed the eruption of the Greek crisis, the worst in Southern Europe, and the rejection of austerity by parties and social movements, couched in populist discourse terms. After the government turnover of 2015, through which a left-wing populist government came to power in Greece, populist government measures entailed pressure exerted on democratic institutions, including the justice system and the media, and the opening of public sector jobs to governing party supporters. In comparison to other crisis-ridden South European countries, such as Portugal where populism did not emerge or Spain where it was defeated politically, populism was strikingly successful in Greece.

Populism became evident in the emergence and strengthening of populist parties on the Left and the Right, the adoption of populism as political discourse by an otherwise radical left-wing party (Coalition of the Radical Left - Syriza), its rise to power in 2015 on the wave of populist reactions to austerity policies and the adoption of populist governing policies during Syriza's government rule in 2015-2019, in coalition with the right-wing nationalist-populist party "Independent Greeks" (the Anel).

It is notable that Portugal also underwent a severe economic crisis in the early 2010s. Portugal overcame the crisis more successfully than Greece, and also had a government turnover in 2015, with the ascent of Antonio Costa, leader of the Socialist Party (PS), to government. However, in contrast to Portugal, Greece, after feeling the negative impact of a severe economic crisis and crisis mismanagement, also felt the negative impact of populist governing policies.

In what follows I will first discuss theoretical approaches to populism, arguing that conceptualizations of populism should take into account how populists actually govern, after coming to power. I will then move to the concept of "practice of political exclusion" (Fishman 2019: 221), as the first among several ways to understand populism in Greece. Political exclusion, in other words, will be shown to be a first contributing factor to the rise of populism in Greece, in contrast to Portugal (and less so, to Spain too). I will then present and interpret another contributing factor, namely legacies of state-society relations and political culture, which have provided a soil fertile for the growth of populism. The emphasis will be on the persistence of cultural patterns of resistance against the state and distrust towards political institutions, such as the government, the parliament and political parties. I will then proceed to present an argument familiar to observers of contemporary Greek politics, namely the extreme polarization of the political party system as a third contributing factor to the rise of populism.

The next step will be a brief discussion of the post-2010 economic crisis, its mismanagement, the societal reactions it provoked and its impact on the Greek party system. In short, the crisis

acted as a catalyst to the rapid and multi-faceted growth of populism in Greece in the 2010s. I will then analyze the populist character of the Syriza party and government in contrast to the Portuguese socialist party which, like Syriza, ascended to government in 2015. I will illustrate my argument through a discussion of distinctly populist governing policies in Greece which Syriza and its nationalist populist coalition partner, Anel, followed in 2015-2019. These were policies aiming to fully control the mass media, control of the justice system and recruitment to the public sector. In the conclusions I will summarize the main argument about the three factors which have contributed to the rise of populism in Greece and highlight the point about the usefulness of including the practices of populist parties in government for a more comprehensive conceptualization of populism.

2. Theoretical framework

Among the various theoretical approaches to populism, four stand out (Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017). The first approach understands populism as a thin ideology, the second as a political style or discourse, the third as a political strategy and the fourth as a relationship between the leader(s) and the led. All these approaches are useful to understand populism while it is on the rise in a certain political system, but none of the them places enough emphasis on populism as a way to govern and to structure state-society relations.

In detail, according to the first approach, populism is an ideology. It understands politics and society in dualistic terms; it pits the "people" against national and/or foreign "elites"; it claims that people have been deprived of their right to self-rule; and it recognizes the "people" as morally superior to its enemies. It is a "thin" ideology, i.e., it does not possess a full set of ideas and values about the world that surrounds us. It may thus be combined with other, more fully developed, ideologies, e.g., socialism, nationalism or right-wing extremism of various kinds (Mudde 2004 and 2017).

According to the second approach, populism is a political style or political discourse. It takes different forms as a signifier. In order to put it metaphorically, it is an empty vessel. In populist discourse, different, originally diverging, demands by politically weak or socially excluded identities are linked together. Depending on the political context, such identities become equivalent of one another, as they rally behind a common cause, namely to resist power-holders. For example, different groups converge to reject economic austerity (Laclau 2005, Panizza 2005).

According to the third approach, populism is a political strategy. It involves political parties and social movements, led by a usually charismatic political leader who is not bound by his or her ideology. The leader implements a strategy of vote maximization, ascending to power and maintaining power (Weyland 2001 and 2017).

And according to the fourth approach, populism is a relationship between leaders and the people who are represented and led by those who lead them. Populist leaders perform ("act out") a representation of the people "as is". Populism is manifested in a rapport between the leaders and the led, while the latter offer their direct, "unmediated" support to the former (Ostiguy 2017).

The first of the four approaches has become popular in academic research, probably because it justifiably stresses the malleability and adaptability of populism. These are features that contribute to understand how populism thrives in variable social settings (e.g., in postwar Argentina, Greece of the 1980s, and contemporary Hungary and Poland) and in symbiosis with different value systems (e.g., statist, nationalist or even neo-liberal value systems).

However, there are limits to Mudde's approach. Some ideologies may not be available to marry with populism. For example, political liberalism of the late twentieth century, emphasizing the balance among the three branches of state power (the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary) and the establishment of independent regulatory and administrative authorities (e.g., the Ombudsman) is not compatible with populism's harsh and deep divisions of political forces (Mueller 2016). Contemporary political liberalism, stressing the need to balance the expression of popular will with the safeguarding of institutional checks and balances is probably not compatible with the naked, i.e., not institutionally mediated, expression of popular will, which populism advocates.

Most of the above conceptualizations are better in interpreting populism *before* its ascent to power than after. Yet, today there is already a long record of populists in power around the world. The aforesaid approaches are perhaps not as useful for the analysis of populist government policies.

For example, one can observe patterns of recurrent populist government policies in Europe today, such as the policies of FDZ government in Hungary, the PiS government in Poland, the SNS government in Serbia, and the Syriza-Anel government in Greece (2015-2019), which include several, if not all of the following government policy preferences:

- distrust towards checks and balances in liberal democracies (distrust towards the justiciary, the media, the independent regulatory authorities)
- colonization of the state
- clientelism in public sector and welfare policies
- economic nationalism, if not outright protectionism
- skepticism or hostility towards the Euro

If my claim that populism in power manifests a set of concrete populist policy choices is correct, then, after all, perhaps populism as ideology, is not so "thin" as asserted by Mudde's theory of populism (Mudde 2017). The reasons why populist governments, to a small or

larger extent, tend to adopt such policy preferences, may vary and depend on various factors. One factor may be a complementing political ideology to which populists also subscribe (e.g., socialism, nationalism). A second one may be the historical legacies of past policy arrangements in the national economy and state which populists steer from the government's position; and a third factor may be the state-society relations which populists strive to build "from above" in order to buttress their political legitimacy and chances for re-election.

3. Case selection

In order to substantiate this argument, a case study analysis would be useful. In this paper, an empirical case providing a difficult test for this argument is discussed. This is the case of the Greek crisis of 2010-2019, including the rise in popularity of the Syriza party in 2010-2014, its ascent to government in 2015, and Syriza's performance in government in coalition with the Anel party in 2015-2019. The difficulty in treating this case and therefore its usefulness as a test of the aforementioned argument lies in the fact that throughout the period under study (2010-2019), including the period of Syriza-Anel rule, the policy discretion of the Greek government was very limited.

During the crisis in Greece, a vast array of government policies, ranging from macroeconomic and fiscal policies to employment and other social policies, remained under the close scrutiny of external actors, namely foreign creditors, who constrained the policy options of Greek governments. In other words, if it is true that the populist government policies listed above are essential to populism and constitute an indispensable characteristic of populism, then these polices should also emerge in the most adverse political circumstances where there should be little, if any, room for populism. These would be circumstances in which a populist government has very little room for maneuver, a situation in which successive Greek governments, including the Syriza-Anel government, found themselves in the 2010s.

In detail, after the start of the Greek crisis (2010), policy-making in Greece occurred in the context of three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), signed between Greek authorities and the country's creditors in 2010, 2012 and 2015 and updated in 2016 and 2017. The MoUs laid out the Economic Adjustment Program which in the case of Greece lasted for almost nine years (May 2010-August 2018). This Program specified the conditions which Greece had to fulfil, if it was to continue to receive financial support to pay for its public debt. The fulfilment of conditions was made under the close supervision of representatives of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The representatives of these three external actors, known as "the Troika", performed periodic reviews of progress accomplished in the Economic Adjustment Program, which included non-economic policy sectors, such as the public administration and justice. Evidently, little political inclusion in decision-making was allowed in that crisis-ridden environment.

4. Democratic practice and political inclusion: comparing Greece to Portugal and Spain

The rise of populism may be accounted first through a new theoretical lens first suggested by Robert M. Fishman, which can be applied to the case of Greece (Fishman 2019: 221-223). Political inclusion is a set of "ways in which political actors…make use of the rights and possibilities for action provided by democracy and deal with others who similarly engaged" (Fishman 2019: 6). Actors may be not only office holders, but also citizens, groups, unions and movements engaging in political activities.

In conjunction with Fishman's analysis, it could be added that regarding state-society relations, political inclusion is a crisp concept capturing the propensity of decision-makers to listen to and adapt to reasonable demands "from below" (unions, movements, associations) and to avoid the complete alienation of the governing elites from the people.

Democratic practice differs by country because, although constitutionally provided institutions and individual and collective rights may be similar, in practice political actors express themselves and interact within, but also outside, formal political institutions in a variety of ways (Fishman 2019). Fishman has shown that, compared to Spain or Greece, Portugal before the crisis, but also during the evolution of the crisis, was characterized by patterns of broader political inclusion, not encountered in other crisis-ridden countries.

Indeed, at least since 1974 in Greece democratic practice has been characterized by a confrontational style unmatched by corresponding practices in Portugal. Meanwhile, in Greece office holders after 1974, such as the center-right, single-majority party government of New Democracy (ND) in 1974-1981 and the left (later on, center-left) Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) in 1981-1989 were relatively unencumbered by institutional constraints, other than those placed by the Greek Constitution of 1975. If anything, this constitution offered to the executive a role overshadowing the roles of the legislature and the judiciary. Greek office holders did not face the constraints which Spanish office-holders encountered during and after the first transition period from Franco's rule (Fishman 2019: 51-57). Constraints included the negotiations with the outgoing Francoist elite or the bitter memories of the Spanish civil war and the 40 year-long, horrifying oppression which followed that war.

Political inclusion was not typical of the democratic practice in post-1974 Greece. Early on, the parliament became an arena of unrelenting political confrontation between government and opposition rather than a stage of political interaction opening up possibilities for inclusion in policy making. With regard to the first stages of formulating government policy, there was little consultation with social partners at least until the early 1990s (Zambarloukou 1996, Lavdas 2005, Sotiropoulos 2019). In 1980-2006, half of all general strikes which were called in Western Europe, were actually general strikes in Greece (Hamman, Johnston and Kelly 2013).

In Greece police used excessive force against demonstrators, while the latter tended to break through police lines, storm government buildings and occupy state-owned buildings such as

schools, universities, headquarters of ministries and offices of state-owned enterprises. Violent political riots were common in Greece not only during the recent economic crisis, when they became the epitome of anti-systemic political action (Andronikidou and Kovras 2012), but also throughout the preceding post-authoritarian period. Moreover, between 1975 and 2002 the longest living left-wing terrorist organization in Western Europe, the "17th of November Revolutionary Organization", bombed or assassinated members of governing and business elites as well as foreign diplomats. Less active left-wing terrorist organizations, such as the "Revolutionary Popular Struggle" (ELA), imitated its example.

In brief, Greek political elites did not follow inclusionary political practices, while non-elites did not want to be included, even if invited to do so. They preferred direct anti-government mobilization to participative consultation, as the next section of the paper also shows. On the other hand, barriers to the political participation of non-governing political or social actors were quickly erected after 1974. And such actors used to pursue their interests not so much through existing institutional arrangements, but mostly against and outside such arrangements, which created a perfect environment for populism to appear and flourish.

5. Populism, state-society relations and political culture in Greece

A popular view of state-society relations in Greece is that there is a historical legacy of resistance of Greek society against the state and foreign occupying powers (Svoronos 1980). Resistance has ranged from the struggle of the nascent modern Greek nation against the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century, during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1827), to the resistance of Greek partisan guerrilla armies against the Axis armies occupying Greece during the Second World War (1941-1944). The accuracy of that view, which downplays Greece's comparatively early integration into Western alliances (e.g., NATO, EU), is debatable. Still one may retain from that view a tendency of Greeks to be suspicious of authority that is also borne out of more recent surveys of trust towards political institutions, as shown further in this paper (Figures 1, 2 and 3, below).

There are also other historical legacies of state-society relations such as political clientelism (or patronage) and populism. Citizens and social groups were integrated into Greece's political system in 19th and 20th centuries through networks of political patronage and populist mobilization of the masses (Mouzelis 1986). A well-known recent instance of the latter was the rule of Pasok in 1981-1989 under the leadership of the charismatic populist leader Andreas Papandreou (Lyrintzis 1987 and 2005, Kalyvas 2015, Sotiropoulos 1996).

It has been argued that Greek politics in the whole era between the rise of Pasok to power in 1981 and today can be interpreted through the prism of populism (Pappas 2013). This is probably an exaggeration. However, it is true that particularly the 1980s and the early 1990s populist themes were part and parcel of Greece's political culture (Doxiadis and Matsaganis

2013, Kalpadakis and Sotiropoulos 2007). In addition to the aforementioned near-absolute rejection of state authority and suspicion towards Western powers, one has to reckon that parties, mass media and a large share of the general population have subscribed to a conflictual, dichotomic, interpretative scheme of public policy choices and a xenophobic understanding of immigration and Greece's place in the world.

It has also been argued that in Greek political culture there has always been a cultural dualism (Diamandouros 1994), pitting "Westernising" political forces and social strata against "underdog" forces supporting traditional and parochial value. Indeed, one cannot help observe patterns of political values and behavior indicative of dualistic, Manichean discourse. Pasok's outright rejection of the establishment, domestic and foreign monopolies, the USA, and even European social democracy in the early 1980 set the stage for the astonishingly popular conceptualization of the Greek crisis of the early 2010s by Syriza. The latter grew in terms of popularity, by continuously employing contrasts such a clash between "the people" vs. "Brussels", the "new" vs. the "old" (political system), "us" vs. "them".

Similarly, in terms of the shallow pillars of liberal democracy in Greece, there was a tension between liberal and illiberal patterns (Pollis 1987, Diamandouros 1994). After transition from authoritarian rule in 1974, the post-authoritarian Greek democracy was only weakly anchored on liberal values and liberal principles of modern democratic regimes, such as checks and balances among democratic institutions. Individual human rights were constitutionally protected. However, they were a lesser priority compared to traditional collectivist values and institutions, such as the Greek nation. Even if plain illiberalism was never hegemonic, the liberal bases of Greek politics and society remained weak.

With the benefit of hindsight, one may argue that - after the 1974 transition to democracy – a few time periods of political, economic and administrative modernization and national organizational successes, such as the impeccable organization of the Athens Olympic Games in 2004, were interspersed in a long period of hegemony of traditionalism and parochialism. The latter were cultural traits providing a soil fertile to the rise of populism. For example, throughout the last four decades, in some quarters of Greece's state, such as schools and public administration, a culture of egalitarianism reigned supreme. It was a culture diffused by parties, media and unions of the Right and the Left. This culture made the differentiation of rewards on the basis of effort and achievement impossible, as both under-performance and over-achievement in education as well as both slack and commitment to work were equally compensated. It became customary to distribute the same educational credentials or material rewards to almost everybody. Moreover, populism was also diffused in and by religious institutions, namely the Greek Christian Orthodox Church (Stavrakakis 2002, Halikiopoulou 2012) and converged with untamed nationalism in the teaching of history in elementary and high schools (Koulouri 2002).

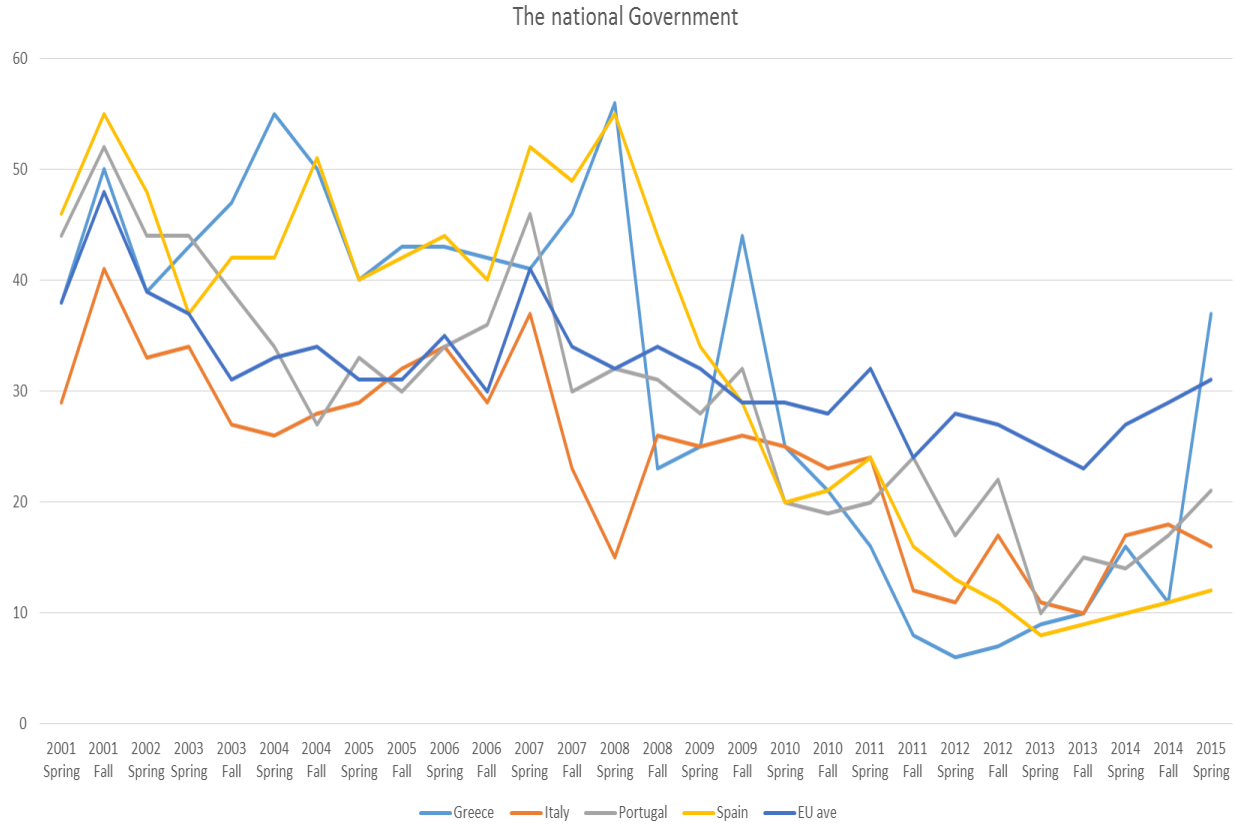
Such legacies of political culture which were full of contradictions, bore consequences in state-society relations and national economy. Despite some public policy successes in the areas of modern transport and communications infrastructure, there are long-standing systemic and public policy failures (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008). Failures include long-term instances of poor governance, corruption, and discrimination against political opponents and powerless groups of the population, e.g., women, the young, the outsiders of the labor market, and migrants (Lyrintzis 2011, Pappas 2013, Sotiropoulos 2019). Populism does not necessarily spring from governance failures and social inequalities. However, after being sparked by other stimuli such as a grave economic crisis, populism can flourish on the soil of a polarized political culture, systematic public policy failure and chronic inequalities.

Primary among such failures has been the incompatibility between employment and education policies in Greece. There has been a long-term divergence between education/training and employment trends, dating back at least to the early or mid-1990s. At the time, a proliferation of establishing new higher education institutions was decided by successive governments, with an eye to appease patronage-based demands for new universities and university departments across the country. The proliferation of higher education opportunities took place without a corresponding care to intervene in the economy in order to stimulate the creation of new jobs and adapt education to labor market demands. Unavoidably, as time passed, larger shares of the younger-age groups experienced unemployment, underemployment and social status inconsistency, all of which also contributed to a culture amenable to exploitation by populists.

Legacies of Low Political Trust

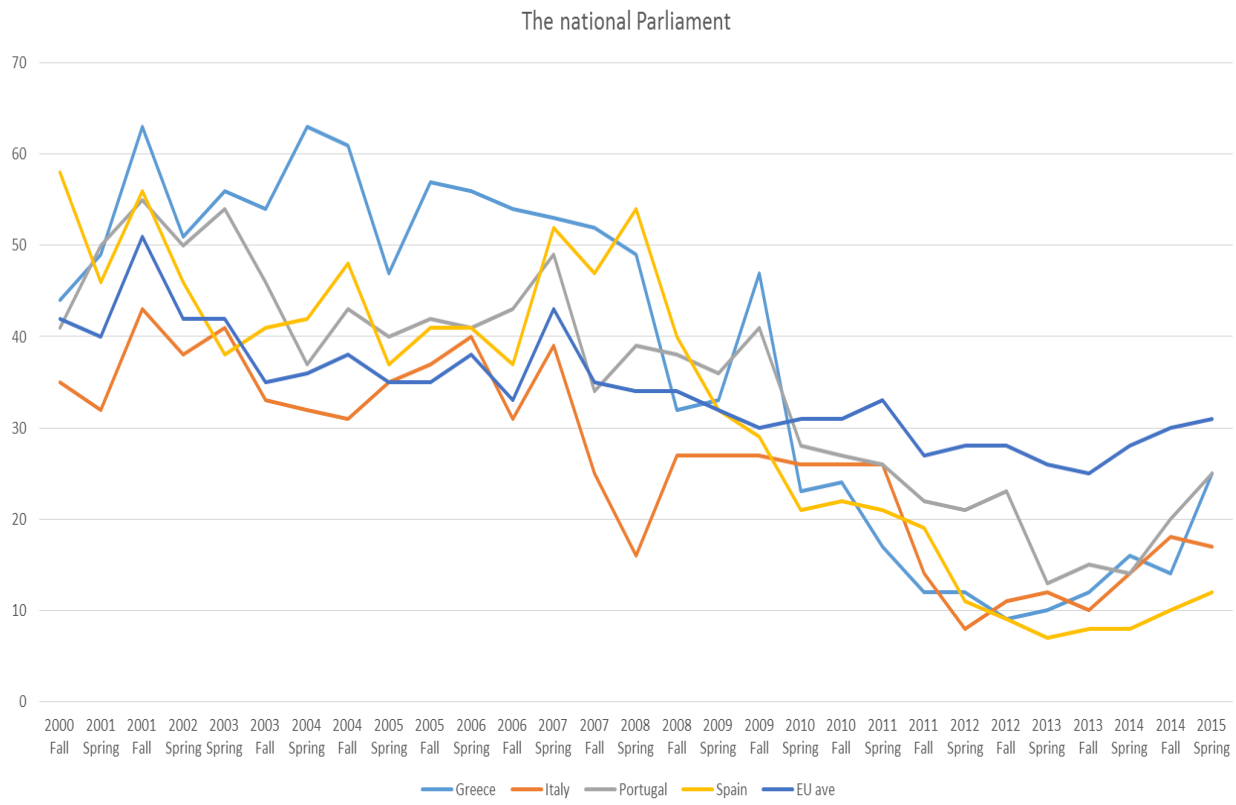
All of the above historical tendencies of state-society relations and patterns of political culture fueled a negative stance towards political institutions. Political trust was on the decline in most EU countries and certainly in all South European countries before the economic crisis started, but there was a very sharp decline in trust towards the government, the parliament and political parties after 2009 (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The sharpest drop occurred in Greece, where already in 2010 trust in parties reached rock bottom (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Trust in national government of countries of Southern Europe, 2001-2015: % of respondents who trust somewhat and trust a lot



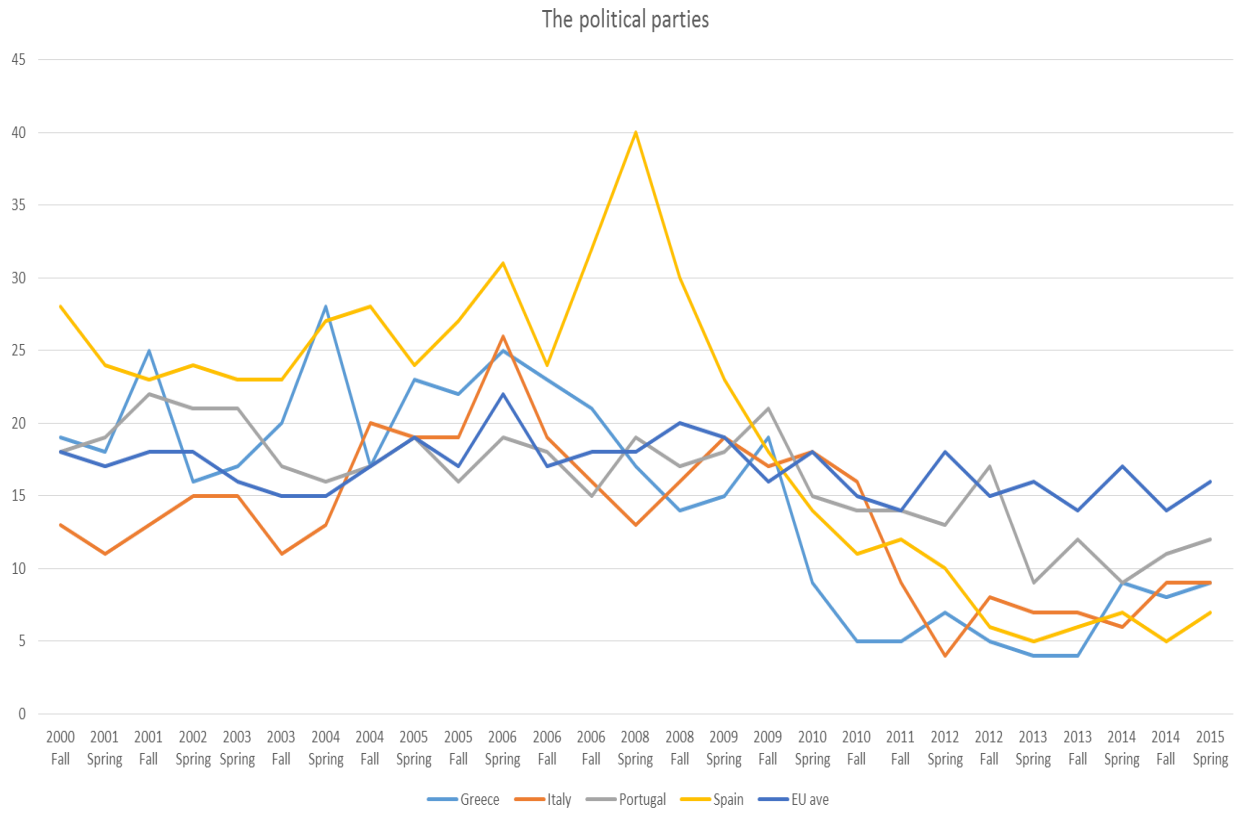
Source: Standard Eurobarometer surveys

Figure 2. Trust in national parliament of countries of Southern Europe, 2001-2015: % of respondents who trust somewhat and trust a lot



Source: Standard Eurobarometer surveys

Figure 3. Trust in political parties of countries of Southern Europe, 2001-2015: % of respondents who trust somewhat and trust a lot



Source: Standard Eurobarometer surveys

6. Populism and party system polarization

Non-inclusive patterns of democratic practice and distrust towards political institutions combine with and are reflected in the political party system. Populism does not only breed polarization in the party system, but also benefits from it. Populist discourse thrives on pre-existing legacies of political party polarization, in terms of which Greece was far ahead, so to speak, compared to other countries. For example, even before the crisis started, compared to the Portuguese party system, the Greek party system was extremely polarized. In the pre-crisis period (up to and including 2009) the Greek party system was an extreme case of two-party system. For three decades the two largest Greek parties, ND and Pasok, obtained a very large share of the vote each (Table 1). It is striking that in all parliamentary elections between 1981 and 2009 the vote for ND ranged between 34 and 47 percent of total votes cast, while in the same time period the vote for Pasok ranged between 38 and 48 percent. The two

parties taken together, garnered a very large share of the vote in the pre-crisis elections (Table 2).

Table 1. Political party polarization in Greece: percentage share of the vote obtained by the two largest political parties in parliamentary elections, 1974-2012

	1974	1977	1981	1985	June 1989	Nov 1989	April 1990	1993	1996	2000	2004	2007	2009	May 2012	June 201
New Democracy	54.4	41.8	35.9	40.8	44.3	46.2	46.9	39.3	38.1	42.7	45.4	41.8	33.5	18.9	29.7
Pasok	13.6	25.3	48.1	45.8	39.1	40.7	38.6	46.9	41.5	43.8	40.6	38.1	43.9	13.2	12.3

Source: official results of parliamentary elections

Table 2. Political party polarization in Greece and Portugal before the economic crisis: Combined percentage share of the total vote obtained by the two largest parties in national parliamentary elections prior to the start of the economic crisis

	National election preceding the prior- to – last election before the crisis (2004 in Greece, 2002 in Portugal)	**Prior-to-last national election before the crisis (2007 in Greece, 2005 in Portugal)**	**National election at the start of the crisis (2009 in both countries)**
Greece	86	80	77
Portugal	78	74	66

Source: official results of parliamentary elections

Two-partyism in Greece has a long history, manifested in legacies which still impact Greek politics today. In the interwar period, there was a national schism between the pro-royalist party, supporting the King, and the liberal party, led by Eleftherios Venizelos. After the end of the Second World War, a civil war followed in 1946-1949 between the communist army and the government army supporting the post-war governments of the Center and the Right. A further division between the Right and the Center evolved in the 1950s and the 1960s, while the civil war-driven cleavage between anti-communists and communists remained deep, as the communist party (the KKE) had been outlawed and had sustained an underground fight against Greek governments in the 1950s. Gradually a front of the Anti-Right clashed with the Right, before democracy broke down in 1967 (Moschonas 1994). The legalization of the KKE

during the transition to democracy (1974) may have closed this chapter in post-war Greek political history, but another basis for acute political party conflict emerged with the clash between the center-right New Democracy and the center-left Pasok in 1974-2009. The post-1974 two-party system was also characterized by extreme polarization (Mavrogordatos 1984, Lyrintzis 2005, Nicolacopoulos 2005).

Since the early 1990s the two-party system may have been marked by an increased convergence between ND and Pasok regarding many policy areas (Pappas 2013). Yet, the conflict between the two parties in parliamentary debates and over the control of labor and professional associations and the staffing of the public sector with party supporters remained extensive throughout the period up to 2011. In that year, owing to the parliamentary instability which the then government of Pasok faced while the country had not recovered from the crisis of 2010, ND and Pasok entered a coalition government together. The two coalition partners stayed in power until early 2015, when the anti-austerity Syriza party won a decisive electoral victory with 35 percent of the vote. In 2015 the ND party came second and formed the main parliamentary opposition to Syriza, but Pasok dwindled down to unprecedented low levels of electoral influence (4.6 percent). The economic crisis, very briefly discussed below, had a heavy impact on the party system, as drastic re-alignment took place (Tsirbas 2016, Tsatsanis and Teperoglou 2016).

7. The Greek economic crisis as a catalyst for populism

It was in this contradictory and inflammatory political, cultural and social environment that the economic crisis of the 2010s started and evolved in Greece. The causes of the crisis were not exclusively domestic, but were related to global economic developments and institutional arrangements of the Eurozone negatively affecting other countries of Southern Europe too (Featherstone 2011, Mitsopoulos and Pelagidis 2011, Lyrintzis 2011, Alogoskoufis 2019).

The financial crisis, which had affected the US economy in 2008, combined with the asymmetries of the Eurozone after 2010 to provoke an economic shock to the EU and Greece. Briefly, from the start of the Eurozone (1999) there were large differences in competitiveness and export capacities between North and South Eurozone Members, which shared a common currency, but little else. The economic governance of the EU was neither designed nor prepared to mitigate the effects of divergence in economic performance between North and South European economies, let alone to balance the impact of a grave economic crisis. The long-term domestic problems of economy and governance in the four South European countries were exacerbated when Eurozone's weakest link, namely the Greek economy, almost collapsed.

The Greek public finances had been deteriorating since at least the mid-2000s, while the balance of payments had also dramatically worsened over time in the 2000s. By the end of

that decade, Greece was facing prohibitive interest rates and could not borrow on international markets. It became unable to service its soaring public debt (Table 3, below). The government of Pasok, which had won a landslide victory in the elections of late 2009 and enjoyed single-party majority rule, came close to stop paying out salaries and pensions and the country was at the brink of sovereign default in early 2010.

As noted in the beginning of the chapter, the provision of financial support to Greece was accompanied by economic austerity packages, including strict conditions for reforms. The austerity packages included large scale cuts in public sector salaries and pensions; decreases in public spending in all policy sectors including welfare and education; and liberalization of employment protection in the private sector along with a freeze on hiring, followed by dismissals, of fixed-term and temporary public employees. The combined effect of these measures was dramatic for economic growth which suddenly dipped, while poverty and unemployment soared, reaching unprecedented high levels in 2013 (Table 3).

Table 3. The impact of the economic crisis in Southern Europe: changing levels of fiscal and social indicators before and after the onset of the crisis in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain

	Public Debt, % GDP, 2008	Public Debt, % GDP, 2012	Public investment cumulative cuts, 2009-2013	Public spending cumulative cuts in education, 2009-2012	Unemployment Rate in 2013	Poverty rate in 2013
Greece	113%	177%	-55%	-18%	27.5%	35.7%
Italy	106%	127%	-26%	-5%	12.1%	28.5%
Portugal	72%	119%	-48%	-13%	16.4%	27.5%
Spain	40%	86%	-58%	-19%	26.1%	27.3%

Source: Eurostat, various years

8. The management of the economic crisis in Greece and social reactions to austerity

In Greece, despite the obvious derailment of public finances, all parties of the opposition and unions completely rejected austerity from the start. In May 2010 George Papandreou, the then head of Pasok and Prime Minister, presented an austerity plan, agreed upon with Greece's international lenders. No consensus was reached on the austerity plan. Even the center right party of ND, which had been in power in 2004-2009 and was the main opposition

to Pasok when the crisis hit, was adamant in opposing austerity, at least in the first phase of the crisis (2010-2011). The ND reversed its stance in November 2011, when it entered a short-term coalition government under the technocrat Lucas Papademos. After winning the elections of 2012, ND – in government coalition with Pasok - pursued austerity throughout 2012-2014, under constant fire by opposition parties of the left (Syriza) and the right (Anel, and the neo-nazi party Golden Dawn). It was only after the populist coalition between the radical left (Syriza) and Anel came to power (in 2015) that most Greek parties converged on the need for austerity measures. Convergence on austerity policies occurred in August 2015, after a misconceived referendum launched by the Syriza-Anel coalition government and under the threat of sovereign default.

The reactions to austerity policies were fierce and the negative social impact of the economic crisis was large. Unions and associations, regardless of their links to Left or Right political parties, also mobilized against austerity. In 2010–2014, in the span of 5 years, 42 general strikes were launched in Greece, i.e., about 8 general strikes per year. Associations of professionals and other associations of self-employed Greeks organized sector-level strikes to preserve preferential treatment by the state (e.g., regarding closed access to their market niche, higher than average pensions, etc). Examples were strikes by small shop keepers, truck owners and taxi owners, as well as relatively well-to-do professions, such as pharmacists and lawyers. Demonstrations became massive in 2010-2014 and were fueled by new, social movements, such as the "indignant" people (*aganaktismeno*i, the Greek version of the Spanish *indignados*), the "won't pay movement" (*den plirono*), and Greece's own "Occupy" movement (occupations of schools, universities, and government buildings).

In brief, while in the face of the crisis the government's behavior was uniformly strict and the government policy measures did not differentiate between powerful and less powerful groups or between high-income and low-income earners, the reaction of opposition political parties and social interests was equally adamant and unrelenting. The stage for the rise of populism was set.

9. Populism in Greece in the light of the Portuguese experience

It is possible to better understand the case of Greece by contrasting it to the most similar among South European cases, namely Portugal, which also found itself unable to finance its own public debt. Portugal had made a successful transition to democracy in 1974, had joined the EU in 1986 and since then had more or less converged with the rest of EU democracies (Costa Pinto 2011, Texeira 2012). Divergence from the EU in economic performance had occurred in the early 2000s, but Portugal had started recuperating when it was hit by the global financial crisis of 2008 and also shaken by the Eurozone repercussions of the Greek crisis in 2010.

In April-May 2011 the Portuguese government resorted to the same EU rescue mechanism as the Greek government had done a year earlier. Portugal was also offered a bailout-package, accompanied by austerity measures. The economic problem of Portugal was far from negligible, but was not as grave as Greece's. More importantly, however, reactions to the economic crisis and externally imposed austerity policies in Portugal were starkly different from the aforementioned reactions in Greece.

In Portugal the center right social democratic party (PSD) was in power in 2011-2015, while the main party of the opposition was the socialist party (PS). In the first phase of the crisis, 2010-2012, there was an agreement between the major parties, PSD and PS, on fiscal consolidation. Austerity measures in the state budget were voted in 2011 and 2012 by the government party (PSD) with the tacit consent (abstention) of the main opposition party (the PS). In 2012, the government, the labor confederation UGT (associated with the PS and the PSD) and the employers' organizations agreed on reforms of the Labor Code which went as far liberalizing employment protection (Razzuoli and Raimundo 2019).

Initial acquiescence was followed by social protest, which peaked in September 2012 and in March 2013, with two large-scale demonstrations in Lisbon. In 2013 the UGT criticized the PSD government's state budget, which it accused of 'ultra-austerity' (Razzuoli and Raimundo 2019). Between 2010-2013 five general strikes took place, among which two were organized by the two larger trade-union confederations, the GGTP, associated with the Communist Party, and the UGT (Accornero and Pinto 2014, Costa, Dias and Soiero 2015). But social reactions against austerity in Portugal were much more subdued than the corresponding ones in Greece.

10. The impact of the crisis and the social reactions to the crisis on party systems

Such differences in social reactions to the crisis itself and to the harsh austerity policies implemented to manage the crisis led to a different impact on the party systems of the two countries. In Greece, formerly existing parties, for example, Syriza and the Golden Dawn (GD), become much stronger. In February 2012 the Anel party sprang out of the parliamentary group of the ND party. In other words, not one, but several populist parties became stronger or emerged in Greece in the wake of the economic crisis.

Briefly, the GD party, emerged out of a former neo-nazi organization that had been established in 1985. In parliamentary elections up to the start of the economic crisis (2009), the party used to obtain a negligible percentage share of votes. Yet It became the 3d largest party in Greek parliament in the two elections of 2015 (in January and September 2015). In

detail, the GD increased its share of the total vote from 0.3 percent in 2009 to 7 percent in the elections of 2012 and 2015. It elected 3 MEPs to the European Parliament in 2014 and 2 MEPs in 2019. However, the party's electoral influence declined in the parliamentary elections of 2019, as the GD party leadership had been implicated in a political assassination of a Greek radical left rap singer in 2013. (In 2019 the GD party was unable to obtain enough votes, i.e., 3 per cent of the total, to enter the Greek parliament.) The political discourse of GD was far right and populist. Typically, it was strongly illiberal, anti-elite, anti-semitic, and anti-EU discourse (Ellinas 2013, Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015, Dinas, Georgiadou and Konstantinidis 2016, Tsatsanis, Andreadis and Teperoglou 2018).

After splitting off from the ND in 2012, a group of nationalist MPs formed the Anel party which obtained 11 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections of 2012, but declined to 3 percent in the European Parliament elections of 2014 and to 4 percent in 2015. After staying in power in 2015-2019, as a junior coalition partner to Syriza, the Anel obtained less than 1 percent of the vote in the European Parliament elections of 2019 (with the result that the party suspended its participation in the national elections of July of the same year). The bridge which connected, so to speak, the radical left Syriza with the nationalist right Anel was a set of common populist themes in their discourse, such as anti-elite and Eurosceptic themes. Another major theme was fierce rejection of the austerity-informed MoUs of 2010-2014, which was reflected in the congruent anti-austerity and Eurosceptic opinions of MPs of the two political parties (Tsirbas and Sotiropoulos 2016) and in the relatively small distance of opinions of the voters of the two parties on economic policy issues (Andreadis and Stavrakakis 2017).

Moreover, the Greek party system underwent a dramatic change (Table 4, below). In the two, consecutive parliamentary elections of May and June 2012, the two largest Greek parties, witnessed a dramatic fall in their electoral performance. Between them, the ND and Pasok had obtained 77 percent of the vote in September 2009. Almost three years later, in the elections of May 2012, the vote share of the two parties taken together was just 33 percent.

Meanwhile, Syriza, which in September 2009 had obtained less than 5 percent of the vote, rose to 17 percent in May 2012 and to 27 percent in June 2012. The ND party somewhat recovered in 2012-2015 and stabilized at the level of 28-30 percent. Pasok, on the other hand, which had reached 44 percent of the vote in September 2009, fell to just below 5 percent of the vote in the elections of January 2015, i.e., the elections which ushered in the rule of Syriza in government coalition with the Anel (2015-2019). The earlier polarization between ND and Pasok was then supplanted by a new acute polarization between ND and Syriza (Table 4).

Table 4. The impact of the economic crisis on the political party systems of Greece and Portugal

	Pre-crisis elections (2009)	First elections during the crisis (2011 - 2012)	Second elections during the crisis (2015) (two elections in Greece, June and September 2015)
Greece, winner of elections	Pasok	New Democracy	Syriza
Parties who came 2n, 3d and 4th in Greek elections	New Democracy, KKE, Laos	Syriza, Pasok, Anel	New Democracy, Golden Dawn, Potami (Pasok came 4th in Sept. 2015)
Portugal, winner of elections	PS	PSD	PSD
Parties who came 2n, 3d and 4th in Portuguese elections	PSD, CDS-PP	PS, CDS, PP	PS, BE, PCP

Source: author's own elaboration, based on electoral results

By contrast, in Portugal party system change was not as dramatic (Table 4). While, as already noted above, in Greece there was the parallel rise of right-wing and left-wing populism, populism held no allure for Portuguese political parties. In Portugal there were no parties corresponding to Anel or GD. The rise of a strong radical left party (Syriza), which espoused left-wing populism was not paralled by a similar tendency in Portugal. In the latter country, the electoral performance of radical left party (Bloco - BE), which was not populist, was remarkable but not as spectacular as Syriza's in Greece. The Bloco doubled its vote share from 5 percent in the parliamentary elections of 2011 to 10 percent in the corresponding elections of 2015. The socialist party (PS), on the other hand, increased its electoral influence in 2015, by obtaining 32 percent of the vote (as contrasted to 28 percent four years earlier), but did not resort to left-wing populism (Fernandes, Magalhaes and Santana-Pereira 2018).

In brief, throughout the economic crisis and its aftermath, populism rose in Greece, but not so in Portugal. The Greek party system imploded, whereas the Portuguese one remained more or less stable. In the Greek case, there was change of the party system. By contrast, in the Portuguese case there was change within the party system. The reasons for this difference are discussed further in this chapter.

11. The political profile of the parties in government in Greece and Portugal in 2015-2019

Syriza, the major government coalition party in 2015-2019 in Greece, is a radical left-wing party with a definitely populist profile, albeit a left-wing one (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014, Katsambekis 2016, Tsakatika 2017). The party had no government experience before ascending to power in 2015. While in opposition, the party had very few or no ties to traditional social interest groups, such as workers and farmers. It was strongly represented among the student movement, the anti-globalization movement and various human rights movements. After 2010 the party's influence grew among the young, the unemployed, artisans and craftsmen and even liberal professions, as a result of Syriza's strategy to indiscriminately support all anti-austerity protests. Syriza was also very influential among public sector employees, as it sought to fight salary and pension cuts and all public sector reforms of the 2010-2014 period.

It was on the shoulders of such social groups, as well as through the support of a plethora of other small groups defending their market niches (pharmacists, taxi drivers, and others), that Syriza rose to government in 2015. In other words, the party became very influential among employees and pensioners of the public and private sectors and among small businessmen and professionals. Syriza had promised to the former a restoration of their pre-crisis salaries and pensions and to the latter a return to the pre-crisis production and market regulations, suitable to their business interests.

However, in contrast to the Pasok and ND parties, Syriza never managed to have but only a minimal presence in Greece's labor union confederations, namely the GSEE representing the employees of private sector companies and privatized state-owned enterprises, and the ADEDY representing the civil service unions (Sotiropoulos 2019). With the possible exception of two regions (Attica and Crete) and some municipalities, Syriza never managed to establish substantive roots in local government either.

The contrast with the PS in Portugal could not be starker. The PS, which has led a coalition government since November 2015, is more or less a typical European socialist party (Magone 1999, Costa Lobo and Magalhaes 2004), and still has ties with labor unions and municipal councils. More concretely, since the mid-1970s the PS has moved to the center space of the Portuguese party system and is supported by middle class voters (Lisi 2013: 309). The party has long-term experience in government in 1995-2002 and again in 2005-2011, heading majority or minority governments. Since the late 1970s the PS has relied on local party cells and shop-floor party cells and has retained close ties with the UGT labor confederation, which it and the PSD had helped establish. During the evolution of the crisis in Portugal the ties between the PS and PSD on the one hand and the UGT on the other became strained (Razzuoli and Raimundo 2018), but there was no direct clash between government and unions of the kind which Greece experienced in 2010-2014. Strikes subsided after the PS rose to power in 2015.

In the winter of 2018-2019 the PS faced a large wave of strikes in the public sector. It included protests by nurses, fire fighters and police officers demanding not only better salaries, but also improvement of public infrastructure which was decaying after the PS had curtailed expenditure on public investment.

12. Populists in government and liberal democracy: the case of Greece

It turns out that not only the political profile of the two left-wing parties, the PS in Portugal and the Syriza in Greece, was different, but their comportment in power diverged a lot, as – in contrast to the PS - Syriza talked and acted in a populist manner. As it is well known, populist discourse thrives on pitting the people, represented by a populist party or leader, against an economic oligarchy or a political establishment (Mudde 2004 and 2017). For example, in September 2013, three years after the imposition of austerity measures, the Syriza leader, Alexis Tsipras, couched his opposition against the then coalition government of ND-Pasok in terms of the motto "either us or them" (speech of Alexis Tsipras in Thessaloniki, 07.09.2013, *He Avgi* newspaper). Tsipras won the elections of January 2015, called snap elections in August 2015 and in the electoral campaign of September 2015, he attacked the oligarchy and told his supporters that "either we finish them off or they finish us off" (speech of the then PM Tsipras in Syriza's rally on 13.09.2015 in Keratsini, Pireaus).

During electoral campaigns populists make promises to popular strata which they falsely believe that they can hold or make such promises even though they know that they cannot keep them. Syriza, for example, was a typical example of a populist party diffusing false promises, as the party overpromised, but seldom delivered (Mudde 2017).

While these are well-known traits of populism, they do not cover the behavior of populists after their ascent to power. Once in government, populists employ the same inflammatory political discourse against institutions, such as the judiciary, civic associations and mass media. Actually, a sometimes neglected, but major, trait of populism is anti-pluralism (Mueller 2016). For populists, a plurality of non-controllable institutions is an unacceptable situation to be fixed. Populists in power may attempt to overturn the delicate balance of powers among the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, as they adopt a plebiscitarian rather than a liberal concept of democracy.

For example, the Syriza-Anel government launched a national referendum on the European Commission-drafted bail-out package under negotiation with Greece in July 2015. It also passed a new law on local government in 2018 which provided for referenda at the municipal level. Through this new law the Syriza-Anel government also wanted to weaken the decision-making powers of mayors and to make them hostage to shifting coalitions of elected members of municipal councils. This strategy was partly fruitful in the local government elections of May 2019 in Greece when, because of the new law, mayors were elected in a two-round majoritarian electoral system, while municipal councilors in a one-round

proportional representation electoral system. As result, in many cities elected mayors did not command the majority of votes in municipal councils. Syriza considered these institutional changes in local government as expressions of its own understanding of democracy.

A populist party in government may claim that above all, if not exclusively, democracy signifies popular sovereignty; and that this party has been elected to represent and lead the people on its own. If democratic institutions and constitutionally guaranteed principles lie in its way, the populist party may attempt to brush them aside, starting with the media and the justice system.

Populist control of the mass media

The mass media is a usual target at which populists aim. Other non-populist governing parties may of course do the same, to the extent they can control the state-owned media. In post-authoritarian Greece (1974-2014), before the rise of Syriza to power in 2015, the public broadcaster (*ERT*) was targeted by successive governments, regardless of their center-right or center-left profile, as control of the state media was considered necessary for government propaganda. In 2013 the *ERT* had been abruptly closed down by the ND-Pasok coalition government. One of the first moves of Syriza, after it had arrived in power in 2015, was to re-open the public broadcaster and transform into a government mouthpiece. Where Syriza differed from previous parties in power, was in the treatment of the private media. Throughout the post-1974 period, different newspapers and private TV and radio channels were heavily involved in party politics and took the side of various political parties in Greece. In the summer of 2016, the Syriza-Anel government decided by fiat to allow for the existence of only four private nationwide TV channels. Eventually it backed down from this typically populist government policy in late 2016, when Greece's supreme administrative law court, the Council of the State, declared the measure to be unconstitutional. In 2017-2019 Syriza continued to exert pressure on private media critical to its government, by openly targeting the harshest anti-government critics among journalists and by allowing government ministers to sue unfriendly newspapers on various defamation charges, with the help of pro-government prosecutors.

Populist control of the judiciary

In Greece the Cabinet selects and appoints the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the supreme courts and highest prosecuting authorities from a list of higher-ranking judges. Before the rule of the Syriza-Anel coalition government, governments of the center-right and center-left used to appoint government-friendly judges, but the aforesaid populist government coalition went a step further. It appointed pro-government judges and prosecutors at the highest ranks of the judiciary and used them to prosecute unfriendly private media and the parliamentary opposition. Moreover, the government constrained independent authorities by appointing

pro-government judges as heads of the General Inspectorate of Public Administration in February 2017 and the Financial Crime Unit in May 2017.

It is noteworthy that even the government-appointed President of the supreme civil and criminal court (the *Areios Pagos* court) sued a constitutional law professor the opinions of whom she had found insulting. Government-appointed judges put through trial the former head of Greece's statistical service (the *ELSTAT*) who had helped consolidate the collection and presentation of statistical data on the country's economy, after the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 2010 was rolled out. (He was falsely accused of having inflated the statistical figures indicating the size of Greek public debt and budget deficit – which were the already checked and Eurostat-approved figures).

In 2015, after the Syriza-Anel coalition government was formed, anti-corruption competences were taken away from an earlier established "anti-corruption coordinator" and assigned to the new General Secretariat of Anti-corruption (the GEGKAD). Anti-corruption mechanisms were thus placed under the supervision of a government Alternate Minister of Justice. Under his guidance, the Ministry of Justice and the government-controlled prosecuting authorities launched in February 2018 a criminal investigation against two former prime ministers and eight ministers, who were either MPs of the opposition parties (ND and Pasok) or members of previous governments before Syriza's ascent to power in 2015. Eventually, owing to shallow evidence and haphazard legal preparation of the case by the government, the investigation fell through. The alleged involvement of various ND and Pasok officials in corruption notwithstanding, it is telling that in 2015-2019 anti-corruption investigations were limited to government officials of the pre-2015 period.

Populist control of the public sector

In Greece, political patronage has been rampant for many decades, while center-left and center-right governments used to appoint governing party officials at the highest-ranks of the public bureaucracy and party supporters at entry-level jobs of the public sector, usually on fixed-term or temporary posts. Patronage was typical of previous populist governments in power, such as Pasok in the 1980s, as well as other, center-right and center-left governments (Sotiropoulos 1996). In other words, non-populist parties had used patronage in the past, but patronage appointments were curbed in the first-half of the 2010s under pressure from foreign creditors. However, upon coming to power, the Syriza-Anel government expanded on patronage practices of the past (Tables 5 and 6 below), in a probably misguided effort to decrease unemployment and poverty through staffing the public sector. This policy choice was combined with very high tax increases imposed in 2015-2019 om middle- and upper-income groups, in order to raise government revenue. Such revenue was primarily used to pay for the cost of social assistance programs and new public sector jobs. Under Syriza-Anel rule, unemployment indeed fell to 18 percent in May 2019, after having reached a peak of 28 percent under ND-Pasok rule in November 2013 (Table 3, above). In the meantime, however,

approximately half a million high-skilled Greeks, who did not find any decent employment or did not have the necessary political connections to obtain employment in the public sector, had left the country, seeking employment elsewhere (the phenomenon of "brain drain").

Regarding patronage, there is official data showing that since 2013 there has been an increasing trend in the hiring of political appointees (with a drop in 2015 when two parliamentary elections took place and the government was not stable, Table 5). During the time of Syriza-Anel in government (2015-2019) the number of political appointees rose by 55 percent (Table 5). The absolute numbers of appointees look small (in the order of very few thousands), but such appointees populate a relatively small set of 19 central services of ministries and the state-agencies supervised by the ministries.

Table 5. Change in the Number of Political Appointees at Higher Levels of Ministries in in Greece, 2013-2018

Month Year	Political party (or coalition of parties) in government	Number of political appointees in central services of ministries and state agencies	Annual percentage change over the previous year
April 2013	ND-Pasok-Dimar coalition	1764	(not available)
April 2014	ND-Pasok coalition	1923	+ 8.3%
April 2015	Syriza-Anel coalition	1233	-56.0%
April 2016	Syriza-Anel coalition	2046	+ 39.7%
April 2017	Syriza-Anel coalition	2186	+6.4%
April 2018	Syriza-Anel coalition	2501	+ 12.6%
April 2019	Syriza-Anel coalition	2739	+9.5%
% change 2019/2015			+55%

Source: http://interops.ydmed.gov.gr/month/monthly.php (official site of the Greek government on public employment). No equally reliable data exists before 2013. "Dimar", in the first row of data, was a small, left-wing party. It was in government coalition, along with Pasok and ND, in 2012-2013, but is now dissolved.

Similar phenomena occurred in 2013-2019 in fixed-term or temporary, i.e., non-permanent public sector jobs in the same period (Table 6, below). This is the kind of public sector jobs which are most often filled at the discretion of government officials rather than through

competitive entrance examinations or other transparent channels of recruitment. Compared to 2015, in 2019 the size of such personnel had increased by 34 percent.

Table 6. Change in non-tenured Public Employment in Greece, 2013-2018

Month Year	Political party or parties in government	Number of non-permanent employees in central and local government	Annual percentage change over the previous year
April 2013	ND-Pasok-Dimar coalition	58,390	(not available)
April 2014	ND-Pasok coalition	61,897	+5.7%
April 2015	Syriza-Anel coalition	65,959	+6.2%
April 2016	Syriza-Anel coalition	72,460	+9.0%
April 2017	Syriza-Anel coalition	75,385	+3.9%
April 2018	Syriza-Anel coalition	83,636	+9.9%
April 2019	Syriza-Anel coalition	100,186	+ 19.8%
% change 2019/2015			+34.2%

Source: http://interops.ydmed.gov.gr/month/monthly.php (official site of the Greek government on public employment). Data includes all contract-based, short-term and hourly-paid public employees. No equally reliable data exists for the period before 2013. "Dimar", in the first row of data, was a small, left-wing party. It was in government coalition, along with Pasok and ND, in 2012-2013, but is now dissolved.

Owing to the austerity policies followed after 2010, the hiring of permanent personnel was curtailed in order to help consolidate Greece's public finances. However, successive governments, but also regional governors and mayors, continued to hire non-permanent personnel, sidestepping the *ASEP* authority (an independent public authority established in 1994 to oversee recruitment to the public sector). Under Syriza-Anel government, this clientelist practice reached new heights, as shown in Table 6. By April 2019 (two months before the elections of June 2019) there over 100,000 fixed-term or temporary public employees.

To sum up this section, the parties of Syriza and Anel, which were in coalition government in 2015-2019 in Greece, have followed center-left social and employment policies and have contributed to the relative decrease of unemployment rate, for the first time since the eruption of the economic crisis. However, the Syriza-Anel government coalition primarily followed typically populist polices regarding the treatment of political and administrative

institutions and more specifically the treatment of the mass media, the judiciary and prosecuting authorities, the central services of ministries and the public sector.

13. Conclusions

This chapter has addressed the question of the rise and rule of populism in Greece in the wake of the economic crisis in the comparative perspective of the Portuguese experience. The chapter first discussed different theoretical approaches to populism. The theoretical argument was that although Mudde's conceptualization of populism as "thin" ideology is perhaps most useful for empirical research purposes, the content of government policies, once populists ascend to power, should also be taken into account.

The question why populism emerged, thrived and eventually ruled in Greece in the 2010s, but not in Portugal, was answered through three different contributing factors. First, compared to Portugal, in post-authoritarian Greece (1974-today) there was much less political inclusion. Democratic practice in Greece was replete of excluding political and social actors. Second, compared to Portugal, in Greece there has been a very long tradition of political culture of resistance against the state and a much lower trust in democratic political institutions, such as the government, the parliament and political parties. And, again compared to Portugal, since 1974 in Greece there has been more acute and persistent party system polarization. Even during the economic crisis which had a heavy impact on the party system, in Portugal change occurred *within* the party system. By contrast in Greece there was party system collapse, i.e., change *of* the party system.

To recap, in Greece there have been long-term legacies of populism, dating back to the 1980s. Legacies of political culture and state-society relations have also been conducive to the rise of populism, once the economic crisis erupted in 2010. The causes of the economic crisis in Greece (2010-2018) should be searched in a combination of external factors, such as the global economic crisis of the 2008 and the built-in asymmetries of the Eurozone, with domestic factors, such as long-term mismanagement of the country's public finances.

The economic crisis proved to be a critical juncture, a catalyst which sparked the rise of populism in Greece, but not in Portugal. While the crisis in Greece was more severe than that in Portugal and international lenders monitored Greek decision-makers much more closely than their Portuguese counterparts, in the two countries there was a reform convergence, based on strict austerity policies. However, the cases of Greece and Portugal became visibly different.

In contrast to Portugal, from the beginning there was an outright rejection of austerity in Greece, and there was a rise of left and right populist parties in 2010-2014 in the Greek party system. In Greece there were legacies of incomparable party system polarization: the acute

competition between the Pasok and ND parties until the break out of the crisis was replaced by an equally or more acute competition between Syriza and ND in the wake of the crisis. In 2012 the party system in Greece collapsed, leaving very little room for convergence, let alone consensus, over the management of the crisis. By contrast, in Portugal the party system changed without undergoing a complete overhaul.

In both countries, as in the rest of Southern Europe, political trust was in decline before the onset of the crisis. However, in Greece trust towards the parliament, the government and the political parties dipped much more dramatically in 2010-2015.

Moreover, the political profile of the governing parties, the Syriza and Anel parties, which ruled in Greece in 2015-2019, was very different than the party, the PS, which governed in Portugal after 2015. In contrast to Portugal, where the PS party followed a mix of economic growth-friendly policies and respected checks and balances among institutions, in Greece the governing coalition of Syriza-Anel may have countered some of the negative social effects of the economic crisis, but primarily proceeded with typical populist policies. Such policies included attempting to control the mass media, to intervene and constrain the justice system, to recruit groups of political supporters into the public sector and to populate the public administration and state agencies with its own political appointees.

In view of the above, regarding the theoretical study of populism in today's Europe, open questions requiring further research remain. Two such questions are, first, to what extent populism in power, by implementing concrete policies of control over liberal democratic institutions, becomes something thicker than what the concept of "thin" ideology would admit; and, second, to what extent populism contributes to enhancing political inclusion or not.

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