Collective reactions to the Greek debt crisis and the austerity measures imposed by the Greek government in accordance with the Troika of lenders (European Central Bank, European Commission, IMF) have been widely reported by the media, but the study of contentious events and episodes has only recently started on a systematic basis (Kousis 2012, Kousis-Kanellopoulos 2012). Since the beginning of the debt crisis an impressive series of large protests and over a dozen of general strikes occurred in Greece against austerity policies. In this paper we will focus on the main organizations/groups that called and coordinated 31 large protest events from February 2010 until November 2012. Our sample includes Unions or Confederations, political parties (mostly parties of the left), Anarchist groups, students, justice oriented groups, professional organizations and Indignados, while their repertoires of contention are combinations of demonstrative, confrontational and violent protests, direct-democratic action, threats, symbolic violence or/and destruction of property. Our aim here is to examine how these very different groups managed to work together or, put otherwise, to what extent they did so. Were the differences in the organizational structure of each challenging group an obstacle to inter-organizational alliances? How threat and opportunity shaped alliance building in Greece? Trying to shed light to these questions and drawing on network analysis (Diani 2002) we have gathered data through a survey with a questionnaire and through a series of semi-structured interviews with one representative of each of the main organizations/groups that mounted the campaign. The questionnaire was distributed to the main organizers of each group. In this paper we will present the first findings of this research project.

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Introduction

Since the financial crash of 2008 the world system has entered a phase of severe and multileveled crisis (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009, Rodrik 2011). Unlike the recent capitalist crises of the last two decades this time the epicenter of the crisis was the advanced western democracies (Harvey 2010). Almost all western economies went into recession, the public debts grew and countless jobs were lost. Western governments reacted to the crisis at first by bailing out their financial sectors and then by imposing upon their population austerity measures and structural adjustment programs in order to restart the economy. The latter is especially true for the European countries. The political consequences of these policies soon played out at the electoral stage: incumbents in almost all European countries were punished in the elections (Kriesi 2011). However, these shifts did not occurred by themselves, in between a series of mass anti-austerity protests erupted that destabilized the political alignments across Europe reminding the lasting significance of contentious politics (McAdam and Tarrow 2012).

Greece, a euro zone member, was one of the European countries most severely hit by the financial crisis. Due to its large deficit Greece could not borrow money from the international markets to recapitalize its huge public debt and practically came close to bankruptcy. By that time EU intervened, jointly with the IMF, and offered a rescue package to the Greek government. The EU, the ECB (European Central Bank) and the IMF provided financial aid to Greece and as an exchange the center-left government of PASOK (Greek socialists) signed a “Memorandum” agreeing on the reforms and the austerity measures that had to be imposed upon the economy and the Greek population. Analogous “Memoranda” soon followed for Portugal and Ireland while Spain also receives financial aid by the ECB in exchange for austerity and structural adjustment programs. In Greece, the “Memorandum” received fierce opposition from the beginning (in the spring of 2010). The main trade unions declared consecutive general strikes and the political parties and organizations of the left mobilized in mass protests to overthrow the agreement. At the same time in Parliament, the main
oppositional party, the conservative New Democracy (ND), also opposed the “Memorandum”, mainly for tactical reasons. For the three years period we examine here, austerity policies deepened economic recession; new more severe measures were imposed and mass protests erupted all over Greece (Kousis 2012, Kousis and Kanellopoulos 2013a). The continuous mobilization of a significant part of the Greek population has not managed to stop austerity but it had a clear impact on the reshaping of the Greek political system (Kouvelakis 2011, Kousis and Kanellopoulos 2013b). PASOK and ND who used to obtain jointly over 80% of the popular vote and form self-reliant governments, jointly received around 30% of the votes in the May 2012 elections and 42% in the June 2012 elections while a tiny and marginal neo-nazist group secured over 6% of the votes in both elections and gained parliamentary representation. On the left spectrum impressive changes also occurred: the until then dominant political force of the Greek left, the communist party of Greece (KKE), was overshadowed by the tremendous rise of SYRIZA (Coalition of the radical left) from 4.5% of the votes in 2009 to 16% in May 2012 and 27% in June 2012 (Spourdalakis 2013).

Drawing on the interplay between contention and convention (Tilly 1994, Goldstone 2003), we will analyze in this paper some of the main internal features of the Greek anti-austerity campaign, trying to evaluate the impact of this campaign in Greek politics. For someone attending the global media this protest campaign appears rather vague as is the overall situation in Greece: a suddenly impoverished society with one third of the working force unemployed, a government struggling to keep the country in the euro zone, the lenders (EU, ECB, IMF) asking the government for acceleration of the reforms and for more austerity, the unions opposing these reforms with strikes, hundreds of thousands demonstrate in the streets against austerity where very often violent clashes between some protestors and the police are breaking out. For the Greek commentators the picture of the protest campaign is less ambiguous and can be described across two parameters: a) the growing distrust of Greek workers for the central trade unions GSEE (Confederation of Greek workers) and ADEDY (Central
union of civil servants), and b) the bitter rivalry inside the Greek left between KKE on the one side and SYRIZA and other smaller organizations of the anti-capitalist extra parliamentary left (ANTARSYA). These two parameters, according to many political analysts, did not permit the anti-austerity campaign to achieve its goals.

But is it really so? Based on the network analysis we conducted for the Greek anti-austerity campaign 2010-2012, we discuss here the centrality in the whole campaign of GSEE/ADEDY and the effective alliance strategy of SYRIZA vis a vis the isolationism of KKE that paved the way for SYRIZA rise. We also argue for the varying significance of organizational patterns and of political positioning and ideologies in the building up of alliances in political movements.

**Methodology of research**

The period beginning in spring 2010 is a typical period of “thickened history” (Tilly 1978): the pace of challenging events accelerated when whole populations engaged at a higher level of contention. The high frequency of protests that were synchronized at the national level, the high level of participants, the broad cross-class coalitions that involved a large number of challenging groups and the general public, make us argue for the emergence of a sustained anti-austerity campaign in Greece. To quantify the Greek anti-austerity campaign we draw on a previous protest event analysis of the large protests against the Memorandum from February 2010 until November 2012, conducted by Maria Kousis and Kostas Kanellopoulos (Kousis 2012, 2013, Kousis and Kanellopoulos 2013). Kousis and Kanellopoulos have depicted 31 large protest events (LPEs) where big crowds in synchronized actions across the country made specific anti-austerity collective claims on authorities. Twenty-four out of 31 LPEs occurred during general strikes, demonstration marches, and the Indignados

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1 All the respondents from trade unions core members we interviewed that belong to fractions other than the ruling ones attributed this distrust to «governmental unionism» enforced by the ruling PASOK fractions in Greek trade unionism. During the last decades it was very common the Chairman of GSEE to become MP and latter Minister of Labor in the consecutive PASOK governments.
gatherings in central squares and brought together 40,000 to 500,000 participants. Five LPEs were carried out in national commemoration days that turned into anti-austerity protests and brought together 10,000 to 80,000 participants. Finally 2 LPEs were actually transnational days of action against austerity and brought the fewest participants, around 5,000 each.

Based on the findings of Kousis and Kanellopoulos research we picked up 34 organization/groups to study. These organizations and groups acted as SMOs in the Greek anti-austerity campaign throughout the 2010-2012 period. They were those that more frequently called, coordinated or participated in the LPEs. Two of them are the officially recognized by the Greek state as social partners confederation of unions of GSEE and ADEDY. These confederations called seventeen 24-hour and three 48-hour general strikes. Calling a general strike is, though, a very common feature of industrial relations in Greece (Hamann et al. 2013). GSEE and ADEDY are highly bureaucratized organizations run by groupings that are actually fronts of the main political parties of Greece. Thus, we also included in our sample PASKE, which holds the majority of seats in both GSEE and ADEDY administrations and is connected to
PASOK, DAKE that is connected to ND and AYTOMI PAREMVASI, which is connected to SYRIZA. DAS is the frontal grouping of KKE that is formally participating in the elections for GSEE and ADEDY but it does not taking part to the administration although it controls some seats. KKE has created its own confederation, PAME, which is not officially recognized and many times mobilizes separately from GSEE and ADEDY. However KKE is participating in the administration of second-level workers federations. We included in our study the largest of these federations that were the most active in the campaign (electricity workers, school-teachers, workers in local administration, public hospital workers).

The second vein of groups we examined are the political forces that actively participated in the LPEs: KKE and its youth organization KNE, which traditionally enjoy the highest mobilization capacity, SYRIZA and ANTARSYA, which are in themselves coalition of political parties and some of the largest anarchist groups. All of these collectivities, besides the obvious differences and tensions among them, are very regularly active in Greek street politics (Kanellopoulos 2012). Finally we looked at some newcomers in anti-austerity contentious politics: the associations of merchants, taxi drivers and journalists and some newly founded collectivities like that of REAL DEMOCRACY, which coordinated the Indignados protests in public squares, the Coordination of first-level base unions, which mobilizes independently from GSEE and ADEDY, and the ROSINANTE, which is an anarcho-syndicalist collectivity.

In order to understand how these groups managed to work together, to what extent they did so, and the nature of their coalition, an array of insights from network analysis seems appropriate. Network analysis has long been applied in contentious politics (Curtis and Zurcher 1973, Zald and McCarthy 1987, Knoke 1990, Diani 1995, Melucci 1996). However, most studies focus on recruitment processes (Snow et al. 1980, McAdam 1988, Fernadez and McAdam 1989, McAdam and Paulsen 1993), or on interorganizational dynamics (Rosental et al. 1985, Diani 1995). Others have addressed the community embeddedness that allow for participation in movements (Gould 1991, Ansell 2003). Mario Diani has approached social movements as networks and has proposed a relevant research agenda (Diani 1992, 2003). But
besides the advances offered by an impressive body of studies on network effects (for an overview see Diani and McAdam 2003), there is still little theoretical agreement on the actual role of networks and networking (Passy 2003). Moreover, seen from a strategic action field perspective, network analysis is very helpful to map a field but is “… mute on the dynamics that shape fields” (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 29).

Trying to overcome the static tendencies of network analysis we have applied this research method to a highly contentious and sustained campaign. Our case in study does not include NGOs or voluntary associations that usually participate in short term coalitions and non-conflictual movements like many cases that have been studied before. It comprises a set of organizations/groups that: a) sometimes are antagonistic or even openly hostile to each other, but they participated in the same LPEs, b) are also engaged in conventional politics, thus their size and impact are wider. Additionally, what was at stake made not only the Greek governments but also foreign governments and intergovernmental bodies to interact in the conflict while the wider public was indeed engaged in massive numbers. In other words a massive political campaign is in itself a dynamic process. We, thus, suppose that our application of network analysis will also be more dynamic. In doing so we distributed an extended questionnaire to core members of our sample organizations/groups asking, beyond the typical in network researches, questions about claim making and the perception of opportunities and threats. Besides that, we also conducted interviews with one representative from each one of the 34 organizations/groups asking questions concerning tactics and strategy, the evaluation of the conflict and the stance towards alliance building.

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2 A survey has shown that almost one third of the population of Greece has participated in at least one anti-austerity protest event (Mavris 2012).
Data and discussion

In figure 2 we depict the network of the Greek anti-austerity campaign. We placed our organizations/groups along two axes. The first concerns the organizational structure of the groups and the second their political positioning. On the vertical one at the top appear the most hierarchical organized groups, at the middle the less hierarchical, and at the bottom the horizontal coordinated groups. On the horizontal axis, we replicated the classical 1 to 9 left-right axis. We placed at the left the more radical leftist and groups (colored in red), then the left (colored in pink and yellow), center-left (light-green), center (green), center-right (light-blue and blue) groups, and at the right edge the far-right groups (black) (see table 1 and table 2). The arrangement in these axes was based on: a) the responses we received to the relevant questions, b) the relevant Greek literature c) our own knowledge gathered through participant observation in Greek politics and SMO’s. Of course many objections could be raised for these classifications. To take an example the “tyranny of structurelessness” (Freeman 1973) also applies to the Greek case. Many organizations that do not have official leaders could be argued that are much more centralized and vertical than others they have. To this classification dilemma valued mostly the existence or not of state financing. The organizations/groups that receive funds from the state usually create a bureaucratic structure that is by virtue more hierarchical than any informal leadership. To the thorny issue of political positioning we moved across conventional lines without embarking on the very usual ontological quarrels of what is the real left or who is the correct Marxist.
We have not chosen to construct our network across direct or indirect ties because the main indicators for that sort of analysis did not apply in our case. Namely, we have found few overlapping or dual memberships in our sample. The same goes for other relevant indicators like sharing of resources and information, organize supplementary actions, having strong personal relations. The linkages we sketched in figure 2 are based mostly on the formal relations that SYRIZA, KKE, and ANTARSYA have with unions, the organization of common actions, and on indirect ties.
Also, in this network landscape appears one more organization/group we had not included in our initial sample: the far-right political party of Golden Dawn (XA). Golden Dawn is also against the Memorandum with the foreign lenders from a nationalist perspective and never called or openly participated in any LPE. This would be against its political orientation and very risky for their members. However, some of our respondents named XA as an opponent and through informal talks with some XA members we have found that they had a clear tactic to mingle in the Indignados LPEs to gain leverage (see also Stavrou 2011).

Figure 2 depicts the polycephalous and complex nature of the Greek campaign. The anti-austerity campaign consists of three main clusters. On the one side are the trade unions and one the other the organized political forces, which in turn are consisting of three different components: SYRIZA and ANTARSYA which are in itself coalitions and KKE. Somewhere between the political cluster and the union cluster appears the short-lived but very decisive cluster of Indignados. Unlike other cases of

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3 XA members refused to fulfill our questionnaires or to record an interview.
polycephalous networks (Sawer and Groves 1994) the clusters in our case are not only strongly connected internally but also share considerable ties between them. Many core activists in the Indignados cluster were also members of political parties and organizations of the left, while Greek trade unions are related strongly to the same political parties and organizations. Greek unions have low mobilization capacity. Union density is also low and those that went actually on strike were drawn mainly from the public sector. To put it otherwise, GSEE and ADEDY called the general strikes but KKE, SYRIZA and ANTARSYA provided those who participated at the demonstrations. Moreover, Greek unions shared even stronger ties with other political forces, namely PASOK. Throughout the 2010-2012 period the administration of all major trade unions were controlled by PASOK (through PASKE and in collaboration with DAKE) and had to compromise between two ends. One the hand they had to protect the interests of the workers they represent and on the other they also had to bear in mind the interests of their political party of origin that happened to be in office at the same time. Eventually, PASKE lost many rank and files who either went to SYRIZA or took clear distances from PASOK leadership. PASKE lost considerable ground in many trade unions but managed, in the last general conference in May 2013, to remain in charge of GSEE along with DAKE. Unionism is perhaps one of the last social sectors that PASOK still resembles the mighty party of the recent past.

The political forces cluster of the campaign is consisted of three different components which all are strongly connected internally but have little ties between them. Given the considerable weight that political forces exercised in our LPEs, this typical polycephalous structure in the interior of the political cluster explains the low density of the overall network whilst the certain amount of centralization. To better understand these tendencies and the alliance building processes; we decomposed the overall network into three smaller networks (see figures 3, 4, and 5).

Figure 3 depicts the network of KKE. It appears like a typical wheel-shaped network with KKE at the central position and all the other organizations connected to it, but it could easily not characterized as a network at all. In reality all the other groups appearing in red at figure 3 are frontal organizations of KKE in various sectors (students, farmers, women) that are fully controlled by the party. Only through PAME
and its participation in the administration of some major unions, KKE is networking with other groups in the campaign. Throughout the campaign KKE participated the majority of LPEs except those initiated by the Indignados. But in any case KKE and PAME have chosen to march separately and at a safe distance from other organizations/groups.

Figure 3

Network of KKE (KKE, KNE, ΜΑΣ, ΠΑΜΕ, ΔΑΣ, ΟΓΕ, ΠΑΣΕΒΕ, ΠΑΣΥ, ΕΕΔΥΕ)

The network of ANTARSYA is much more different than that of KKE. ANTARSYA is actually a coalition of 10 different organizations of the “anti-capitalist, revolutionary, communist left and the radical ecology”. The largest organizations of ANTARSYA are depicted in red in the frame of figure 4. They form a dense clique structure since none of these organizations holds a more centralized position or exerts significant influence over the others. ANTARSYA, which was formed in 2009, has ties with the rest extra-parliamentary left organizations. It retains strong ties with the Coordination of a-level unions while the anti-capitalist coalition has even secured few seats in the administration of some large trade unions. Also, many ANTARSYA activists vividly participated in the Indignados LPEs. Finally, ANTARSYA has only indirect ties with SYRIZA but the two coalitions use to march very close to each other.
SYRIZA was formed in 2004 as a coalition of the parliamentary party of SYNASPISMOS (once again a coalition of the remnants of the euro-communist party, a large fraction of KKE and some ecologists) and some small extraparliamentary political organizations of the left. SYNASPISMOS was always the dominant part of the coalition. Its leader by principle was the chairman of SYRIZA and finally in 2013 and after its great electoral advance SYRIZA was transformed into a unified political party. SYRIZA’s network in 2010-2012 is closer to the wheel/star structure. But unlike KKE this is a much more loose network and in fact is the wider one comparing to those of the other political forces. SYNASPISMOS maintained its central position but all the other groups maintained their independency and participated in the leadership of SYRIZA. SYNASPISMOS youth organization is more radical and is not fully controlled by the party. SYRIZA has a very open alliance strategy to its left and to its right. One the one hand it has established strong ties with social justice groups (DIKTYO), it connects to radical trade unions and has fully embraced the Indignados LPEs. One the other hand it has participated in the administration of GSEE/ADEDY (but not any more just after the last GSEE congress) and, mainly, has attracted many
defected PASOK MPs and rank and files social-democrats forming the electoral front of SYRIZA/EKM just before the elections of 2012. SYRIZA has a more or less bureaucratic structure but at the same time has ties with less hierarchical and horizontal organizations and groups, seemingly resembling the Greek version of the mass connective party (March 2011, Spourdalakis 2013).

SYRIZA’s electoral success could be partially seen as a network effect. In turn, it seems to us, that what was special in the overall network of the Greek anti-austerity campaign that explains that effect is the relatively more moderate position of SYRIZA and its placement in between convention and contention. The more ideologically strict, in terms both of political positioning and organizational structure, a group is in a campaign the more difficult to gain from networking. This goes to many ends: strictly vertical groups face the same difficulty in networking with strictly hierarchical ones, political groups that want to keep their ideological purity are marginalized in networks as the groups that appear to be neutral, especially when these networks grow bigger.
In the specific terrain of the Greek anti-austerity campaign, SYRIZA appears to be the central player. But a closer look at the network and at the dynamics of contention reveals the centrality of GSEE/ADEDY and the possible challenge for the restructuring of the network posited by KKE. Without the sanctioning of GSEE it is very difficult a general strike to be organized and without general strikes has proved difficult for the anti-austerity LPEs to continue. The anti-austerity campaign is mainly taking place within the industrial/working relations field of Greece. It could be argued though that GSEE/ADEDY continue to act as governance units within that field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). This perhaps explains the fact that KKE has not broken all its ties with the official unionism. The communist party also still holds its mobilization capacity and its traditional power in the Greek working class. Last but not least, what is happening inside the campaign is not independent from what is happening outside from it. The anti-Memorandum front has so far destabilized the Greek political system but it has not altered it. Moreover, austerity and neoliberal reforms do not seem to be reversed soon.

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