

Greek Elections 2012: A Political Crisis as an Anti-Marketing Tool for Traditional Parties

Dr. Nasios Orinos

European University Cyprus
Kastorias 6A, Lykavitos, 1055, Nicosia, Cyprus

Abstract

This article strives to answer the question how a political crisis can be an anti-marketing tool for traditional parties. It presents a road map of the 2012 Greek Parliamentary Elections. It begins with a discussion of the context within which the elections have taken part, explaining how the memorandum and the bailout agreement imposed have impacted the country. It reviews the Greek election law and discusses the campaign strategies and tactics that have been used historically. But foremost the article tries to bridge between the two elections, 6th of May 2012 and 17th of June 2012, presenting the strategies used in those, while discussing and analyzing the campaigns used by the two major parties now in Greece, New Democracy and SYRIZA. It concludes by presenting the results of the two elections noting the huge percentage drop of PASOK and the end of two-party system, synthesizing it with the impact these results will have on the country.

Keywords: Pasok , Syriza, New Democracy, Memorandum

1. Introduction

Newman (1999) highlighted that marketing strategy lies at the heart of electoral success because it induces a campaign to put together, in a relatively short period of time, a forceful organization that mobilizes support and generates a winning coalition of disparate and sometimes conflicting groups. Garecht (2010) has posed a question. Why on earth would we want to get involved in politics? As he noted, the political lifestyle seems enjoyable. We get to go to parties, get great seats at events, everyone knows our name, so what's not to love? On the other hand, the political life is a difficult life, far more difficult that we would imagine. Political candidates are sliced and diced every way possible by the media, whereas the lifestyle is a busy one. There are events and rallies to attend, voters to talk with, supporters to call, money to be raised, interviews to do, and letters to write. So Garecht wondered whether we should be in politics or not? As he noted, the answer is yes. Because we know that the great questions of our day are decided in the political sphere, and we want to have an impact, be heard, and make a difference!

Mitropoulos (2012), explains that after the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in the United States it was known that the global financial system would face severe losses. But Fargnoli (2012) goes a step further and notes that in the last 20 years Greece can be regarded as a striking example of the crisis of representative democracy. The two main parties, as he notes, which have been alternating at ruling the country have built a system based on clientele, vote-buying and tax fraud. This uncompetitive model has led to mounting public debt, huge and inefficient public sector.

The first memorandum was introduced in spring 2010. Along with its trimester monitoring came four major amendments, only to result in the creation of a second memorandum in early 2012. In a statement made by the Eurogroup on May 2nd 2010, the Eurogroup Ministers concurred with the Commission and the European Central Bank, that market access for Greece was not sufficient and that providing a loan was warranted to safeguard financial stability in the euro area as a whole. As the statement specifies, following a request by the Greek authorities, euro area Ministers unanimously agreed at the time to activate stability support to Greece via bilateral loans centrally pooled by the European Commission. According to the same statement, in the context of a three year joint programme with the International Monetary Fund, the financial package made available € 110 billion to help Greece meet its financing needs, with euro area. Member States were ready to contribute for their part € 80 billion, of which up to € 30 billion in the first year.

The first disbursements were made available before the payment obligations of the Greek government fell due on May 19th 2010. The 2010 statement stressed that Euro area financial support was provided under conditions, on the basis of a programme which has been negotiated with the Greek authorities by the Commission and the International Monetary Fund, in liaison with the European Central Bank. The programme was approved by the Greek Council of Ministers on May 2nd 2010 and was endorsed by the Eurogroup on the basis of a Commission and European Central Bank assessment. The agreement that acted as a bailout programme was named “Memorandum” and had severe consequences on Greece’s political system.

Mitropoulos (2012), notes that in Greece, the voting of the 1st memorandum in 2009 as known had severe consequences on people’s pensions. According to the memorandum pension costs should be kept below 2.5% of gross domestic programme from 2009 – 2060 which means sever pension cuts. The voting of the 2nd memorandum in the beginning of 2012 aimed to put in practice a new, longer and harsher program that would deep the country into recession. According to Mitropoulos (2012), even though the new government insisted that no harsher measures would be forced, it withheld from people the truth, that Papademos’s government was imposed to the Greek people from Europe so that the new memorandum could be imposed easier. Fargnoli (2012), states that the impact on gross domestic product growth of the fiscal adjustment resulted to be much higher compared to the estimates of the bailout programme. Gross domestic product growth estimates were revised several times from -2.8% for 2011 and +1.1% for 2012 to -6.9% in 2011 and roughly -5% in 2012. Against this backdrop it is clear that the targets of the programme are impossible to achieve and should be relaxed. According to Fargnoli, negative revisions in gross domestic product growth, while keeping the deficit targets unchanged, imply additional cuts equal to 8.2% of gross domestic product over the whole period. To achieve the 2014 deficit target Greece should commit to further 5.5% adjustment with respect to the first version of the Plan. This is why the programme is now considered socially unacceptable by the majority of Greek population and will have few possibilities to succeed.

Kotsonopoulos (2012) explains that a careful inspection fully supports the essence of Memorandum as a neoliberal response to the crisis, applied in Greece by token of a test case. Austerity measures introduced by its clauses precipitate its subsequent application to all European countries, irrespective of their exposure width to the current crisis. Kotsonopoulos explains that three mechanisms are deployed to consolidate capital. The first is taxation. Corporate tax has been reduced the last five years from 40% to 20% and now is scheduled to be reduced further to 15%. The burden shifts to indirect taxation. VAT, as he says, was increased in 2011 from 21% to 23% while the taxation on basic-need goods rose from 10% to 13%. At the same time high incomes are to a large extent rest intact. The second is the deregulation of the labour market. Collective agreements have been abolished; lay-off regulations are now lifted, while the wages in the private sector have been scaled down by 32%. The same holds for public sector employees who in some cases suffered up to 60% cuts. The third mechanism is privatizations, which open wide the field for the valorisation of capital. A massive programme of privatizations is scheduled amounting to 56 billion Euros. Along with this comes a deregulation of the social insurance system and the dismantlement of public health and education. A clear indication, as Kotsonopoulos notes, that the set of policies described above is an utter failure and that the memorandum is nothing more than a dead letter. According to Kotsonopoulos, the memorandum was introduced on the grounds that will bring the economy back on track by 2012, while from 2013 onwards an annual rise in gross domestic product was to take place at the rate of 3.5-4%. Two years after the painstaking implementation of the austerity measures the result was: a decline of the gross domestic product approximating 20%, a rise in unemployment from 11.1% in 2010 to 21.7% in 2012, private consumption fallen by 15% and total investment ratio by 32% and last but not least public debt rose from 115% in 2009 to 165% in 2012. Numbers are clear and the voice indicates that the memorandum is certainly not the road to salvation.

Even though both agreements were approved by the Council of Ministers, approval was not unanimous. At the time the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, governed the country with George Papandreou being Greece’s prime-minister. Even though the majority of the council members voted for the memorandums, there were many council members who strongly opposed to it. The two major parties, PASOK and New Democracy, joined forces and “passed” the agreements in the council, but those members who opposed and did not vote for it were expelled from their parties. The country was divided to the “*For the Memorandums*” and “*Against the Memorandums*”.

The “Fors” believed the agreements were a must to save the country and help it recover and the “Againsts” believed that the measures imposed to the Greek people were too harsh and would lead the country into a deeper recession instead of helping it recover. Kotzias (2012), notes that this injustice led to a social reaction from May 2010 until today. The whole world had seen citizens demonstrating outside the Parliament for days, fighting with the police, engaging into vandalism and transforming Greece into a battlefield. The political and social crisis was yet to come. Kotzias (2012), goes further and argues that Greece’s problem was its inability to negotiate. From the government’s side, there has been a sense of defeatism, inexperience and ignorance and politicians in charge at the time were convinced that those who were forcing the country to tide its financials were indeed right. Therefore, the government was not in a position to negotiate effectively. Kotzias (2012) insists that those in charge surrendered psychologically and went to negotiate without actually having a counter offer in their suitcase regarding Greece’s financials. The government did not explain to Troika that there were limits beyond which Greece could not retreat. For example, during the 1st memorandum Troika suggested a four year program whereas the government transformed this into a three year program, something that proves that the government was indeed not prepared to negotiate.

2. Political Parties in Greece

2.1 Major parties

The restoring of democracy in 1974 and the collapsing of colonels’ Jounta signaled a new era of the modern Greek history called the political *changeover*. This new era resulted in a change in the governmental system from a dictatorship to the parliamentary democracy. Linardatos (2000), notes that the first days after the collapsing of Jounta were days of joy and relief but at the same time days of suspense due to the unknown future of the country. In this new era Greece was composed by five major parties, with two of those constituting the so-called two poles, the left and right. As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia explains that the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, was established on September 3, 1974 following the restoration of Greek democracy after the collapse of the military dictatorship of 1967–1974. Its founder was Andreas Papandreou, son of the late Greek liberal leader and three times Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou. Andreas Papandreou was offered the leadership of the liberal political forces immediately after the restoration of democracy, but in a risky move he declined, so the leadership was assumed by Georgios Mavros. Papandreou also explicitly rejected the ideological heritage of his father, and stressed the fact that he was a socialist, not a liberal. Papandreou was a very powerful orator and charismatic leader. Wikipedia explains further that at the November 1974 elections PASOK received only 13.5% of the vote and won 15 seats (out of 300), coming third behind the center-right New Democracy party of Konstantinos Karamanlis and the centrist Center Union - New Forces of Georgios Mavros.

However, at the November 1977 elections according to Linardatos (2000), PASOK eclipsed the centrists, kept the communist party down, doubled its share of the vote and won 92 seats, becoming the main opposition party. Linardatos notes that 1978 was a year of political rearrangements with votes concentrating on the two poles, PASOK and New Democracy with the Communist party advancing to a third political power. At the same time center parties were starting to eclipse. A higher concentration in the two poles was noticed in 1979. It had been the beginning of the so called two-party system. The political coiling to the two poles and the fragmentation of the center, with an advancing communist party was the main characteristic of the Greek political life of the 1981 elections. According to Linardatos (2000), after four bad financial years since 1977, in the 1981 elections New Democracy had lost an important percentage. According to Wikipedia July 3, 2012, PASOK won the Greek Parliamentary Elections in 1981 with 48% of the vote capturing 173 seats forming the 1st autonomous socialist government in the history of Greece since 1924 with prime-minister Andreas Papandreou.

In June 1985 PASOK won the elections again forming a second autonomous socialist government serving until 1989. Due to its founder’s health problems and severe scandals torturing the country, PASOK lost the elections to New Democracy. Linardatos (2000), states that the 1989 elections brought New Democracy in the 1st place but with no majority, with PASOK showing a significant drop. In October 1993 PASOK restored its power and with Andreas Papandreou forming a new government, succeeding to govern the country also in 1996–2004 with Costas Simitis. On March 2004 and on September 2007 PASOK lost the elections to New Democracy. In February 2004 George Papandreou, the son of the party’s founder was elected as the party’s leader and renewed his leadership after the 2007 elections.

In 2009 PASOK won the elections with George Papandreou becoming the country's prime-minister where he served until 2012. Just before the 2012 elections George Papandreou was resigned passing on the party's leadership to Evangelos Venizelos.

As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia notes that New Democracy, ND, is the main centre-right political party and one of the two major parties in Greece. It was founded in 1974 by Konstantinos Karamanlis and formed the first cabinet of the Third Hellenic Republic. After serving as the Cabinet of Greece from 2004 to 2009 and its smashing defeat in the 2009 Greek elections, in which it recorded its historical lowest percentage of votes, New Democracy under its current president Antonis Samaras received more votes than any other individual party in the 2012 Greek elections of May, but it did not manage to form a majority government. According to Wikipedia July 3, 2012, New Democracy was founded on 4 October 1974. Konstantinos Karamanlis was sworn in as the first Prime Minister in two months of the post-dictatorship era. As of July 4, 2012, in the Founding Declaration on New Democracy's website, Konstantinos Karamanlis notes that what has happened at the time, that is the transformation in those two months from dictatorship to freedom had been a political miracle. Karamanlis had already served as Prime Minister from 1955 to 1963. In the first free elections of the new era, New Democracy won.

This result is attributed mostly to the personal appeal of Karamanlis, rather than the influence of New Democracy as a party, to the electorate. Karamanlis claimed that he intended New Democracy to be a more modern and progressive right-wing party than those that ruled Greece before the 1967 military coup, including his own National Radical Union. The party's ideology was defined as "radical liberalism," a term defined by New Democracy as "the prevalence of free market rules with the decisive intervention of the state in favour of social justice." In 1977, according to Wikipedia July 3, 2012, New Democracy again won national elections, albeit with a largely reduced majority (41.88%). Still, it retained a comfortable parliamentary majority. Under Karamanlis Greece redefined its relations with NATO, and tried to resolve the Cyprus issue following the Turkish invasion. In 1980, however, Karamanlis retired. His successor, George Rallis, was defeated at the following elections by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement led by Andreas Papandreou. Under New Democracy leadership Greece joined the European Communities in 1981. Karamanlis was criticized by opposing parties, which were against the prospect of entering the European Communities, for not holding a referendum, even though entry into the European Communities was prominent in the political platform under which New Democracy had been elected to power. New Democracy returned to power in a coalition government, with prime minister Tzannis Tzannetakis, with the traditional Left Party in 1989 and subsequently participated in the grand coalition government of Xenophon Zolotas from November 1989 to April 1990.

Linardatos (2000), notes that in the April of 1990 elections New Democracy formed a majority government under Constantinos Mitsotakis earning 46.89% of the vote. From there on the party suffered a period of successive losses. In 1992 a series of successive incidents caused a harsh opposition against Mitsotakis's government. The explosion at the refinery of Elefsina caused the death of 7 people, with New Democracy being blamed for a lack of foresight and control. As Wikipedia July 3, 2012 further explains, New Democracy was defeated in 1993 under Mitsotakis, in 1996 under Miltiadis Evert, and in 2000 under Kostas Karamanlis, nephew of the party's founder. In 2000 New Democracy lost by 1.06% of the popular vote, the smallest margin in modern Greek history. By 2003, however, New Democracy was consistently leading the PASOK government of Costas Simitis in opinion polls. In January 2004 Simitis resigned and announced elections for March 7, at which Karamanlis faced the new PASOK leader, George Papandreou. Despite speculation that Papandreou would succeed in restoring PASOK's fortunes, Karamanlis had a victory in the elections and became Greece's first center-right Prime Minister after eleven years.

On July 3, 2012, Wikipedia notes that The "Communist Party of Greece", KKE, was founded in 1918 as the Socialist Labour Party of Greece being the longest lived party in Greece. There are scholars who describe it as far left, although the Party rejects this label, and says that the characterization of extreme or far-left is a propaganda who terrorizes the people and works for the stabilization of the capitalist political system. As of July 4, 2012 KKE lists on its website that it was founded as working class consciousness trying to grow the revolutionary theory of Marxism and Leninism. Aleka Pappariga is the party's leader. Wikipedia July 3, 2012 explains that from 1918, with only short periods of legal operation, was until September 1974 banned and forced to work under conditions of clandestinely.

Expressing the historical tasks of working class and other strata of working people, KKE has set the revolutionary transformation of Greek society through the elimination of capitalism and the building of socialism and communism as its ultimate goal. The party was succeeding its participation in the parliament since 1974 and up until today with its percentage ranging between 5-13 ever since. Besides 1989, the communist party had always been in the opposition.

As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia notes that “Popular Orthodox Rally”, LAOS, is a Greek right-wing populist political party. It was founded and is led by journalist Georgios Karatzaferis. Karatzaferis formed LAOS in 2000, a few months after he was expelled from the centre-right New Democracy. As of July 4, 2012 on its website LAOS states that it was founded due to the two major parties’ lack of vision as well as their tendency to drag with their concessiveness the country into dangerous adventures. Wikipedia, July 3, 2012 notes that the party got 2.2% of the vote and failed to reach the 3% threshold of the popular vote in the 2004 elections, three months later it gained 4.12% of the vote and one seat in the 2004 European Parliamentary Elections. LAOS received 3.8% of the vote in the 2007 elections, electing 10 members of parliament. In 2009 LAOS managed to elect two representatives in the European Parliament, receiving 7.14% of the vote. After receiving 5.63% of the vote and electing 15 members of parliament in the 2009 elections, LAOS dropped below the 3% in 2012 and failed to secure any seats in the parliament.

As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia refers to the Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA, as a left-wing political party in Greece, originally founded as a coalition of left-wing and radical left political parties. The coalition comprises a broad array of groups (thirteen in total) and independent politicians, including democratic socialists and green left groups, as well as Maoist, Trotskyist, and eurocommunist organisations. Its parliamentary leader is Alexis Tsipras, president of Synaspismós, the largest party in the coalition. Although SYRIZA was formally launched before the legislative election of 2004, the roots of the process that led to its formation can be traced back to the Space for Dialogue for the Unity and Common Action of the Left in 2001. Wikipedia, July 3, 2012 explains that the "Space" was composed of various organizations of the Greek Left that, despite different ideological and historical backgrounds, had shared common political action in several important issues that had arisen in Greece at the end of the 1990s, such as the Kosovo War, privatizations, or social and civil rights. Even though the "Space" was not a political organization, but rather an effort to bring together the parties and organizations that attended, it gave birth to some electoral alliances for the local election of 2002 the most successful being the one led by Manolis Glezos for the super-prefecture of Athens-Piraeus. Wikipedia, July 3, 2012 notes that it was in January 2004 when SYRIZA was first formed as an official coalition and took part in the 2004 elections. At the time it won 3.3% of the vote and elected 6 parliamentary members. In the 2007 elections SYRIZA increased its power earning 5.04% of the vote and in 2009 to 4.6% of the vote. In the 2012 elections the party had one of the most strongly anti-memorandum position, which seemed to had worked in its favor. As of July 4, 2012, on its website SYRIZA states clearly that with the support of Greek people it was bounded to cancel the memorandum and the bailout agreement. In simple words, the party offered to the people what they wanted and recorded a historical increase earning 17% of the vote during the first part of the elections and 27% at the second. Alexis Tsipras became Europe’s most famous leader.

Golden Dawn, Chrysi Avgi, is led by Nikolaos Michaloliakos and has grown from a small, fringe group to a widely reported Greek political party with nationwide support. As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia states that Scholars and media describe it as neo-nazi and fascist although the group rejects these labels. Michaloliakos began the foundations of what would become Golden Dawn in 1980. It first received widespread attention in 1991, and in 1993 was registered as a political party. It temporarily ceased political operations in 2005, and was absorbed by the Patriotic Alliance. The Alliance in turn ceased operations after Michaloliakos withdrew support. In March 2007, Golden Dawn held its sixth congress, where Party officials announced the resumption of their political activism. As of July 4, 2012 on its website the party states that should the country wishes to exit the financial crisis must, among others, cancel the memorandum, go through a financial control of the public deficit and the bailout agreements since 1974 and refuse to repay the illegal, as it calls it, bailout agreement. According to Wikipedia July, 3, 2012, at local elections on November 7, 2010 Golden Dawn got 5.3% of the vote in the municipality of Athens, winning a seat at the City Council. In some neighbourhoods with big immigrant communities it even reached 20%. The party ran a campaign during the Greek national elections of 2012 based on concerns for unemployment, austerity and the economy, which gained a large increase in support from the general public. The party ran on a harsh anti-immigration campaign.

It achieved 7% of the popular vote, enough to enter the Hellenic Parliament for the first time. The 7% of the vote that Golden Dawn won on the national elections of May 2012 gave the party 21 seats in the Greek Parliament following a second election in June, this was reduced slightly to 18 seats.

As of July 3, 2012, Wikipedia states that the Ecologist Greens, OP, has existed since 2002, yet the ecologist movement in Greece dates many years and was characterized by a reluctance to actively become involved in the political scene. They are a member of the European Green party.

Table 1 below, depicts the results of the main parties in the 2007 and 2009 Greek elections.

Table 1		
	2009	2007
	%	%
PASOK	43.92	38.1
New Democracy	33.48	41.83
SYRIZA	4.6	5.04
KKE	7.54	8.15
LAOS	5.63	3.8

2.2 New parties

Five of the above parties constituted the parliament's main parties the last years, up until the signing of the memorandum and the bailout agreement in 2010 by the Greek government. The agreement had as a consequence the rising of new parties and political formations.

As of April 23, 2012 Wikipedia notes that Democratic Alliance, DEAL, was a center - liberal party founded in November 2010 by Ntora Bakogianni, an ex-foreign minister and member of the parliament and other three parliamentary members who were all expelled from New Democracy. Ntora Bakogianni and the other three parliamentary members were expelled from New Democracy due to their denial to vote for the memorandum. In 2012 just after May 6th elections, Democratic Alliance was dissolved and joined forces with New Democracy.

According to Wikipedia, July 3, 2012, Democratic Left, DIMAR, was founded on 27 June 2010 when the Renewal Wing platform of the left-wing party Synaspismos, among them Fotis Kouvelis, Thanasis Leventis, Nikos Tsoukalis, and Grigoris Psarianos. They were joined by more than 550 individuals. At a subsequent national conference of the Renewal Wing, 170 members were elected to national policy committee of the new party. As of July 4, 2012 on its founding declaration on its website, the party states that a basic founding pillar is the common fight against fascism and the promotion of democracy and the social rights of the working people.

According to Wikipedia, the first conference of the Democratic Left was held on 31 March - 3 April 2011, electing Fotis Kouvelis as its leader with 97.31% of the vote. On 22 March 2012, six members of the parliament from the Panhellenic Socialist Movement joined the party, which raised the total number of Democratic Left members of the parliament to 10, the party was eligible to form a parliamentary group. The minor party Free Citizens also joined the Democratic Left on 22 March 2012. Wikipedia July 3, 2012 notes that in the May 2012 elections the Party got 386,116 votes (6.11%) and 19 deputies in the Greek Parliament, making it the 7th biggest party in Greece. In the June 2012 elections, the Democratic Left won 17 seats, making it the 6th largest party by seat count.

As of April 23, 2012 Wikipedia notes that Panhellenic Citizens Chariot was formed by two parliamentary members of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, Giannis Dimaras and Vasilis Oikonomou. On October 20, 2011 Vasilis Oikonomou decided to form his own movement under the name "Free Citizens". On 17 April 2012, an election cooperation agreement with the conservative anti-austerity party Independent Greeks was reached.

Independent Greeks, ANEL, was created by Panos Kammenos, a former member of the parliament for the conservative New Democracy party on 24 February 2012. As of July 3, 2012 Wikipedia notes that Kammenos had been expelled from the New Democracy parliamentary group after voting against Lucas Papademos's coalition government in a vote of confidence. The founding declaration was presented on March 11. As of July 4, 2012 the party's founding declaration states that it demands the cancellation of the memorandum.

The party has been joined by 10 former New Democracy deputies, namely Elena Kountouras, Christos Zois, Kostas Markopoulos, Dimitris Stamatis, Spyros Galinos, Mika Iatridou, Maria Kollia-Tsarouha, Panagiotis Melas and Mihalis Giannakis.

All new parties and formations had one thing in common. They have all denied to accept the bailout agreement and the memorandum that was imposed in the country in 2010 with their leaders being expelled from their parties but still kept their seats as independent parliamentary members. As a result they formed new parties. Their main position was the abolition of the memorandum, a position that they all kept and fought for in the 2012 elections. Indicative is the fact not only the creation of new formations, but also cooperation in view of these elections. For example the Panhellenic Citizens Chariot party of Giannis Dimaras and Independent Greeks party of Panos Kamenos announced their cooperation in April 2012, just before the elections. The new formation ended up with 20 seats in the parliament. In addition, the Democratic Left party of Fotis Kouvelis and the Free citizens party of Vasilis Economou also joined forces grabbing 17 seats in the parliament.

3. Election Law

The current Greek system belongs to the enhanced analog, combining elements of proportional and majority system. According to the electoral system to enter the House a combination or a single candidate must reach the 3% threshold of the popular vote. The objective is to avoid inclusion in the parliament of very small parties. The 250 out of 300 seats are distributed on a proportional representation, while the remaining 50 seats are allocated to the first combination irrespective of the proportion and the difference from the second. This element is part of the majority system and aims to strengthen the major parties and to allow the creation of a stable parliamentary majority, what we call majority or autonomous government. Merlopoulos and Notaras (2002) note that the number of parliamentary members that each district elects is based on its proportion on the population so that proportionality is maintained.

Note that in the 2009 elections PASOK came first earning 43.92% of the vote, the New Democracy earned 33.48% of the vote, KKE 7.54%, LAOS 5.63%, and SYRIZA 4.6%. Before parliamentary members were expelled due to the memorandum and before the creation of other formations, the political parties were represented in parliament by the parliamentary seats below:

Table 2		
2009		
	%	seats
PASOK	43.92	160
New Democracy	33.48	91
SYRIZA	4.6	13
KKE	7.54	21
LAOS	5.63	15

4. May 6th elections

On his May 6, 2012 article in *Simerini*, Orinos noted that the latest polls, indicated that the elections in Greece would slap on the two major parties, New Democracy and PASOK. This would lead to diversification of the political scene. What seemed to prevail was the punitive vote of anger and indignation of the citizens due to the memorandum. A new anti-memorandum bloc had been set, characterized by the new formations created as a result of deletions of members of New Democracy and PASOK. This had been the main feature of 6th of May elections, namely the fact that entrance to parliament claimed several parties which clearly resulted in a completely new political landscape. For the first time 8-10 parties claimed entrance in the parliament. Based on polls the percentage of both major parties had shrunk to about 40%, down from 77% in 2009, whereas the same time polls indicated an increase in the rates of new formations. As a result of the newly created formations many voters have moved to parties like SYRIZA, the Communist Party, Democratic Left, Independent Greeks and Golden Dawn.

The possible entry of several parties in the parliament would prevent a majority government, whereas the cooperation of New Democracy and PASOK to form a government due to their common position on the memorandum was more than visible.

4.1 Strategies before

On his May 6, 2012 article in *Simerini*, Orinos further explains that if someone went back to the so called campaigns, that is what we call communication with the public, the strategies and commercials on elections in Greece had always been interesting. Going back even in the 80s and 90s one would then see that emphasis was on unemployment with slogans that focused on productivity and growth, slogans which were in focus and in later years. Typical example was the 2004 television advertisement depicting a young scientist sitting on a motorcycle delivering food. Interestingly, there was a television advertisement that aired in 2009 in terms of PASOK, which depicted a cross-road in which one side led to a difficult and the other on an easy road. Using the slogan "*Let's go with Papandreou*" someone chose the hard but safe way, wanting to urge voters to trust PASOK in the difficult days that were to come.

4.2 Strategies 2012

Newman (1999) explains in his Handbook of Political Marketing that political marketing shares much in common with marketing in the business world. In business marketing, sellers dispatch goods, services, and communications, like advertising, to the market and in return money and customer loyalty are received. In campaigns, candidates dispatch promises, favors, and personalities to a set of votes in exchange for their votes. On May 6th 2012 elections, promises had been in apogee. On his May 6, 2012 article in *Phileleftheros*, Orinos noted that the election was conducted without «debates» because there was disagreement as to whether and how these would be held. The election was based mainly on panel discussions and party gatherings. Moreover, parties communicated with voters through television. Knowing that his party was in danger of serious losses, Evangelos Venizelos, opened a dialogue with citizens. On television advertising and having to restore trust with the voters of PASOK, he assumed responsibilities by clearly apologizing. Moreover, especially in the last week has tried to contact 2009 voters to persuade them to return. At the same time he made an effort to reverse the punitive mood of voters towards his party. New Democracy and Antonis Samaras also opened a dialogue with citizens but not to apologize. He first appeared on television commercials and addressed citizens highlighting the dilemmas that were before them, asking them to choose the development, justice and security noting that "Greece could make it." In the last week and while opinion polls indicated that a majority government was not feasible he maneuvered asking people to vote for New Democracy so that he could create a majority government and be able to renegotiate the memorandum. Quite the opposite had been the strategy of the Communist Party, which during the election had aimed to remind the average citizen he/she was experiencing problems. With this it wanted to prevent the vote to go to the two major parties. In the commercials it used words like "extortion" and "chaos" leaving the impression that people should not be blackmailed by the two major parties.

A reference point in these elections had been the increase in the percentage of Golden Dawn which the polls had been shown remarkable results. The probability of its penetration in the parliament had enough troubled all parties that were extremely critical and had made an effort to link Golden Dawn with Nazism and to deter voters to vote for it.

4.3 Results and next day

As Alkman Granitsas, Stelios Bouras and Matina Stevis noted in a Wall Street Journal article on May 7, 2012, Greek voters on Sunday delivered a stinging rejection of the country's two incumbent parties, PASOK and the conservative New Democracy, and the austerity program they support, raising the specter of political instability that could ultimately challenge the country's future in the euro zone. More than 60% of the popular vote went to smaller left and right-wing parties that have campaigned against the austerity program Greece must implement in exchange for continued financing from its European partners and the International Monetary Fund. With the political landscape dramatically altered, difficult talks for a multiparty coalition were set to follow the election of Greece's most fragmented Parliament since the restoration of democracy and the fall of the military junta in 1974. Alkman Granitsas, Stelios Bouras and Matina Stevis noted that the two parties garnered just under 33% of the vote between them, a sharp drop from the combined 77% they won in the previous election less than three years ago.

At least seven parties, most of which reject austerity policies, were poised to clear the 3% threshold needed to enter Parliament, meaning the next Greek government will have difficulty implementing the reform program demanded by the country's European and international creditors in exchange for funding a continued bailout for Greece. According to Alkman Granitsas, Stelios Bouras and Matina Stevis, in a surprise result, the Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA, which seeks to terminate the austerity program, saw its share of the vote more than triple from the 2009 elections, to 16.4% of the vote and 51 seats, making it the second-largest party in Parliament. PASOK took the brunt of voter anger, slipping to third place, with 13.5% of the vote and 41 seats, its worst showing in more than 30 years. The far-right, anti-immigrant Golden Dawn party, with an estimated 6.9% of the vote, or 21 seats, will enter Parliament for the first time. Alkman Granitsas, Stelios Bouras and Matina Stevis projected that if final results confirm initial projections, a bipartisan coalition of New Democracy and Pasok was unlikely to deliver a viable government, capable of passing fresh reforms demanded by international creditors.

On a May 13, 2012, a week after the first round of the elections, in his article in Simerini, Orinos noted that the results of the elections in Greece corroborated the election forecasts. The main feature of the elections had been the use of punitive voting toward parties that supported the memorandum, something that had led the political landscape in Greece into a complete reversal. New Democracy had been the 1st party, but the huge drop in the percentage of the 'former' major parties marked the abandonment of the two-party system and had been a slap for New Democracy and PASOK. Since 1974 until the 2009 elections the two "former" major parties aggregated between 75% -85%, with the exception of 1977 where together earned a 67%. Indeed, the first party in percentage had always exceeded 40%.

In the elections of 6 of May 2012 New Democracy and PASOK summed only 32%. Exit polls had shown that PASOK had a coiling of only 35% with leaks towards SYRIZA and Independent Greeks of 19% and 8% respectively. Overall, PASOK had recorded a 31% drop compared to the 2009 elections, which corresponded to 2,189,489 fewer votes. New Democracy had a coiling of 50% with leaks to the Independent Greeks being around 15%. The decrease of New Democracy and PASOK had led to an increased anti-memorandum feeling with SYRIZA and the Independent Greeks recording a very high percentage and considered the winners of the elections. These two parties had the strongest anti-memorandum position, which seemed to had worked in their favor. The composition of the new parliament was now 7-partisan, but what sensed the most had been the entrance of the Golden Dawn in the parliament with a respectable record. On the contrary, LAOS and Democratic Alliance of Ntora Bakogianni had not entered the parliament. Interesting was the fact that 19% of the vote had remained out of parliament as the election law requires a 3% threshold of the popular vote to enter parliament. Based on the above, Greece seemed to had entered a new era with the political scene to be fully differentiated.

The table below depicts the parties' percentages and their seats in the parliament.

Table 3	6th of May 2012	
	%	seats
New Democracy	19	108
SYRIZA	17	52
PASOK	13	41
KKE	8.5	26
Independent Greeks	10.5	33
Golden Dawn	7	21
Democratic left	6	19

Orinos stated on his May 13, 2012, article in Simerini, that overall turnout was recorded at 65% slightly above that of 2009 where it was recorded at 70%. The collapse of the two-party system was considered historic, but not the collapse of the financial crisis. As Andreas Pimpisis noted in a Phileleftheros article on May 7, 2010, the collapse of the two-party system was historic, but the results would not solve Greece's problems. The winner of the elections, SYRIZA's Alexis Tsipras had all along noting that he intended to cancel the memorandum, therefore creating huge uncertainty. A new government should have been appointed and had to pass legislation and give a host of new measures by June 2012 by the uncertainty in the spotlight. Nevertheless, with lenders been on waiting-call, voices against the Memorandum were required to answer the following questions. Was a memorandum renegotiation possible? Could the anti-memorandum parties provide the solution?

5. June 17th elections

The failure of government formation had led to a host of developments in the following weeks, culminating a battle between New Democracy and SYRIZA. Orinos stated on a June 17, 2012, article in Simerini that the battle between the two had been a fight of self-reliance. In case that a majority government would not be possible there should be collaboration. The probability of being first led Antonis Samaras to appeal to all center-right forces within and outside Parliament, to create a European center-front, as it was called. On 21/5/2012 Dora Bakoyanni announced the cooperation with the New Democracy. The front was enlarged with the entrance in New Democracy of Thanos Plevris and George Anatolakis, former members of LAOS.

Communication dilemmas

The two parties had presented their own dilemmas to influence voters. According to the same article by Orinos on June 17, 2012, SYRIZA kept investing in the termination of the memorandum with a lighter flavour this time. It highlighted a two year moratorium to restore growth in the country and then renegotiation of the memorandum's provisions so that it became more affordable. Alexis Tsipras posed the dilemma "*SYRIZA or the memorandum*" which basically urged that the only solution to all those who opposed to the memorandum was SYRIZA. On the other hand, New Democracy and Antonis Samaras communicated the continuation of the memorandum, but renegotiation to change the terms. Most importantly he highlighted stay in the euro and he used a "terror" strategy based on which he terrified the country that should it voted for Alexis Tsipras and SYRIZA, the country could exit the euro and face bankruptcy.

5.1. Results and next day

Orinos noted in an article published in Simerini, on June 24, 2012, that the main criterion of the 17th of June elections held in Greece had been a vote to form a government and not so much to punish the two ex-major parties. Voters had seen the urgency of forming a government and to allow the country to remain in the euro. On this basis, the predominant result of elections had been clearly the victory of New Democracy with higher percentage and more seats and the opportunity provided to form a stable government. Beyond that, there was the sinking of PASOK and composition of a 7-party parliament with the inclusion of the Golden Dawn which had been harshly criticized before the elections, but was even close to the 4th place in the evening of the election.

As of June 18, 2012, Skai.gr listed the 17th of June results on its website as follows:

Table 4	17th of june 2012	
	%	seats
New Democracy	29.7	129
SYRIZA	26.9	71
PASOK	12.3	33
KKE	4.5	12
Independent Greeks	7.5	20
Golden Dawn	6.9	18
Democratic left	6.25	17

Coiling

According to Orinos's article on June 24, 2012, in light of the exit poll, the coiling of New Democracy was recorded at 92%, while that of SYRIZA at 84%. It should be noted that besides the above, an important aspect of these elections, in contrast to the 6th May elections, was the moving of voters from smaller parties, mainly by the KKE, PASOK, DIMAR and Independents Greeks, towards New Democracy and SYRIZA. New Democracy recorded significant inflows of around 47% from Independent Greeks, whereas SYRIZA noted inflows of 26% and 25% respectively from KKE and DIMAR. In addition, New Democracy and SYRIZA helped increase their percentage by the vote which had remained out of parliament on May 6th. As stated earlier, on May 6th about 19% of the vote had stayed out of parliament whereas on June 17, it was dropped to 6%. In a question based on which voters were asked to note with which criterion they had moved to the two major parties, 7 in 10 said they had moved to them to help form a majority government or to give them the opportunity to enter into partnerships and form a stable government.

Coiling for all other parties was recorded as follows: PASOK = 73%, Independent Greeks = 51%, KKE = 66%, Golden Dawn = 66%, DIMAR= 56%. In another question, voters who decided on their vote in the last 15 days were asked what they had voted for. 6 in 10 noted to had voted either for New Democracy or SYRIZA. This reinforces the tendency of voters to move to the party which they believe will win the elections.

6. Conclusion

The voices heard stating that Greece had voted “for” the memorandum were probably wrong. The two “For” the memorandum parties, New Democracy and PASOK, did not even accumulate 50%, however provided the electoral law and the bonus of 50 seats New Democracy, PASOK and DIMAR formed a government and brought stability to the country.

Given the declaration of Alexis Tsipras to remain in the opposition, voices against the memorandum would probably not abate. The strong opposition with all other parties aggregating more than 50% and forming a very loud voice would probably not allow Greece to settle. The end of the two party system in Greece as everyone knew it was now to an end. New parties had evolved and the government formation had been radically altered. The lesson of the 2012 elections in Greece was that the economic and political crisis had been an anti-marketing tool for the traditional parties.

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