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Winners and Losers of the Greek Crisis as a Result of a Double Fragmentation and Exclusion: a Discourse Analysis of Greek Civil

Maria Zafiropoulou, Alejandro Pérez, Archontia Christodoulopoulou, Radina Peeva, Ioanna Marini

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Winners and Losers of the Greek Crisis as a Result of a Double Fragmentation and Exclusion: a Discourse Analysis of Greek Civil Society

Maria Zafiropoulou1, Alejandro Pérez2, Archontia Christodoulopoulou3, Radina Peeva4, Ioanna Marini5

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore, through the civil society's opinion, the polarisation between 'winners' and 'losers' and the group of the 'new excluded', or 'new poor', that has emerged as a result of the European economic crisis and the social transformations that followed in the Greek society. Based on the Theory of Justice introduced by John Rawls (1971), and using the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study focuses on the discourse analysis of the perception of 97 representatives of local and national NGOs, both formal and informal. The main results focus on different self and others' presentations, especially during the economic crisis, and on the creation of an unbalanced, fragmented and exclusion-cantered society. However, the definition of rich and poor appears ambiguous through the analysis of various linguistic strategies of Greek NGOs revealing a hidden face of the society.

Keywords:
fragmentation, exclusion, civil society, discourse analysis, poverty

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1. Introduction

Processes of fragmentation and exclusion both within and among European societies have emerged as a consequence of the economic crisis. These processes occur at two levels: on a material and on an ideational level. The first one refers to a continuously rising level of unemployment and poverty and the second level to a double fragmentation and exclusion based on ideas and discourses. Considering social transformations, such as an economic crisis, as processes which have both winners and losers, this double process creates losers and winners and affects the pre-existing economic and social stratification. The crisis creates new categories of excluded and vulnerable population groups. One of them would be 'the losers', such as unemployed people, migrants, or seniors, compared to other categories of society, like physical persons or legal entities, which are preserved, such as emerging organisations in times of crisis and the Germans. The role of Germany is central in the discursive patterns of blaming of civil society's representants.

How could we define this double exclusion and fragmentation during the Greek crisis in order to understand the place and role of "the new excluded" in the Greek society? In other words, how is the polarisation of winners and losers perceived and drawn in the period of economic recession?

The perception of civil society in such phenomena and questions seems very important and we argue that it represents a great part of the population, since in Greece, well known professional associations such as those of liberal professionals, health and law professionals, and generally the trade unions of the wider public sector (Sotiropoulos 2004) are among the traditionally strong civil society organisations. According to Sotiropoulos and Bourikos (2014), their strength is derived from their efficient organisation and high representation among Members of Parliament and Cabinet ministers, regardless of which political party is in power. Finally, during the crisis, the role of civil society has increased rapidly (Sotiropoulos 2004, Zafiropoulou et al. 2017) and new resilient strategies have been developed in order to face the new processes of exclusion and fragmentation of the society.

We propose a definition of exclusion and fragmentation depending on the concept of poverty. Nevertheless, we argue that poverty cannot be defined simply by a small number of economic indicators. Our conception of poverty is based on the theory of justice of John Rawls (1971), holding that a well-ordered society is a society governed by justice, understood as fairness. The theory of justice as fairness is, in its turn, based on two principles: the first principle insists that *"each person has an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all"* (Rawls, 1982:161). These are called basic in the sense that they allow to exercise the moral human capacities. According to the second principle -the "difference principle"- *"social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: they must be (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society; and (b) attached to offices*

and positions open to all under conditions of faire equality of opportunity" (Rawls, 1982: 162). These two principles constitute the basis of Rawls' *social contract theory*.

The theory of primary goods follows a different path from that taken by Amartya Sen, as it is independent of individual needs or desires of people[6]. By developing a theory of primary goods, Rawls invites us to consider poverty and exclusion beyond economics. The concepts of fragmentation and exclusion are defined through the access to primary goods and the inequalities in the access to these primary goods. Those already excluded from the system are "pushed to the edge of society" (Council of Europe, 2004:8), losing access to basic social services and to economic rights and so do the newly excluded of the Greek crisis. This form of deprivation impacts the status of new vulnerable groups (perceived before the crisis as 'the privileged' or 'the rich'), fragmenting society even more deeply than before the crisis and downgrading their status of exclusion to 'new poor', and thus in contrast to the rich– the winners. This kind of analysis abolishes the conventional and common binary notions of 'text' and 'context', 'discourse' and 'society', 'representation' and 'reality' and re-unifies them into one of an all-encompassing and dialectic whole (Shi-xu, 2016). In the category of 'the new excluded' (the 'losers') both socially and economically excluded people are part of. This double, social and economic exclusion refers to a double material and ideational fragmentation of the Greek society during the crisis.

After a brief methodological section, we focus on the double process of exclusion and fragmentation according the political theory developed by John Rawls which promotes a more encompassing concept of poverty and of social exclusion. The perception of civil society actors about poverty and crisis, their causes and impacts will be developed in order to draw the polarisation of 'the winners' and of 'the losers' during the crisis period. This polarisation considers issues of fragmentation in ascriptions of blame and accountability according to the Greek civil society.

2. Methodology

In order to examine the connections between fragmentation and exclusion and the hidden causes of this new polarisation of winners and losers, we will employ a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. "Critical (discourse analysis) implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change" (Fairclough 1992: 9). We will analyze discourses as practices of power-knowledge according to Teun A. van Dijk's (2006) approach and close to the Foucauldian doctrine of CDA, by pointing out dominant and hegemonic language, social structure and social order

6 Many researchers are tempted to follow Sen's theory, promoting a theory that takes into account the specific needs and desires of people. However, these needs are not absolute and specifically defined, they lack objectivity and seem to us an incomplete way of treating the problem (Cf. Pogge, 2010)

representations and discrimination discourse. Thus, our approach, deploying the interpretative means of the sociology of knowledge, will explore the way attitudes emerge as social perceptions and facts as norm-guided perception of facts. According to the sociology of knowledge (reasonably-normatively) interpreting is a great part of social facticity. Indeed, crisis talk and blame attributions are directly related. Blaming, as a recourse, is used by the Greek society in order to reallocate its responsibility. Therefore, trying to analyse people's discourses must be dealt with the questions of what their perception consists of, what cultural, social and economic understandings it draws upon and which resources it mobilises to sustain its rationale. The Atlas.ti software for qualitative analysis data has been used in order to better examine self and others representations[7].

We focused on the perceptions, of 97 representatives of 79 local and national NGOs and new emerging informal organisations during the crisis, from the area of Athens and the province of Achaia, in Western Greece. The sample was divided into 8 different categories. More specifically, 81% of the organisations were NGOs while the rest are informal initiatives of civil society. 26 organisations of the sample are active in the sector of social solidarity, 19 in the health sector, 8 in the field of the economy, 7 in societal issues, 4 of them in the sector of culture, 4 in education, 1 in the environment and 10 had multiple areas of activities. The face-to-face interviews, conducted in the Spring of 2014 and 2015, were based on semi-structured questionnaires and lasted 1 hour in average. The research protocols for the choice of this sample survey has been very detailed and rigorous: a representative sample was drawn and inferential statistical analysis has been performed on the data collected, using the software Atlas.ti. In Patras, the sample size includes practically all the large and medium sised NGOs and informal organisations. In Athens, 67 NGOs were randomly selected from the National Register of NGOs, by using appropriate algorithms in order to avoid selection scenarios like "selection of the first four NGOs of each group after having ordered them alphabetically"[8].

7 The primary document families (79 interviews each averaging 7 pages) allowed us to group our data in 8 categories. Memos have been added in order to capture some insights, which due to the great number of comments, it was not possible to connect to the data, and they were then linked to codes. The codes were grouped in three categories: 1) NGOs' and emerging organisations' codes, 2) argumentation patterns' of poor and winners codes and 3) linguistic strategies' codes. Each comment was designated as a quotation and the codes were attached to the quotations. Finally, some visual representations of data (codes, quotations) have been used in order to link data and explore connections between discourse analysis, especially in order to form the ''US'' and ''Others'' representations.

8 This paper is based on the ongoing research programme "Fragmentation and Exclusion: Understanding and Overcoming the Multiple Impacts of the European Crisis" (FRAGMEX).

Table 1

CATEGORY	
Informal Groups - Initiatives Of Civil Society	***19***
Athens	8
Patras	11
Formal Typical NGO	***69***
Athens	25
Patras	44
TOTAL	**88**
POSITION IN THE ORGANISATION of the interviewees	
Founder	12
President	23
Social Worker	11
Supervisor	7
Coordinator	8
Member	8
Administratine Staff	6
Members Of The Board	6
Director	5
Scientific Staff	1
Management Consultant	1
Project Manager	6
Volunteer	3
TOTAL	**97**
EDUCATION LEVEL of the interviewees	
Secondary education	8
IEK	2
University	74
MSc	7
PhD	6
TOTAL	**97**

3. Double exclusion and fragmentation during the economic crisis

In his definition of poverty, John Rawls links poverty with the concepts of fragmentation and exclusion, because *"the least advantaged are defined as those who have the lowest index of primary goods, when their prospects are viewed over a complete life"* (Rawls, 1982:164). The *primary goods*, namely income, wealth, liberties, opportunities, social conditions of self-respect etc., cover the freedoms and fundamental rights which all members of a just society should have access to. Thus, a fragmentation of such a society leading to specific groups of people being excluded, is one of poverty's characteristics.

The prescriptive way of Rawls for defining poverty aims to fix an indicator of primary goods for all citizens. His point of view intends to be universal and applicable in all circumstances even in times of crisis. Consequently, he argues that *"each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override"* (1971: 3). Thomas Pogge goes even further in the declaration and definition of such a right and deprivation as he notes that severe poverty can be conceived as a human rights violation. He especially stresses that:

> *"A human rights violation involves unfulfilled human rights and a specific active causal relation of human agents to such non-fulfillment. This causal relation may be interactional; but it may also be institutional, as when agents collaborate in designing and imposing institutional arrangements that foreseeably and avoidably cause human rights to be unfulfilled*" (2012: 10).

In the same perspective, on 11 April 2008, an internal note of the United Nations, produced by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, mentions that in Africa and Asia, rising food prices resulted in poverty situations *"where there is still food, but people cannot afford to buy it"* (P. Bolopion, 2008).

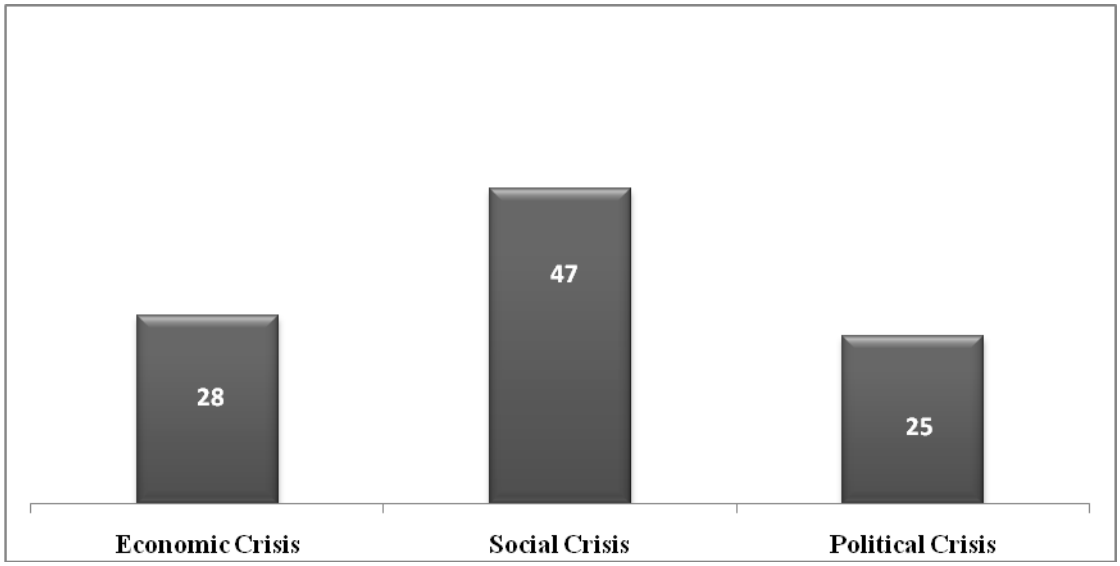
3.1 Poverty and the double fragmentation of economy and ideas

Poverty can be both quantitative and qualitative, as it may be characterised by material and spiritual deprivation of primary goods. Traditionally, the welfare state in Greece has been criticised for being inadequate, fragmented and operating on a clientelist basis (Sotiropoulos 2014, Petropoulos and Valvis 2015). This finding is likely related to the fragmented nature of the Greek welfare system, which does not provide universal social services to the entire population—a policy which seems to be contributing substantially in the reduction of poverty in other countries—but instead targets specific groups of people.

The table below describes the causes of the crisis as they have been outlined by the 97 representatives of local and national NGOs and new organisations, which emerged during the crisis, stressing that this crisis is more ideational than economic as it is *"a matter of moral values more than a matter of finances"* (Founder of the Community Kitchen "The other person"). For the interviewees, the fragmentation of society and politics is mainly

ideational (linked to a degradation of social values) while the economic crisis is based exclusively on material causes. It is noteworthy that besides this classic archetype 'morality-economy', they attribute a crucial separate place for the political crisis in the Greek fragmented society.

Figure 1: The causes of fragmentation according to 79 Greek NGOs and new organisations that emerged during crisis



The fragmentation process most cited by the NGOs' representatives is that of the labour market. According to the "Social Profile Report on Poverty, Social Exclusion and Inequality" of the Crisis Observatory (2015), the phenomena of fragmentation of the labour market have increased substantially during the crisis, due to both new labour market legislation and the continued deterioration of the Greek economy. Katsikas *et al.* (2015), note that part-timers and employees on a temporary contract faced substantially higher poverty rates than those with full-time contracts and employees with permanent jobs, respectively. In addition to the precarious and low-paid employment, NGOs' representatives indicate general income reduction, price increases and inflation, tax evasion and overtaxation as economic causes of the fragmented welfare state. The signs of this economic fragmentation, according to civil society's representants, lie in a deep transformation of the market (privatisation of public services, substitution of public services by local communities and NGOs, transformation of macro and micro level etc.) and on the imposition of new dominant fragmented and multi-focal processes (such as globalisation and unequal system of international economic regulation).

Material fragmentation is frequently accompanied by ideational fragmentation. Therefore, according to the interviewees, the lack of values and principles is the main cause of the Greek moral decadence illustrated by the lack of solidarity and the decline of

social classes, while the political crisis is seen via a multilevel corrupt system and the lack of democratic procedures.

> *"It is- how can I say it? A dispute of all societal structures that existed all these years, starting from the political system, well... going into the administration system and to the income distribution system of the country... hum.. it's a crisis at all levels, that may be concerning us, as citizens, mainly the economic part, but it's more obvious now as we move on. No, I think… I believe that apparently the crisis is essentially economic, that's how it began... I believe that it is a political issue, I think it is an administrative issue, a government issue... hum... I believe that it is a matter of social goals, it is where society aimed over the years, just because society itself didn't make productive models".*
>
> *(Director of Agia Efrosini)*

> *"There has started to exist a big discount, a change in values and principles thus defining our social life; and at the same time there is also a significant part, to which we attribute many of the difficulties that we are going through... It's the lack of education. The lack of education, which has to do, not with the education that we draw from schools, but the one referring to social education. It's not poverty, it's not unemployment, it's not social decline, nor drugs. All those, are the spikes hum... the peaks of some icebergs, whose basis, thus... The basis of one iceberg is just the lack of education and the change of values and principles".*
>
> *(KINISI- PROTASI Head of the Creative Center and Programs)*

> *"We integrate poverty into spiritual poverty of the Greek, i.e. the Greek's spiritual poverty is much harder than the economic poverty.*
>
> *(Chief executive in Art in Progress)*

3.2 Double exclusion and losers of the crisis

The material and ideational fragmentation creates material and ideational exclusion. The interviewees point out three kinds of exclusion, which are closely related to the causes of crisis (Figure 1). They refer to social, political and economic exclusion and point out new vulnerable groups of people, who appear to be the losers of this double process. For some, they are the 'new poor' and for others the 'new excluded' but -we argue- the correct term characterising them is the 'losers'.

Our argumentation for denying the use of "new poor" or "new excluded" is mainly based on the following statements:

a. During the economic crisis, some groups of people (such as the elderly, unemployed and uninsured people) were excluded to some extent from specific primary goods, even if these people are not considered –in the economic sense of

the term— poor. Indeed, people not excluded in the welfare system are stigmatised, and thus excluded during the crisis. These populations being at risk of social exclusion, practically represent a large part of the population during the economic recession. The coordinator of Praxis' projects and of the Day Center of this NGO, notes that "*poor is also the one who cannot.., does not have..., despite the fact that he works, he cannot.., he earns so little that he cannot even afford his fares to go to work".* In a similar vein, *"Imagine that there are people who used to be sponsors to the food bank and now they are recipients"* stated a social worker in the food bank of the Social Organisation of the Municipality of Patras.

b. Even if social exclusion is strongly linked to poverty, we argue, that not all social excluded people are economically poor and vice versa. The fragmentation may be ideational and thus exclusion as well.

c. In addition, we deny the use of the term 'excluded' in order to define the so-called 'new excluded or new poor' of the Greek population, because the term of social exclusion itself is problematic. Indeed, this concept as defined by a large part of researchers is very limited. According to the Council of Europe (2004: 8),

> "s*ocial exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and are prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and educational opportunities, as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over decisions that affect their day-to-day lives".*

As we can see, the concept of social exclusion presupposes boundaries and limits in culture and in society which do not legally exist. Indeed, as argued earlier, this process is not a stable condition reflecting the outcome of a well determined process (poverty in its economic sense), but rather it constantly changes. Thus, social boundaries between insiders and outsiders may be more or less porous, formal or informal and simple or complex. We conclude that poverty and social exclusion are context-dependent concepts.

An example of the necessity of finding another concept –apart from 'the new excluded' or 'the new poor'— in order to define these groups of people is the 'paradox of the elderly' (Zafiropoulou, 2014). The elderly are the less poverty-stricken (in the economic sense of the term) and the most excluded of healthcare services age group. We observe that according to official statistics the poverty rates of the elderly were initially much higher than all other age groups (29.4% in 2003). However since the mid-2000s the elderly's position improved over time, reaching 22.3% in 2008. Between 2009 and 2011 their poverty rates increased from 21.4% to 23.6%, but then declined substantially to 17.2%, making this age group the less poverty stricken age group. In fact, it is the only age group for which the relative poverty rate fell, as low pensions were cut less, compared to wages. However, while the elderly's lot in 2012 seems to have improved in relative terms and it is seemingly less affected by monetary or material resource distribution, paradoxically the

elderly's exclusion from access to healthcare services and medicines (which is one of the primary goods according to Rawls) is very high. The reduction in pensions has reduced the ability of the elderly to access healthcare services. Increased co-financing for medication and the closure of certain local health structures have aggravated this situation. Difficulties arise when follow-ups or further medical examinations out of the hospital are required at a later stage. In these cases, the elderly often drop out of treatments or miss follow-ups. EU SILC data reflecting the same phenomenon notes that the self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (because of the cost of services were too expensive, of their geographic coverage and the extended waiting lists) for retired people rose, from 7.6% in 2008 to 9.4% in 2012.

> *"Elderly people, while their income has decreased, are forced to help the younger generations who have been financially damaged because of unemployment and the crisis".*
>
> *(Social Worker & General Secretary of the Board FRONTIZO)*

New vulnerable populations of this double fragmentation and exclusion, not necessarily socially excluded, represent the losers of a crisis, of a new system full of inequalities. This double process does not provide these specific groups with the primary goods, in the sense of Rawls, and specifically the basic structure does not guarantee equal "liberty of conscience, or freedom of thought " (Rawls, 1982: 163).

> *"There is normally, firstly social exclusion, that we created ourselves. We, ourselves place people to the sideline. We were afraid not to be robbed, afraid to talk to them we saw them and we changed direction, we looked at them in a wrong way, without thinking. Those people are more afraid of us, because their shame and dignity are far worse than ours".*
>
> *(Founder of the Community kitchen- The other person)*

According to the interviewees, the majority of the middle class, perceived before the crisis as a privileged part of the Greek society, are working people, often not insured or temporarily unemployed, and represent the great loser of the Greek crisis:

> *"Unemployment is the most important, ok? Violence, impoverishment of large... large parts… uh, mainly of low classes, but also of middle classes which tend to be destroyed. Well, we had a very strong middle class, which… violently, I think, that right now, is falling apart. Since we do not have heavy industry in our country, 95% of enterprises are small and medium-sized enterprises, which employ from one to ten, maximum fifteen employees… If… if someone considers this, it is this category which, is essentially confronting the biggest problem. That is, the middle class is being destroyed… the lower working classes and because of the tax raid and, uh, high unemployment, recession- prolonged recession- uh, they are being impoverished even more".*
>
> *(Coordinator in Agrotica- Free Products Zone)*

Large families have become socially vulnerable during the economic recession:

> *"I could say that young and unemployed people often overlap. Large families and families who are socially vulnerable.., these usually include unemployed members. All these, usually have low income, they are unemployed... thus we are talking about socially vulnerable families".*
>
> *(Director of Programs in APOSTOLI)*

Immigrants, already in vulnerable situation even before the crisis have become one of the most excluded target groups. The situations of young people and seniors are often seen as interdependent and they appear to be a scourge of the Greek society:

> *"A typical picture is people who are looking in the trash bins. That is the most marginal part of immigrants- those who didn't integrate, they are in the absolute margin, with the risk of not even finding something to eat; in addition, in the margin are those.., those.., employees that their sectors where particularly hit by the crisis.., for example industry.., hmm.., and suddenly they found themselves in unemployment. Especially ages that cannot easily find a job again. And another category that has a large problem, are young people".*
>
> *(Member of Management Committee of OIKIPA)*

However, the most frequently cited problematic situation is the one of the people most dependent of the healthcare sector (people with chronic health conditions, disabled people and cancer patients) (Economou *et al*., 2014):

> "*Well, when there is an economic crisis the disabled person is the one who pays for it the most, because she/he will be the one who will not have the financial ability to go out. It will be the one that cannot take the medication needed, the one that cannot have the hospitalisation needed, the one that consequently must have her/his basic needs covered".*
>
> *(General Secretary of National Association of Paraplegics)*

4. Double polarisation: I/Us vs. Them and Winners vs. Losers

Seeking to investigate the representations of the winners and losers in Greek society, we focus on the linguistic strategies of the interviewees reflecting the ideational fragmentation and exclusion of the society. By employing CDA, we explore the links between textual structures and their function in the speakers' interaction within the society. Our analysis recognises: a. the role of the NGOs in Greek society, as their mission, structure and operation determine their discursive practices, and b. the crisis context as

language is shaped within the prevailing socioeconomic context. According to Fairclough, these two aspects, the "socially constitutive" and the "socially shaped", are interconnected. The discursive-cultural rift between the outsiders on the one hand and the new insiders and especially the old ones on the other, is obvious in the discourse of the NGOs and the emerging organisations. This rift results in each group assigning blame to the other for the new social and economic stratification in the aftermath of the crisis.

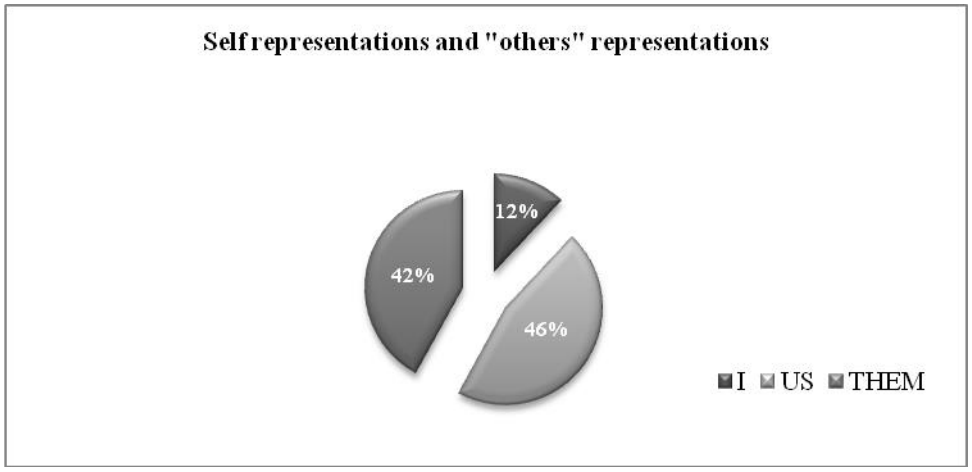
For the interviewees, the contrasting stakeholders, who represent an antagonistic relation of 'loser versus winner', are the following:
- The conscious citizens (self-defined as both winners and losers) versus the others ('the corrupt')
- NGOs and emerged organisations of civil society (losers) versus the Greek government (winners)
- Informal organisations (losers) versus old national and powerful NGOs (winners)
- Greece (loser) versus North European countries (winners)

4.1 (Self) representations of losers and winners

Responsibility narratives structure the ways of perceiving and responding to social problems, and thus make a certain knowledge of the world visible, while rendering invisible what falls outside its boundaries of truth. In fact, this is the strength and at the same time the weakness of such a discourse analysis as the interviewees' discourses reflect their ideology, that is their cognitive representations and societal position and interests (Van Dijk, 2006).

The proportion of the "I" is lower than one third of the number of the 'us' pattern. Also, the number of self-representations (I and Us) is slightly higher than the one of the others (them). Thus, it shows the almost equally divided perceptions of the population under examination, into a responsibilisation and victimisation frame. This division is indicative of the wider dissensus plaguing Greek society about the origins, causes and recipes of the crisis.

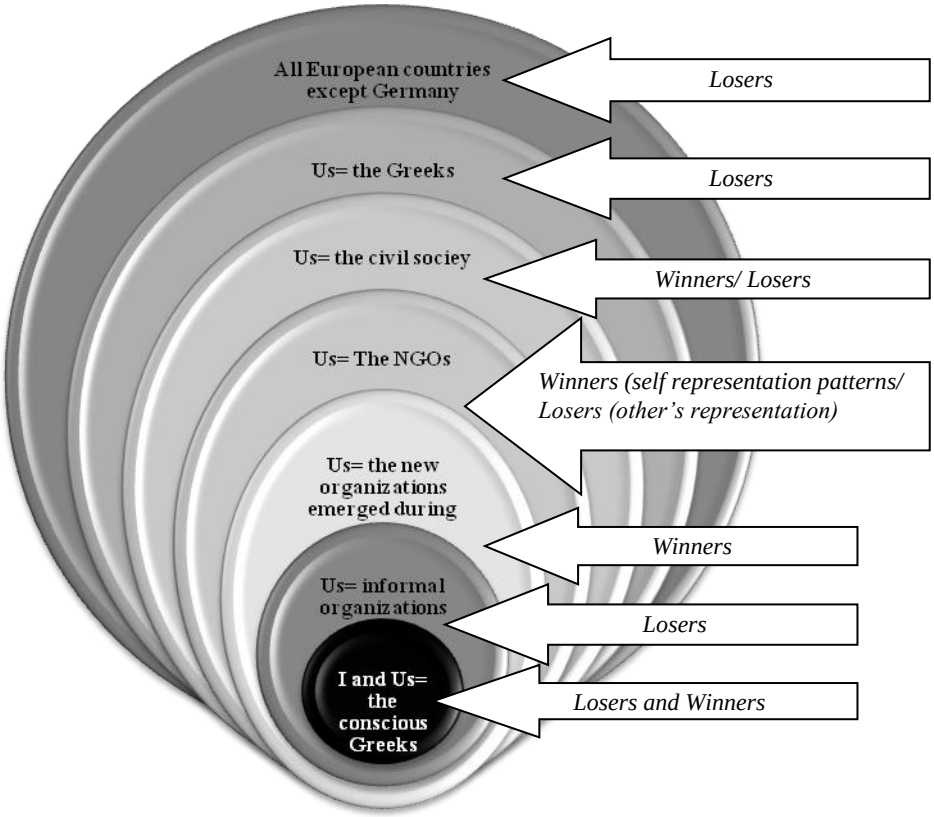
Figure 2: Civil society's representations of self and "others"



The figure below shows seven spheres, the so called by Van Dijk ''in-groups'', that may be denoted by *We*, describing the *'I'* and '*Us'*. These spheres create cultural, political, social or ideological sameness or uniqueness. Moreover, each sphere is related to positive or/and negative perception of 'Us', thus describing who is perceived as the loser and who as the winner in the relationship. In all these spheres, the interviewees include themselves in their discourse by using certain pronouns (such as us, our, ours), or avoiding other ones (such as 'You' or 'Them'). The sphere 'Us= the civil society' and the one 'I and Us= the conscious Greeks' represent the largest majority for the perception of 'Us'.

The sphere 'Us= the new organisations emerged during the crisis' is unique in referring to an absolute positive representation of 'Us' and implying a certain ideology uniting people (societal ideology and exculpation of these groups and its members). Their argumentation is based on the necessity of unity towards the crisis, while the other six spheres reflect partly or totally a negative vision of 'Us' leading to a certain inculpation and co-responsibility of these groups during the crisis and even to a certain victimisation.

Figure 3: The 7 spheres of civil society's self-representations of the Us



4.1.1 I and Us

It is important to consider the ways in which the crisis regulates narrative structures, it allows certain questions to be asked, while it forecloses others that "pertain not only to the systemic features of the world economy, but also, and more importantly to moral (dis)placements" (Kosmatopoulos 2014:484). "Such moral (dis)placements can be more readily disclosed through paying attention to the way the narratives of crisis are transmitted through and mediated by a language of responsibility and more specifically through ascriptions of blame and accountability" (Zafiropoulou *et al*., 2015 :114). For example, by employing victimisation and responsibilisation patterns interviewees' discourse aims to emphasise the role of solidarity.

> *"It is very difficult for people to leave the 'I', their inflated 'ego' and to integrate to… the deflated 'we'. I use the concepts of 'inflated' and 'deflated' precisely because… that is exactly what demonstrates the prevailing situation...".*
>
> *(STIRIKSI AMKE, Head of the Program)*

Thus, the ‘Us’ sometimes passes by as an underestimation of the ‘I’,

> *"We are a whole. Our needs are collective and no personal needs must be taken into account. You know... individual efforts do not lead anywhere"*
>
> (President of NGO ‘Agia Paraskevi’).

The responsibility of this fragmentation and exclusion is a confusing topic in the interviewees' discourse. The Head of the Creative Center of PROTASI-KINISI for another way of life reflects this confusion of responsibility as he firstly describes himself as an insider, responsible for his future/ for this future, talking about collective responsibility (Us) and then he disclaims every responsibility (I), by blaming only the others of his ex-insider group (Them).

> *"Hum... I think that they (crisis and poverty) are closely linked... because the overall decline when it has to do with values, when dealing with authorities, has... is what pulls the rest of the system to collapse as well. I personally believe that it is not the others' fault; besides, do not forget that societies and their politicians, reflect who we are as citizens and who we are as a society. Thus, I do not think that politicians are bad and citizens are good. I believe that all together we do this "thing", today, what we all hate and through confrontation we are trying to blame one another. Emm... actually, they are trying... I do not belong in this category, but in any case, that's the way it is... "*

4.1.2 The definition of Rich and Poor marking the limits of social inequalities: The ‘US’ and the Others

‘Them’ is the foundation of prejudiced and disadvantaged perceptions and discourses. It is characterised by the labeling of the social actors who are represented as ‘winners’ and their generalised negative attributions. Different arguments justify the exclusion of the ‘Us’ in the sphere of ‘Them’.

We can easily see the dichotomous polarisation strategy of civil society's representatives in times of crisis. The polarisation of ‘us’ and others is obvious in the discourse below as the expressions employed denote a sense of collective belonging to a powerless society characterised by a corrupt government, describing a deep dichotomy of the ‘good guys' associated to the poor (Greek citizens) and the "bad ones" associated to the rich (Germany, government).

> *"Crisis and poverty... two synonymous words; if you prefer... interwoven [...] Greece, because it had no heavy industry, all the equipment was made abroad… in Germany, America etc. And I ask these people; these rich people who detain the power of decision… "Didn’t they know?", "Didn’t they know what was*

happening?"... And since they knew and they were aware… why, even now, don't they decide to clear up these things? Why is Greece still forced to take... to purchase from Siemens... since we all know what has been going on with Siemens. I am just giving an example. Why does Siemens still continue to be a supplier to the Greek public sector? Isn't it a little strange?"

(President of Vocational Rehabilitation Center for people with disabilities)

In the same perspective, emerging civil society's organisations have a positive self-perception even if they express the feeling of being the losers of the whole system and that the NGOs are the privileged of the system, and thus the winners.

"After the financial scandal of big NGOs in our country, we, the new organisations of the civil society, have to prove not only what we are but also what we are not. They (i.e. the big NGOs involved in the scandal) do not pursue the same aim with us. They have different objectives... mostly personal ones. We have only one objective: the common good"

(President of 'Agia Paraskeui')

Moreover, the crisis has also created a new intra-European level of fragmentation and exclusion. A rift is developing between the societies of the countries of the North (the winners), which are called upon to provide financial assistance to the countries of the European periphery hit by the crisis and their societies, which react negatively to the policy conditionality that accompanies this assistance.

When I hear 'crisis', the first thing that comes to my mind, is what we gain from such a crisis. Because certainly, there are people, that are gaining. It did not suddenly open, let's say, a big... and the money disappeared from the market. It has gone to specific 'pockets', to northern pockets. Hmm, the problem is definitely not domestic. It is international.., we live in a global environment, and.., global players.., do basically redistribution of wealth.

(Coordinator of Agrotica- Free Products Zone)

4.2 Linguistic strategies emphasising the polarisation rich-poor and the blaming patterns

The linguistic strategies such as the strategic use of metaphors and repetitions or certain pronouns and adjectives, amplify the meaning of the comments' main idea and create a preferred point of view as well. The majority of linguistic strategies point out this frustration, sadness, anger and the economic, cultural, social, societal and moral impoverishment of the Greek population. The President of the Hellenic Association for the Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis answers to the question *"How could you describe the crisis?",*

"It is a Caiadas. A modern Caiadas for people with disabilities. They are the ones who lose everything. It has been mentioned, of course by others… this expression has been said by many others for other populations but unfortunately the reality is that only people with disabilities are thrown to Caiadas. It is absolutely disgusting!''.

Repetition of history (what used to be said at the time of ancient Greeks is now put into practice), correction of others' discourses ("this expression has been said by many others for other populations but unfortunately the reality is...") and judgement ("This is absolutely disgusting!") are the main rhetorical features used in this discourse. These assertive nominalisations, combined with the culture-determined indicator-metaphorisation ("It is a Caiadas. A modern Caiadas"), evoke various emotions like sadness, loneliness and anger.

"The Greek, once he gets hungry, slaughters the chicken; he makes no patience to lay its eggs, in order to subsist on eggs. We are all victims of ourselves and only we, ourselves, can get away from our poverty".

(Chief executive in Art in Progress)

The forces of metaphorisation identified are apparent in these discourses. They stimulate the emotion by employing strong words such as Caiadas and create bewilderment and perplexity by using the strong image of a hungry impatient Greek slaughtering the chicken and thus, they reach directly Greeks and their intimacy invoking the 'harsh reality'.

5. Conclusion: The payoff of the transformation: Losers vs Winners?

In talking about winners and losers, there is no doubt that our argumentation can be dismissed as a 'loser-talk'. It is certain that in times of crisis it is hard to think of winners. But, at least in relative terms, civil society seems to have achieved some things so far. Its role in times of crisis has been analysed and theorised by Greek researchers these last years (Sotiropoulos, 2014). Nationally and internationally, the positive linkage of civil society to local democracy has been a fetish theory for researchers, as well. "Under certain circumstances, economic shocks are possible to create windows of opportunity for significant policy change, by disrupting the self-refentiality of the health care system" (Economou, 2012 :7).

We argue that the civil society's opinion about losers and winners paradoxically reflects a different aspect of the ambitious doctrinal theories and shows a dynamism which is signifies the empowerment of informal organisations. We argue that, ironically, at the moment the losers seem to have met at least one challenge: they have escaped meaningful and necessary regulation as the public sector did in times of crisis, and they have started involuntarily to reorganise the social reality in Greece even at a local level.

Of course, they are as yet not obvious winners because of their embryonic organisation and their lack of conscious power.

New civil society's informal organisations illustrate how, because of crisis, the removal of public safety nets exacerbate existing disparities and causes the disadvantaged to fall even further behind. These disparities among population constitute an inequality of security that engenders winners and losers. The fragmentations of the Greek population reflect a Greek society confused, lacking reciprocity and mutual respect among reasonable citizens (what Rawls calls non-ideal principles).

Could civil society disqualify the myth of the traditional market by offering new alternative solutions for and by the citizens? What is important to seize is that solidarity increases participants' resilience, enabling them to persevere, while it also acts as a countervailing response to the feelings of powerlessness generated by the crisis. Many NGOs referred to the changing role of Germany from the ‘sick man in Europe' to the ‘locomotive of Europe', juxtaposing the situation of the poor from 'new poor in Greece' to 'locomotive of civil society'. Even if the perception describing the civil society actors as more privileged to tackle the big issues of poverty, of inequality, of unemployment and of the environment, is strongly contested nowadays because of the lack of radical changes in social and economic systems after longtime presence of civil society, future research should focus on the role and potentialities of the emerging informal organisations and on the finalisation of their procedures, products and services, as an alternative way to structure a society in crisis.

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