Liberal articulations of the 'Enlightenment' in the Greek public sphere

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This study presents a scrutiny of 'liberal' discursive constructions of the 'Enlightenment' in the Greek public sphere. The study is based on the analysis of articles published in two news/lifestyle websites, 'AthensVoice' and 'Protagon', during the (ongoing), so-called, 'Greek crisis'. Discourse theory, informed by critical discourse analysis, is deployed to analyze these discursive constructions. The analysis shows that Greece's economic/social/political problems are constructed as symptoms that underline Greece's fundamental deficit, which is the country's alleged 'lack of 'Enlightenment', as perceived by 'liberal' voices in Greece and elsewhere. The article concludes that such discourses are part of a biopolitical, disciplinary framework producing the object to be reformed by austerity: an 'un-Enlightened' 'Greek character', 'guilty' for 'self-inflicting' Greece's crisis. This 'reform of character' envisioned by liberals in Greece and elsewhere, is supposed to emerge through the institutional advance of neoliberal restructuring processes that include austerity reforms, privatizations, and loss of labor and civic rights, conditions to foster the neoliberal, entrepreneurial, mobile and austere subject, to potentially meet the socio-political requirements of late capitalist growth.

Keywords: Crisis, Greece, biopolitics, Europe, modernity, liberals, Enlightenment

1. Introduction: the 'Enlightenment' as an inherited feature

Soon after the election of a left-wing, Syriza-led coalition government in Greece in January 2015, and during the beginning of a new negotiation process on Greece's so-called 'reforms program', between the Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis and the Dutch president of the Eurogroup, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, a

certain Lykourgos Liaropoulos, member of the time's emerging, 'centrist' party called 'Potami' (the River), tweeted the following:

> … as a true Greek, Varoufakis thought that bullshit and smiles would win the game. Nevertheless, it only happened what always happens, when you play smart to people that have gone through the Enlightenment, with your sole weapon being the Greek kilt. Fortunately, the Dutch didn't fall for it. To be continued at Eurogroup…!!

The particular message soon gained negative publicity leading to Liaropoulos' party resignation. In a typical Orientalist style (Chibber 2013, 289), Liaropoulos presented the Dutch as 'naturally' 'Enlightened', and the Greek as 'naturally' 'unenlightened'. The 'Enlightenment' thus appeared more like an exclusive cultural, national or racial attribute, than a process that is potentially open to all through education, reflexivity and praxis.

The purpose of this article is to study the uses of the Enlightenment as a reified, instrumentalized concept in the Greek public sphere. I argue that 'Enlightenment' is a nodal signifier of a modernizing discourse connected to the regressive and mythological dimensions of modernity, as analyzed by Adorno and Horkheimer (1989). In particular, the problematization of Greece through an 'Enlightenment' discourse –where Greece is supposedly 'lagging behind' the 'Enlightened' Western Europe – plays an important public disciplinary function (Foucault 2008; Lazzarato 2011), connected to the crisis and austerity's biopolitical dimension, seeking to reform the problematic 'Greek psyche'. In this context, Greece's economic/social/political crises become mere symptoms of a supposedly larger disorder, the country's lack of Enlightenment (and along with it, 'commonsense', 'reason', or 'efficiency'), which here appears as the 'real' crisis of the country and the key to its resolution. The 'soft' dimension of neoliberal governance thus emerges, as a strategy of producing popular consensus to austerity reforms, on the basis of the non-economic meanings of indebtedness (Graeber 2011). Beyond consensus though, the biopolitical reform of the Greek subject through the broader neoliberal, crisis-restructuring process also emerges in such discourses that are publicly promoting the neoliberal subject – that is mobile, calculative, entrepreneurial, 'wholly immersed in global competition' (Dardot and Laval 2014, 256) – as the key aspect of the crisis-resolution.

2.   Theoretical framework: the Enlightenment, liberalism and Greece

In this section, I problematize the Enlightenment idea through the use of relevant critical theory. I also discuss the essence of liberalism today, given that 'the

Enlightenment' is instrumentalized by liberals in the Greek public sphere. Finally, I consider key arguments laid by intellectuals in Greece and elsewhere, concerning Greece's modernity.

2.1 Problematizing the 'Enlightenment' concept

In their classic 'the dialectic of the Enlightenment', Adorno and Horkheimer (1989) demonstrated that the bourgeois advance of modernity and its instrumentalist spirit, resulted to the progressive loss of the Enlightenment's critical and emancipatory potential. Modernity regressed into a new form of mythology focusing on an unproblematized idea of 'progress', upon which new systems and technologies of domination and subjugation emerged, connected to economistic rationales, strategic planning, productivity and wealth accumulation. Adorno and Horkheimer note that modernity's mythology is 'rationally' constituted through positivist thought, as expressed in mainstream economics and bourgeois culture. In his 'negative dialectics', Adorno notes that a highly problematic feature of positivist thought is its inability to reflect on its own constructions and the contradictions they unfold, both semantically and in real-life contexts too: *"The ratio becomes irrational where… it runs counter to the meaning of thought by hypostasizing its products, the abstractions. The commandment of its autarky condemns thinking to emptiness, and finally to stupidity and primitivity"* (Adorno 2004, 34).

In 'modernity and the Holocaust', Zygmunt Bauman (1989, 87) argues that *"the Holocaust did not just avoid clash with the norms and institutions of modernity. It was these norms and institutions that made Holocaust feasible. Without modern civilization, there would be no Holocaust"*. Bauman (also: Arendt, 1964; Traverso, 2003) analyzed the Holocaust as a phenomenon made possible in highly modern, secular, bureaucratic and industrially advanced countries like Germany. In this context, the Nazi plans for extermination were 'efficiently' rationalized, communicated and materialized through the use of technology, the industrial mode of production, bureaucracy and instrumental rationality. Bauman (1989, 191) understood such institutional features to create a culture and a mode of life that is disconnected from moral concerns, civic ethos, and critical thinking. These absences formed the context where the evils perpetrated in the extermination camps of Nazi Germany occurred, in an uncontested way by the time's German citizens. Therefore, the Holocaust is not an exception but one face of modernity (Bauman 1989, 7) and a possible trajectory of it.

2.2 The content of liberalism today and its relevance to the disciplinary uses of the 'Enlightenment'

Scholars agree that liberalism is the hegemonic ideology of the last 25 years across the globe, connected to ideas, institutions and practices related to the 'free market economy' and liberal representative democracy. The meaning of liberalism however, is historically connected to various political traditions and historical trajectories, with ties to both the right and the left (Crouch 2011, 3):

> across and within scholarly discourses, liberalism is construed in manifold and contradictory ways: as an embattled vanguard project and constitutive of modernity itself, a fine-grained normative political philosophy and a hegemonic mode of governmentality, the justificatory ideology of unrestrained capitalism and the richest ideological resource for its limitation.   (Bell 2014, 683)

Neoliberalism however, is today's hegemonic variant of liberalism, gaining a pivotal position in policy making across the world in the years after the 1970's global economic crisis. Dardot and Laval (2014, 28) note that neoliberalism primarily emerged from the crises of liberalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, connected to economic crises, class and geopolitical conflict, and capital's constant needs for institutional changes to meet its demands for efficiency and growth. The development of capitalism in the late 19th century thus proved to be incompatible with classical liberalism's focus on civil rights. For Foucault (2008, 70), neoliberalism emerged out of a crisis of liberal governmentality, and ordoliberalism, the German version of neoliberalism, endeavored to produce a policy framework to safeguard and promote economic competition, in the expense of welfare and popular sovereignty. Ordoliberalism is the EU's policy-making driver, under which democracy should be abiding to the rationalities of the 'free market' (Streeck 2016). Crouch (2011, 7) thus notes that ordoliberalism is an *"economic liberalism, whose competitive order would be guaranteed by law"*.

Neoliberalism offers a rather delimited and regressive view of social life, optimizing a negative sense of freedom in human affairs, and putting the (capitalist) economy as a key model in organizing potentially all aspects of the social. According to the neoliberal doctrines, competition emerges as the key driving feature of, not just the economy, but social life, understood as *"the law of life and the mechanism of progress via elimination of the weakest"* (Dardot and Laval, 2014: 41). The neoliberal state is to intervene to safeguard the 'natural' process of competition and the negative liberty assumed in it (Prozorov 2016, 98).

2.3 Problematizing Greece's modernity

Various agents (from politics to academia, business, or the media) in Greece and abroad, address a 'Greek particularity' regarding Greece's position in the Western world. While most stress a modernization deficit, they also represent different ideological approaches on the matter. One approach insists that Greece is an exceptional, unmodern country in the West, with backwarded politico-economic institutions defined by corruption, clientelism, passivity, non-realism, anomic civic behavior, political extremism, and excessive consumerism (Triantafyllidou, Gropas, Kouki 2013: 1). To this regard, the foundations of Greece's pre-modern institutions and habitus are to be found in the Ottoman remainders on Greece, the influence of the Orthodox Church, and the leftist/populist socio-political culture that developed after the fall of the Colonels' dictatorship in 1974 (Andronikidou and Kovras 2012, Koliopoulos and Veremis 2003, Kalyvas 2015). A differential narrative stresses Greece's undemocratic history (ruled by dictators, often backed by imperial powers) and Greece's peripheral position in global capitalism, to address Greece's modernity dilemmas. Problems like consumerism and civic apathy are addressed not only in exceptionalist terms, but also as global symptoms of the late capitalist culture (Mouzelis 1996; Tsoukalas 2012). Either way, Greece's modernization was a 'realist' demand shared by most scholars representing both arguments in the pre-crisis times (Triantafyllidou, Gropas, Kouki 2013: 11).

During the crisis years, these approaches became more conflicting than complementary. Lately, relevant arguments are either insisting on the Greek nature of the crisis (e.g. Ramfos, in Mylonas and Kompatsiaris 2013), or understanding it as a symptom of a global capitalist crisis (Tsoukalas 2012, Douzinas 2013, Harvey 2014). The argument stressing the 'Greek nature' of the crisis develops a modernizing agenda focused on 'free market' driven doctrines, and it is connected to the hegemonic crisis rationales (articulated by politicians, economists and pundits) that promote the need for deep neoliberal reforms. The understanding of Greece as a weak part of European capitalism, addresses broader concerns related to the reinvention of social-democracy beyond neoliberalism, or the reinvention of socialist institutions under grassroots and democratic logics (Harvey 2014).

To conclude, I propose an alternative reading of Greece's modernity. In critique of post-colonial theory, whose scholars address the modernization deficit of non-Western countries, Chibber (2013, 290) notes that the modernity deficit of countries outside the capitalist core is connected to a defeat of the socio-political struggles of the middle and lower classes by the local and transnational bourgeoisie. The problem is thus not local history and culture: *"the colonial state was driven by the same impulses that drove state formation in Great Britain"* (Chibber 2013, 93). Enduring Orientalist myths see modernity in evolutionist terms, mostly driven by

supposedly 'Enlightened' bourgeoisies. Instead, Chibber (2013, 112) argues that the West also faced similar forms of alienation and exploitation with 'its rest', but subaltern struggles forced the bourgeois to develop socio-political and economic justice institutions, which are now erroneously viewed as bourgeois initiatives (Chibber 2013, 148). Indeed, socio-political struggles in Greece throughout the 20th century have been politically and also violently crushed by local and foreign elites, and also coerced by social-democrats, in a similar way that leftist movements were coerced by social-democracy elsewhere (Benjamin 1968, 258). The culturalist construction of Greece as an exceptional state, should thus be understood in the form of a banal Occidentalism (Bozatzis 2016), and connected to the 'crypto-colonial constitution of Greece since the 19th century' (Hamilakis 2016, 227), sustained by the defeat of local and global democratic and working class struggles.

3.   Popular lifestyle/opinion media in Greece addressing the 'Greek particularity'

The study's empirical material was obtained from two popular Greek websites, which focus on lifestyle issues and news. These websites were 'www.athensvoice.gr', which is the homepage of the weekly free-press, 'AthensVoice', and 'protagon.gr'. A political-orientated critique of such publications concerns the importance of popular culture in hegemonic interventions for the construction of 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977, 133) among the general public during the crisis' years. Sevastakis (2004) and Baysha (2012) among others, show the importance of such discourses in post-modern frameworks where standardized forms of political communication are not publicly appealing.

First published in 23/10/2003, AthensVoice is a popular weekly free-press paper published in Athens by 'Plus Athens Publishing'. 'AthensVoice.gr' features daily input of new material and ranks as the 95th most popular website in the Greek cyberspace (www.alexa.com, 18/01/2016). Its founder and chief editor is Fotis Georgeles, a journalist and writer present in the Greek media since the 1980's, as a regular contributor to the times' popular lifestyle magazines such as 'Klik', or the times' counter-cultural 'Babel'.

'Protagon.gr' (ranking 153 on the Greek cyberspace (www.alexa.com, 18/01/2016)) is a news and opinions' website, founded by the journalist Stavros Theodorakis and other famous Greek journalists. Protagon's underlining title reads: 'stories, so that we can think differently'. Founder of the 'Potami' party, Theodorakis has previously worked for radio stations, daily newspapers and main public and private TV networks and has also authored three books. After founding 'Potami', Theodorakis resigned from Protagon in 2014.

The key word 'Enlightenment' (Διαφωτισμός) was the search-term used for the purpose of this study. In a search done on 30th October 2015, 113 relevant articles were found in Athens Voice, and 86 in Protagon. In total, 199 articles were analyzed, written between 2007 and 2015 by different authors ranging from writers to academics, journalists, or economists, among others. Often, the same authors contribute to both websites, with most of them sharing similar ideas on the Greek society, its culture and politics.

All articles studied point towards a 'Greek exceptionalism' thesis to explain Greece's problems and the country's relation to the West. This is not something new in the Greek public sphere. As Sevastakis (2012) explains, the 'Greek exceptionalism' thesis has publicly appeared both positively (in moments of economic boom, like the 1990's and the 2000's), and negatively (in moments of recession, like the 2010's). In his own study of the Greek lifestyle media during the 1990's and the 2000's, Sevastakis (2004) notes the development of various 'postmodern' themes related to consumerism, individualism and a post-historical, post-ideological, 'centrist' political position in the Greek public sphere. Such themes were also connected to a broader affirmation of both 'Greekness' and modernization, in a late capitalist context, where Greece was emerging as one of the world's richest countries. A perceived Greek exceptionalism, with Greece being at the threshold between the West and East, was then dealt positively by the contributors of lifestyle magazines. In the pessimistic context of contemporary Greece, Greece's exceptionalism was negatively denoted by the same authors, as Greece's position in the 'developed world' declined.

4.   Analytical method

The analytical method draws on Laclau's (1996) discourse theory, to critically address the meaning equivalences formed in the discursive articulation of the Enlightenment concept at the media studied. The analysis also draws on Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analysis, to look at the ways that the discursive meaning hierarchies are produced in the texts. The 'Enlightenment' is analytically understood as a nodal signifier of the discourse articulated in the 199 articles studied. A nodal point is the center of a given discourse. A nodal point is an empty signifier, only temporarily fixed in meaning through the process of discursive articulation. The Enlightenment concept is instrumentally used in the texts studied a) to criticize the Greek society its politics, culture, and institutions, b) to legitimize the crisis-solutions proposed by the 'liberal' authors and the policies they represent/envision.

Discursive articulations are never fully homogenous but bear contradictions and entail a great deal of heterogeneity too. Dahlberg and Phelan (2011, 16) note that *"Contingency describes how any entity is dependent on relations with other entities, rather than self-grounded… To presuppose radical contingency means accepting that there is no final, absolute ground, foundation or essence to identity, except for contingency itself"*. If we understand all objectivities as socially constructed and historically/politically contingent, then we can further perceive public interventions in social crises – like those studied- as attempts to construct a hegemonic common-sense, a structure of feeling through the establishment of master-frames to view the world according to specific discursive premises that attempt to fix contingency and establish specific truth-regimes.

5.   Analysis: the chain of equivalence of concepts defining the Enlightenment and the semantic exclusions they entail

In all articles studied, the Enlightenment emerges at the heart of Greece's problems and its economic, political, social and humanitarian crises. The 'lack of Enlightenment' is what makes Greece to appear as less up-to-date to Western developments. The 'West' is the normative standpoint where critique derives from, and a horizon of 'realism' and 'truth'. Greece should therefore follow the economic, cultural and civic developments of the West. The Enlightenment is the key to reach 'our' (Western) 'missing fullness' (Stavrakakis 1999).

The texts' discourse is coded (Saldaña 2009, 3) in thematic terms as Figure 1 shows. The Enlightenment and its antithesis appear in chains of coded categories forming semantic equivalences that define 'us' and 'them', regarding the preferred identity of the self and its threatening Other (Fairclough 2003, 88). Through the development of 'pattern codes', meta-codes to explain key themes and ideas expressed (Saldaña 2009, 152), the analysis demonstrates their meaning constructions by addressing them in grouped associations. The analytical concept of 'nominalizations' is used to demonstrate how social agents and events are constructed in the texts. The use of active or passive voice, the abstraction of social agents through personalized or impersonal modes of representation (such as the use of nouns or pronouns), are features reflexively used to construct semantic forms of inclusion and exclusion (Fairclough 2003, 145), and to advance preferred meanings. Literature related to the critique of instrumental reason, neoliberal biopolitics and post-democracy, is deployed to stress the contradictions and exclusions entailed in the discourses studied.

A perceived 'lack of Enlightenment': Greece's insufficient passage from the historical 'Enlightenment' process.*

Enlightenment codes

(chain of semantic equivalence of the positive, 'liberal' identity that defines 'us' [Greek, Western Europeans]):

Progress/future/evolution

West/Europe/Moderntiy

European bourgeois history and culture

EU core member states

The EU institutions

The Eurocurrency

Experts: technocratic politicans, economists, business-people, entrepreneurs, liberal pundits

Rationality/maturity/'common-sense'

Positive/pioneering/constructive ideas

Meritocracy

Secular institutions

Civil society

Democracy, toleration, civility (politico-economic, social) stability

Law abiding citizens/ Honesty

Politico-economic efficiency (Positive) science

Digital technologies and the internet

Competition/ Free market

Innovation

The private sector of the economy

'Success': in business, academia, arts, politics, the economy, and generally in all spheres of life

Liberal cosmopolitanism

One part of Greek society :

Economically dynamic/independent, entrepreneurial individuals

Citizens in favour of the EU, the 'West', the Eurozone, 'reforms' (austerity) (e.g 'we stay in Europe'

movement, the 38.69% of the voting population that voted for 'Yes' at the July 5, 2015 referendum)

Anti-Enlightenment codes

(chain of equivalence of the oppositional identity ['them' and 'our negative self']):

Past/stagnation/decay

'Outdated' ideas and modes of life

Greece's Ottoman legacy, habitus/culture

The polity change of 1974 and its legacy/ the 'hegemony of the Left'

Greece's 'old' political parties and their structure and relations with their base/society

Dysfunctional institutions and laws

'Failure' (individuals, business, academia, politics/economy...)

Statism, passivity

Socialism, 'Greek sovietia'

Steralile negativity, phobia towards novelty

Traditionalism

Dependancy/parasitic culture (on state and EU subsidies) cleptocracy

Nepotism/ corruption/ fraud

The public sector (which is parasitic, unproductive, dysfunctional and burgeoing); the civil servants (who are incompetent, lazy, parasitic, and corrupt) civil servants

Lack of education/information/manners; provincionalism

Fanaticism/dogmaticism/fundamentalism (political and religious)

Totalitarianism, populism and extremism: an equation of the Left and the Right, a flattening of discourses and practices (Syriza, Communist party, Anarchist groups, leftist student groups, labor unions, citizens negating 'reforms' and protesting against the EU and the Eurocurrency, the citizens voting for 'No' at the July 5, 2015 referendum, the Occupy movement, the Indignados movement, the 'Golden Dawn' nazi party, terrorist activities)

Religious power (Orthodox Church)

Mob/Ochlocracy

Fake bourgeois

Irrationality

Physical violence/Lack of civility

National currency supporters ('Drachmists', 'Drachma lobby')

'Non-secular' societies (Islamic countries, Russia)

'Third world' countries (African countries, Latin American countries)

'Old', 'failed', 'outdated' states and systems: the USSR, the 'Eastern Block', North Korea, Cuba

The Enlightenment as the resolution of Greece's constitutive problem: to 'become European', through institutional and biopolitical 'reforms'

The Enlightenment/modernization of Greece will occur with (neoliberal) institutional reforms, primarily to 'liberate' the economy

By remaining in the Eurozone

With cultural change in daily life:

By identifying with (north) European (bourgeois) history/culture

By politically supporting the EU and its policies

Through the individual uptaking of the tasks of austerity as 'opportunities' (mobility, entrepreneurialism, risk, competition)

* As a result, Greece misses the foundations to be properly Western; Greece also lacks of a true European identity, and a local, historical bourgeois class that could set the foundations for Greece's catching up with the West, by becoming 'secular', 'entrepreneurial', and competitive.

Figure 1. The discursive construction of the Enlightenment by the contributors of *AthensVoice.gr* and *protagon.gr*

5.1   Reproducing the Occidentalist cultural hierarchy

Europe is denominated by its Western/Northern prevailing politico-economic and cultural norms, which are presented as universal standards of social, economic and political life. Europe's articulation in the Greek-crisis narrative occurs through its juxtaposition and comparison to Greece, which appears to be in a threshold of worlds. In a 28/10/2014 article entitled 'Nevertheless, Huntington was right!' at 'Protagon', the author and journalist Nikos Dimou refers to Huntington's 'class of civilization' neoconservative thesis, to establish his cultural dichotomy claim on Greece's identity as belonging to the 'Eastern Orthodox' block than the Western one.

Greek affairs are examined by taking 'Europe' as a vantage point of scrutiny (Fairclough 2003, 129). In a 01/04/2015 AthensVoice article ('Lessons of political aesthetics'), Nikos Georgiadis presents and comments upon various up-to-date events. Among them, the satirical show of German TV, 'Die Anstalt', which in an episode addressed the -unknown to the German public- atrocities committed by the German army in Greece during WWII, including the – unrepaid- forced loan imposed on occupied Greece by Nazi Germany:

(1)   "Humor fought and won because the German state television is a democratic institution… Yes, the German state television has the courage to witness reality and accept the historical responsibility for Germany's past. This is required by the Enlightenment, Humanism and Democracy. Here, in the country of the Balkan Peron and Evita… everyone appears to be satisfied due to the devaluation of the common-sense. The tragedy lies in the fact that everyone (the author mentions Syriza government ministers) was elected by the citizens' vote, in full conscience".

A series of nominalizations organize the author's point-of-view in the excerpt above. The nouns 'Enlightenment, Democracy and Humanism' are highly abstract, nominal entities (Fairclough 2003, 13), appearing as normative imperatives, consented by 'all'. The narrative's actors, 'the German state TV', 'all', or, 'the country', appear as concrete entities in nominal forms. Adjectives ('democratic', 'Balkan') organize a hierarchy between these actors, according the normative imperatives proposed. The opening clause 'humor fought and won' is lacking agency: 'humor' appears as the subject, but 'humor' requires an agent itself that is missing from the text; furthermore, an adversary is also lacking, as a (defeated) opponent remains undefined. 'Die Anstalt' criticized the post WWII German governments' avoiding of paying war reparations Greece, through political tactics and public diplomacy. 'Die Anstalt' thus disclosed the double standards of austerity's morale,

that is developed and sustain by Merkel's government in Germany, where only Greece is to 'honor' its debt.

The economy of the text highlights the German state TV, with 'Die Anstalt' being a mere part of it. The attention thus shifts from the particular show and its content, to the essence of the German TV. The show is reduced to a proof of how democratic the German TV is, further attesting how democratic Germany itself is. This occurs through Germany's comparison with Greece ('the country'). 'The adverb 'here' also signifies Greece, described through derogatory metaphors and adjectives.

By not referring to Germany's unacknowledged responsibilities of war crimes' reparations – the main focus of Die Anstalt's episode- the author diverts the attention from the matters that the show opened to the German public. This way, the challenges brought by the show to the German public are downgraded, as the public can rest assured that Germany is democratic. Georgiadis instrumentalizes Die Anstalt's political satire to exhibit Germany's (supposed) 'democratic depth' to Greek readers. The important message is therefore the celebration of the German democracy. The author remains blind to the racist and distorting representational strategy of mainstream German media towards Greece during the crisis (Mylonas 2012, 2015; Bickes, Otten, Weymann 2014; Kutter 2014). Many Greek liberals are against the demand of war reparations from Germany, arguing that it is a 'nationalist' claim of a long-gone-past, failing to see that demands of justice and recognition are, indeed, connected to the traditions of 'the Enlightenment, Humanism and Democracy'.

5.2 Secular intolerance

The (supposed) superiority of (Western) Europe and its challenges to Greece are further established when comparisons are done with non-Western/European societies. The positivity of the fundamental features producing the West is emphasized by the negativity of the non-Western, who is non-secular, unmodern, corrupt, violent, unenlightened and poor. In a self-assuring logic of success, where 'everything is made to fit as an illustration or a proof' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1989, 126), the West's Enlightenment is the qualitative essence producing the Western liberal and secular culture, which, along with its economic power, forms the Western advantage to the world. In the 11/09/2011 Protagon article entitled 'ten years after 11/09/2001, I have question', the writer, journalist and academic, Soti Triantafyllou, concludes:

(2)   "Why build a mosque in the Ground Zero area; why build mosques and churches and "worship places" anywhere? I mean, either Al-Qaeda and

religious fundamentalists want it or not, we are in the 21st century: the Renaissance has happened, the Enlightenment too and all great revolutions of the spirit… so are we now going to build a mosque in the middle of a skyscrapers' canyon???"

Nominalizations construct the granted domain: reified historical events propose an evolutionist process of universal progress. The juxtaposition of 'post-modern' symbols (skyscrapers) versus 'pre-modern' ones (Churches and Mosques) emphasize the dichotomy of present/future and the past. A common geopolitical and cultural identity is also assumed through the use of 'we', concerning a Western-centric perspective. Religion is also discredited in secular terms. Other articles studied also address Greek Orthodoxy as a reason for Greece's unenlightenment (e.g. 'Are we a theocracy?' Protagon, 22/01/2014). Nevertheless, the stressing of the Islamic fundamentalist, is also caught within broader public and policy concerns regarding the control of migration currents. Non-Westerners, particularly Muslims, are constantly problematized as non-integratable in Western societies. Soti Triantafyllou, among others, advance what Lindekilde (2014: 365) describes, while studying Danish public discourses on migration, as the mainstreaming of liberal intolerance *"that has transformed old racist or nationalist intolerance into a discourse stressing liberal reasons (autonomy, gender equality, social cohesion, public-private divide, security risks) for not tolerating particular Muslim practices"*.

5.3   Idealizing the bourgeois

The bourgeois appears as the ideal subject position of Western identity. The features of a contemporary bourgeois identity concern the neoliberal subjectivity traits, related to individualism, mobility, risk, entrepreneurialism, competitiveness, 'hard work' and also civility, liberal cosmopolitanism, techno-enthusiasm and consumerism. In the 02/08/2014 Protagon article 'The Enlightenment that we did not live', Chrysanthos Stefanopoulos, an economist, argues that:

(3)   "If someone attempted to identify the real causes of the crisis, he should start from the period of Enlightenment that Greece never experienced (because of the Turkish rule). The system of landowners was never turned into a well-governed bourgeois system, but simply transformed into a new oligarchic system, controlled by the state and its affiliations. One should also not go that far back in time: The main causes of this crisis came during the post-junta period. Consumerist nirvana engulfing the years of prosperity blinded us from reality. Few exceptional politicians who tried to warn us in due time were summarily sent by us to historical oblivion, while deifying populists and demagogues who gave away borrowed money".

Stefanopoulos' account summarizes the two main root/historical causes of the liberal 'Greek-deficit' narrative: the Ottoman ruling of Greece and the post-Junta period. The Ottoman rule ('Turkish') and the 'post-Junta period 'appear solid, and Greece and its people (through the use of the pronoun 'we') are also nominalized as perennial and homogenous socio-cultural entities. Historical events and meanings are recontextualized (Fairclough 2003, 139) in ways favorable to the author's ideological position, excluding consideration of context and social difference.

This 'Enlightenment deficit' deprived Greece of the 'true' bourgeois, who would organize politics, the economy and civil life in harmonious ways, like those of the West. The adjective clause 'well-governed… system', defines positively the noun 'bourgeois' in a self-explanatory manner. Socio-historical accounts (Hobsbawm 1996; Polanyi 2007; Marx 1976, Chibber 2013) demonstrated that the development of bourgeois societies was neither a smooth and uncontradictory, nor a complete process: on the contrary, the establishment of bourgeois class domination and mode of production was confronted by revolutions and revolts, met by violent state interventions and processes of harsh land-grabbing, accompanied by a violent proletarianization of the peasantry to create a class of 'free laborers' to work in the inhumane conditions of the industries. As Harvey (2014, 135) additionally notes 'monopoly power is inherent in private property forms'; the bourgeois class has never been fair or redistributive but instead used its politico-economic power to create institutions to sustain its interests, becoming a new oligarchy reactionary to 'progress'. Chibber (2013, 89) similarly argues that popular rights enjoyed in Western countries were not granted by an Enlightened bourgeoisie, but claimed and fought for by the working classes. Finally, consumerism is an attribute of all contemporary world (Bauman, 2007), as economic growth is based on over-production of commodities which is connected to the increase of consumption and the opening of new markets.

In 'the provincialization of the bourgeoisie' (AthensVoice, 09/12/2014), Haris Xirouhakis discusses the particularities of the Greek bourgeoisie:

(4) "The loss of Greece's urban consciousness is now a fact that is accelerated by the economic crisis… not that the bourgeoisie ever had strong roots in Greece… over time, the bourgeoisie downplayed its criteria of social distinction by upgrading people not deserving it. Celebrities and the nouveau riche, with their exhibitionism, shallow sensationalism and kitsch, became paradigmatic… Along their economic success, the bourgeois succumbed to fraud… many bourgeois did not avoid the easy enrichment through indecent methods. Eventually, the bourgeoisie lost its civility".

The bourgeois class is again presented according to the very bourgeois myths legitimizing its existence: meritocracy, entrepreneurialism, civility, honesty are

highlighted through their opposites in Xirouhakis' account of the Greek bourgeoisie. The hegemony of the bourgeois ideology remains affective across the globe, despite that late capitalism offers minimal possibilities for upwards social mobility (Sennett 2006). Hobsbawm (1996) has convincingly demonstrated that the bourgeois myths were largely created by cynical opportunists, who used any available tool to enrich themselves. The bourgeois features presented as perverse due to Greece's unenlightenment, are in fact the typical features of the bourgeois identity (Ellyll 2008).

5.4   Individuals as problems and solutions: the EU and the Eurocurrency as vehicles for European identity

The common use of the pronoun 'we' across all articles refer to a common national identity. Yet, it is the individual that is stressed above structures, institutions and culture, highlighting the mobile and reflexive capacities of the Enlightened subject to 'seize the day'. The agent of the problem and the solution of Greece's crisis is the individual (Mylonas 2014, 311), as Protagon's 21/11/2011 article 'The country is I', explains. Individual empowerment is not an aspiration of liberalism alone but of other modern ideologies too. Under (neo)liberalism though, the sovereign individual is to function in a terrain safeguarded by state institutions organized by the demands of capital's economy. This is a limit of (neo)liberal subjectivity, which, by failing to address systemic boundaries (assuming them to be natural), often regresses to endless self-blaming and spite against others, who cannot escape the systemic constraints: *"the argument that first the people should be changed before the world can be changed belongs to the old anti-utopian armory. It leads to a vicious circle"* (Adorno in Buck-Morss 1979, 187). The stressing of individualism is connected to the bio-political turn of the late capitalist economy, where individuals are required to function as entrepreneurs of themselves in a highly competitive, market-society (Foucault 2008; Brown, 2003; Boltanski and Chiapello 2006; Lazzarato 2011; Dardot and Laval 2014). In Lazzarato's (2011: 56) words

> the debt economy is characterized by a twofold expansion of the exploitation of subjectivity: extensive (since not only are industrial work and tertiary sector concerned but every activity and condition) and intensive (since it encompasses the relationship to the self, in the guise of the entrepreneur of the self-who is at once responsible for "his" capital and guilty of poor management whose paradigm is the 'unemployed').

As an object of knowledge ('the Greek') to be reformed, the individual's possibility to become a 'European' is constantly stressed: In 'Can Europe become moth-

erland?' (11/03/2014, Protagon), Nikos Dimou argues for a European-centric education reform that

(5) "Especially in our country, which lived at the margins of Europe for centuries, not involved in major European movements (such as the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Enlightenment), such a change is basic and necessary to feel part of Europe".

Europe appears as a reified, ahistorical nominalization, without considering its totalitarian legacies (Bauman 2004). Catastrophological scenarios accompany the discussion of Greece's relation to the EU, with the Eurocurrency appearing vital for Greece's European future. In 'The new Asia-Minor catastrophe' (23/01/2012, Protagon), the academic Nikos Alevizatos argues that

(6) "the potential cut-off from the European Union-which, as a lawyer, I can assure you that sooner or later will happen, if we abandon the Eurocurrency – is very likely to end the historic cycle which started 200 years by the Greek Enlightenment".

By claiming his expertise (a lawyer) Alevizatos uses an authoritative source to legitimize his catastrophological scenario, which does not explain why the Nordic countries, Britain, or East European countries, have been EU, but not Eurozone, members. The particular catastrophological frame (Mylonas, 2012), constantly propagated by EU officials and all Greek governments until now (2017), sustains a moral panic among Greek citizens to accept austerity regimes, usually described in technical and moralistic terms, as necessary measures to overcome the crisis, produce 'economic recovery', and to also redeem the guilt of a people (supposedly) 'living beyond its abilities'. European identity is thus contextualized in the accepting of austerity reforms for Greece to remain in the Eurozone. The Eurocurrency becomes the key instrument for 'Europeanization'. The challenging of austerity is addressed as the negation of Europe. A mythological construction of the Eurocurrency emerges, blocking the possibility of a critical public discussion on the structure of the Eurozone and its flaws, asymmetries and contradictions, along with the nature of the Eurocurrency itself 'designed to inject a new, neoliberal form of money into national economies' (Streeck 2016, 172), a discussion that might enlighten and empower citizens.

5.5 The post-democratic perspective: beyond the Right and the Left

Most authors seldom identify to either the political left or the right, which are viewed as 'outdated' concepts. A future-orientated approach is adopted instead, connected to certainties of progress and the post-historical, Fukuyamian thesis

of a predominant liberalism as the final and best socio-political system for the world. Democracy is mentioned in several texts studied, but is presented in negative, 'pragmatic' terms (Streeck 2016, 110), as an impossibility that is constantly being coerced by established party politics, political clientalism, and abused by 'unenlightened' citizens.

In 'what will the liberals become?' (Protagon, 27/12/2014), Andreas Zamboukas estimates that

(7)   "… The battle for dominance will be given by the two great conservative poles of the political system. The major trends of today's 'updated' populism are apparent in both rival parties. One concerns the promise of a 'generous' statism, defending past achievements from the era of 'kleptocracy' (capital, work positions, salaries and pensions). The other is based on right-wing phobias against the Left… Within this terrorizing backdrop, there are not many common-sense forces to enlighten the political system and the Greek society in general."

In another example from Athens Voice, 10.02.2012, Giorgos Siakantaris in 'Filorussia, pause it' writes:

(8)   "… specific political and ecclesiastical circles in Greece see in authoritarian Russia the standard by which a country can confront the great Western evils: liberal democracy, rationality, the Enlightenment, globalization and European integration through the euro-currency. The Greek anti-liberal party is crowding to fit in the neo-orthodox and the drachma-parties. This party includes forces from the left to far-right… facing the aforementioned Western values with suspicion, contempt and hatred."

These excerpts demonstrate the ways that their authors 'discuss' with their opponents, who are addressed in derogatory and flattening terms. Nominalizations formulate the non-liberal adversary, presented as the 'anti-liberal party': the 'neo-orthodox', 'drachma-party supporters', and the 'forces of both the left and the far-right', are those opposing the 'West', 'liberal democracy', the 'Enlightenment'. Further attributes of the 'anti-liberal party' are 'populism', 'kleptocracy', 'statism' or 'leftist phobias'.

A political horizon is proclaimed that is less understood in accordance to the 'left/right' interpretation of politics and identities, and more through a 'forward-backward' understanding of socio-political realities, ideas and practices. A post-democratic approach is proposed, where political opposition is discredited as irrelevant and dangerous. Social affairs become matters of 'common-sense', 'realism' and effective expert-based management, assuming a 'centrist' position (Ali 2015) to consensually resolve the tensions emerging from a class-based society (Ranciere

2007, 14). Capitalism, globalization, the centrality of the 'free' market in human affairs are uncritically approached as facts (Fairclough 2003, 56), as natural realities that cannot (or should not) be challenged. Nevertheless, the left/right distinction relates to the modern, secular political imaginary (Dyrberg 2005, 177), providing a conceptual space to conceive the economic, national, cultural and class divisions and conflicts, allowing grounds for political contestation and recognition of social difference.

Both the right and the left are addressed as remnants of the past. A polemic, however, is launched against the (anti-capitalist) left over its proclaimed responsibility for Greece's crisis (Mylonas 2014). As Xenofon Boutzakis writes in AthensVoice (19/5/2010, 'The Left bankruptcy is worse than the economic bankruptcy'):

(9) "…the Left has a huge share of responsibility for the bankruptcy system … with its outrageous and stubborn negativity, it verified its full inability to make any serious proposals while staying trapped in violent populist politics."

In another, 22.07.2009 article entitled 'On the Left deficit', Soti Triantafyllou also writes in AthensVoice that

(10) "… apart from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, we also lost the 1960s, the emergence of alternative movements, the demands of individual freedom, the radicalization of the multiracial, multicultural left. So our social movement is poor, dogmatic, and primitive; it lacks imagination, and is guided by perverse thinking: it translates the so-called "class hatred" into envy, jealousy and manifests itself with acts of ugliness and annihilation… Are we still in the Dark Age before the Enlightenment? And why does nobody from the Left talk about these things? Why should we accept the nonsense and arbitrariness of a "movement" that is not interested in justice and goodness that forcibly interrupts theatrical plays, threatens with terrorist operations and reviles anyone disagreeing?"

A claim of a 'true' leftist identity often appears in texts like those above, as some of the contributors, like Triantafyllou or Georgeles, were connected to counter-cultural movements appearing in Greece during the 1970's. Triantafyllou's points above relate to what Boltanski and Chiapello (2006, 169) described as 'artistic critique', which prevailed in the Western Left from the 1960's and on. This emerged in a moment when social-democratic, material demands were covered as they were compatible to the post-WWII capital's growth, allowing space for further demands to advance concerning individual freedom. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that the artistic critique current weakened social movements as it reduced social

critique, and its threat to capital, which after its 1970's crisis was able to assimilate the individualist demands (e.g. for non-alienating work) in productive ways, leading to the biopolitical production process of today, developing new forms of subjugation and alienation, worsened by the absence of critical movements towards the emerging conditions of late capitalist societies (Harvey 2014, 267).

In his 'Sweet gangs' (30/05/2012) article at Protagon, the film director Sotiris Goritsas notes that

(11)   "We are neither the only nor the first to be facing financial disruption. Another country, Denmark, was faced with large fiscal deficits in the 1970s… Within three years, however, all the descendants of the Vikings -not Plato and Aristotle- had left their crisis behind. They did so by completely erasing what they knew until then and replacing it with a single word: Competitiveness… The times' Danish SYRIZA… participated in this national effort without saying 'no' to everything. It only insisted that the future fruits of growth obtained from the removal of barriers to competitiveness were to be shared with justice… Indeed, in order to share, you must first produce!"

Sakelaris Skoumpourdis makes a similar argument in AthensVoice (15.11.2011) writing that

(12)   "… a conscious ringing of the Enlightenment bell brings back its vivifying logic… that the left today is the open democracy, with welfare state and free market".

Such suggestions conform to the general economistic, neoliberal imperatives, seeing endless compound growth and an intensification of competition not as key problems of contemporary societies (Harvey 2014, 282), but as solutions, failing to understand limits in capital's growth, as well as the historical contexts where capitalist growth was compatible with social-democratic reforms. The critique of capitalism in this context appears as sterile, back-warded, unrealistic or nihilistic (connected to an absolute negativism, or to conspiracy theories), with the Left, having either a possibility of demanding some kind of redistribution of growth-profits, or to be standing for liberal cosmopolitanism. The economistic ethos of austerity, regarding a balance between production and distribution emerges as a common-sense explanation of justice and reason, confirming Foucault's (2008: 32) thesis that the market in neoliberalism becomes a mechanism of, not only justice, but truth.

5.6 The post-political vision: technocracy instead of politics

In line to the post-democratic theme, indignation is expressed against politics, elections, grassroots participation and protest. These are all discredited on the basis of inefficiency, disruption, and irrationality. In a reflection over the sweeping victory of the anti-austerity vote on Greece's 5/7/2015 referendum, despite the liberals' terrorizing propaganda campaign in favor of austerity, one reads:

(13) "On Sunday, it was not fear that was defeated but true fear that won. The fear of a people to change… because this nation never went through the Enlightenment…. We were, again, afraid to change, we were afraid of the reforms, and we were afraid of the democratic Europe".

(Protagon 7/7/2015, 'the victory of the true fear', Yannis Gkikas)

The vote of the people is thus rejected as a fearful reaction rising from a 'lack of Enlightenment'. Nominalizations ('we') produce the collective identity and its psychology, discrediting a majoritarian vote, while the 'Enlightenment' and 'democratic Europe' produce the essence of (austerity) reforms, which appear as more democratic than popular voting.

In his 16/06/2014 article ('The revolution of 2021', AthensVoice), Spiros Kitsinelis writes about revolutions:

(14) "Everyone agrees that Greece needs a new revolution… My own idea of the new Greek Revolution is described by Nikos Dimou in his book 'talking with an indignant for new revolutions – technological and other'… we need a technological revolution… a new generation, not afraid of scientific novelty, that will put technology to good civil service. Besides bureaucratic and organizational matters, the way of thinking needs to change… the country went generally bankrupt because we lack rationality… because the Enlightenment never touched Greece. The scientific way of thinking and working will be a great revolution for Greece. Who does not want more science, technology and rationality in Greece? Only those burdened with dogmatism, stagnation, darkness and charlatanism."

Intertextual references (the book of Dimou) (Fairclough 2003, 40) provide an authoritative legitimacy to the author's views. Nominalizations ('we', 'Greece', 'science', 'good service'), form a semantic chain of equivalence defining positive social change. Technocracy is to resolve Greece's problems, restore reason, and empower citizens' entrepreneurial potential. The opponents of technocracy are framed in derogatory terms, with the use of abstract nominalizations ('those burdened with dogmatism, stagnation…'). Mythopoiesis is a further process that constructs the legitimacy of the particular claim, based on the negative myth of the

non-rational-Greek and on that of the nihilistic/extremist left that may be striving for a socio-political revolution instead. Additionally, technology and science are idealized, although they are not neutral entities but defined by broader hegemonic politico-economic processes. A technocratic vision thus develops in such narratives, supposedly covering the ultimate, objective ground of truth and knowledge on how to best resolve social problems and tensions that demands a unanimous consent, as disagreement is based more on confusion than in a different socio-political vision for life. An impoverished space of discussion therefore emerges that blocks democratic dialogue.

6.   Conclusions: a dogmatic and conformist 'Enlightenment'

The study shows that the Enlightenment sign is fixed in a West/European identity construction, denoted by positive, modernistic and liberal features, such as rationality, progress, technology, and entrepreneurialism. The modern/non-modern distinction appears as dichotomous and rigid. Research has shown that these dimensions are never fully clear and the 'pre-modern' always emerges in the modern and vice-versa (Triantafyllidou, Gropas, and Kouki 2013, 14). 'Greece' is presented through the frequent use of subject and object pronouns like 'we' or 'us', to address flattened regimes of responsibility and guilt. The 'West' and 'Europe' emerge as universal modernity paradigms and as panopticons (Mylonas 2014, 314) observing 'us' and 'our' shortcomings. A key agent constructing this historical reality appears to be the bourgeois individual/class and its contemporary transformations.

The discourses studied attempt to create a structure of feeling, related to the advance of specific values, identities and social relations, in a ruptural historical moment when change becomes possible. A common feature in all texts is the lack of any systemic concerns over the crisis, regarding the contradictions of the capitalist-realist narrative unfolded and its certainties. Further, Greece's differences can also be systemically addressed, due to its uneven position in core/periphery relations of nation-states in capitalist globalization (Hadjimichalis 2011, 255). The emphasis on cultural/psychological explanations of the crisis (Mentinis 2013) instead, identifies the authors to the master crisis' narratives of the EU's and Greece's politico-economic establishment, particularly in its efforts to abolish any possibility of politico-economic alternatives to emerge.

An engaged view is manifested through constant references of 'we', stressing flat and dramatized, collective pathologies and responsibilities. Franz Fanon's analysis of the psychology of the colonized is useful to further address the tensions inscribed in such articulations:

> All colonized people, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave, position themselves in relation to the civilizing language: i.e., the metropolitan culture. The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become   (Fanon 2008, 2).

The unproblematic acceptance of the hegemonic crisis-narratives, and the certainties over the identity of Europe itself, mark an insufficient (or cynical) reading of history and politics, and further demonstrate inferiority complexes, through the expressions of both admiration and spite. Besides, the Enlightenment, along with modernization, are persistent themes of cultural analysis of the non-western stranger (Bhabha 1994) justifying colonial and imperialist conquests in history, in the context of the colonizing powers' self-assuming 'civilizing mission' over helpless or 'failed' people (Said 1977, 107; Ebanda de B'béri and Louw 2011, 336). The critique of such narratives thus departs from an internationalist perspective, stressing the class-based commonalities of popular majorities living in precarious and unjust conditions, across the globe today, in Europe's core too.

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