



**Development of think-tanks in Greece -The background:
Operating environment and definitions**

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Introduction

The operation and development of think tanks in Greece have been closely dependent on the environment in which they operate and the overall patterns of expansion of the civil society sector. Since 1974, the year that democracy was re-established after the seven-year dictatorship, stability has marked the country's politics and social life. The right to Association of Greek citizens is protected by the Greek Constitution (Article 12 [1]). It is also guaranteed through the provision of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), which protects the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association with others (ECHR, Art. 11). The right of association and the framework towards a more participatory mode of governance have been reinforced in Greece in the previous three decades. This has happened with the proliferation of norms and laws adopted under European Union law as well as Council of Europe conventions. These constitutional and fundamental rights rules form the basis for the unencumbered formation of civil society organisations, to which think tanks in all their legal forms belong.

Typically, think tanks in Greece tend to function either as foundations, non-for-profit enterprises or in some cases as Associations, according to the Greek Civil Code. This applies both to think tanks that appear to be organisationally independent as well as to those organisations that operate under the umbrella of a larger institution, such as a State agency or a University. The dominant political culture in the country has meant that until 2008, with the unraveling of the Greek financial crisis, the “third sector” in Greece, was dominated by political parties or public bodies. While there has been a small number of independent (from state or political affiliations) organisations, little room was there in order to consider that such organisations have had a real impact. Before the financial crisis, even public, think tanks were little known to the broad public and enjoyed little influence vis-a-vis their political party ‘rivals’. In addition,

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Greek citizens, with the exception of the Olympic Games phenomenon which demonstrated a short-lived dynamic of volunteerism, have showed little interest in volunteerism; “participatory” mechanisms that are outside the broad sphere of the State, including political parties or universities remained below the radar. This situation is also evident in the expansion patters of think tanks in Greece. Following the global trend, think tanks in Greece appear to have largely proliferated in the 1990s, where we observe the establishment of a large number of “policy institutes”. On the basis of the character of their activity, these institutes can be broadly described as “think tanks”.

For the purposes of this study, a think tank is understood as a permanent organisation that undertakes research with the purpose of influencing the policy-making process, provide expert advice and disseminate information and knowledge to the broad public. This is a rather broad definition that remains neutral as to the question of legal independence as well as autonomy from other organisations. The questions of independence and definition of a think tank is a significant one that has preoccupied researchers and requires special attention. In this research we have approached this issue adopting a ‘softer’ approach that takes into consideration the regional and institutional context. In contrast to the typical Anglo-Saxon view which regards as think tanks only those institutions that have a completely independent legal status operating on a nonprofit basis and are clearly separate from universities, political parties or any other corporate interest, under the more contemporary perception, the degree of true autonomy and independence is related not only to the legal personality of an organisation but more so to the dominant social and political traditions, the regional context, the institutional culture as well as the circumstances under which the organisation is operating.

Looking at the case of Greece, a point of high significance should be made. When considering the independence and the validity of a think tank’s output, it is pertinent that one should examine factors such as the dominant political party activity, the

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financial resources, the state-centric culture, as well as the factor of the financial crisis that has altered collectively the political and social setting as it was established in the last three decades; and the “rules” of the game, overall. According to the Secretariat General of Information & Communication and the “Global Go to Think Tank” report of 2012, today there are approximately 35 think tanks operating in Greece. This is, however, a number that should be taken with relative caution as it is based on a very broad definition of what a think tank is, and includes scientific associations, foundations, advocacy tanks, research institutes and partisan or private sector institutes, while in one instance two different branches of a single organisation appear as two distinct units. In reality, there is a very small number of truly independent think tanks in Greece, in the legal sense at least, arguably reflecting the dominant political culture, where policy making traditionally passes through political parties and the state structure. Looking at the time line of think tank proliferation it is evident that the majority of these policy institutes, are either public think tanks (that is operating under the supervision of a specific state agency, usually a Ministry) or University institutes; that is research units that are part of an academic institution. The remaining “think-tanks” are basically Foundations, established under presidential degrees, according to the relevant legal framework, or partisan think-tanks; as they demonstrate clear links with the political parties out of which they stemmed. Only nine organisations, appear to have a completely separate legal and organisational identity, and in some of those cases it remains difficult to determine their institutional affiliations.

1. Definitions: activity, influence and challenges of think tanks

Based on the background and the working definition, in order to represent this rather imbalanced picture, three major Greek think-tanks have been selected as case-studies. The Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), the Institute for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE) and the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE). This selection is grounded on their significant impact and reputation as opposed to other research organisations which could be analysed

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but their work is rather sporadic and certainly not systematic. The aforementioned organisations have independent legal personalities, and no affiliations with political parties or private sector organisations, thus accounting for the factor of “formal independence”, yet one of those (KEPE) belongs to the broader state, affiliated as it is to a Greek ministry. All three organisations, appear to be upholding and clearly support the independent and “neutral” status of their research. Moreover, ELIAMEP is mainly oriented to European and Foreign Policy while IOBE and KEPE are fundamentally economic think tanks. As such, additional lines of comparison can be drawn not only when discussing the question of independence, but also when accounting for the degree of influence think-tanks enjoy, in their respective fields. Finally, with the exception of KEPE, which is one of the oldest Greek think-tanks founded in 1959, the selected think-tanks were founded in the 1980s.

Focusing on these horizontal issues, we are engaging in an in-depth comparative analysis of the activities and policy interests of the selected think-tanks, their impact strategies and how have those been determined by the operating environment in Greece and the ongoing financial crisis, as well as the impact in future operational and communication strategies, and the lapse between public perceptions and their actual activities and impact over the period 2008-2013. Special attention is placed throughout, not only on the question of independence and its practical implications for the activity of think-tanks in Greece, but also on the operating environment which has been largely defined by the crisis-factor; a crisis that has had significant economic, political and social implications thus constituting at the same time the central challenge and opportunity for think-tanks in the country. In-depth interviews with representatives of KEPE, ELIAMEP and IOBE have been conducted for the purpose of the research. Nevertheless, names are not included in the following report as the ethics parameter is of increased significance in qualitative analysis.

1.1 Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)

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Established in 1959 by the then Prime Minister, Constantinos Karamanlis. KEPE is the oldest economic research institute in Greece and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Regional Development, and Competitiveness. The primary aims of KEPE since its establishment were the scientific study of the problems of the Greek economy, the encouragement of economic research and the cooperation with other scientific institutions. In 1964, the year KEPE acquired its present name, its objectives widened to include the preparation of short, medium and long-term development plans, the analysis of Greece's short and medium term economic developments, the formulation of economic policy proposals and the education of young economists. Today KEPE dedicates a significant part of its resources to the analysis of the various aspects of the financial crisis, its causes and effects in the divergent sectors of the economy and the different social groups. Its activities are focused on applied research concerning the Greek economy, on the study of economic conjuncture and on the provision of advisory services to the government on issues of economic analysis and policy.

KEPE has functional independence, all the while the main core of its budget derives directly from the state budget. A smaller part of the institution's budget also stems from European Union programs or direct commissions from various ministries. The latter, constitutes a rather important side of the organisation's activities, however, not all outputs are published. Indeed, KEPE has been very active in the production of unpublished studies, reports and position papers assigned by ministries or other authorities mainly aimed at supporting economic policy decisions.

From the organisation's regular publications one of its most important research outputs is the four-monthly review "Greek Economic Outlook" that closely follows and analyses all current developments. The particular review was re-launched in 2010 and constitutes a significant, yet specialised, source for the study of the Greek financial crisis and its broader implications. Today KEPE has a total of 29 members

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of research staff, down from 100 before 2008. This is a very important reduction in human resources, however, it does not appear to have affected the organisation's activity and visibility. On the contrary, as it is analysed further below, KEPE since 2010 has been especially active, visible and, arguably, more influential in the Greek policy-making spectrum in comparison to the past, while in parallel it appears to be increasingly recognisable by the broader public in Greece.

KEPE at a glance - Research

- **Macroeconomic Analysis and Projections:** This includes the presentation of economic conjuncture and indexes, short-term economic forecasts, long-term economic growth and external economic relations.
- **Fiscal and Monetary Policy:** This is related to research on fiscal policy sustainability of public debt, the taxation system, monetary policy and the eurozone.
- **Human Resources and Social Policies:** This refers to research work on labour market and employment, social welfare and insurance, education and immigration policy, European economy and society.
- **Development Policies and Sectors. :** This is related to studies on investments and economic development,
- **Sectoral Studies:** These studies analyse the banking System and capital market as well as energy and infrastructures. All in all research projects here can cover a broad range of issues concerning the Greek economy and are selected in response to new needs.

Furthermore, KEPE's publications are organised under the following main series:

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- **Studies:** These are original research monographs investigating specific economic issues through the application of modern analytical methods. Since 2008 it has produced 8 major studies focusing on analysis of unemployment patterns in Greece, a chronological overview of the finance and economic growth of Greece and a study of the price transmission mechanism in the Greek agri-food sector.
- **Reports:** These are research monographs analysing in a systematic manner economic issues on a sectoral, regional and/or national basis. Since 2008 KEPE has produced 18 reports focused to a very large extent on labour market developments in Greece, including the pension and wage system reforms, a study on the economies of the Western Balkans vis-à-vis their EU integration prospects. Other topics have also included subjects related to tourism and the transport system in Greece.
- **Discussion Papers:** These are papers on ongoing research projects. 31 discussion papers have been issued since 2008, a higher number compared to the previous 5 year period (especially considering that 2013 is at the beginning). Topics concern the role of the EU in the world from an economic perspective, Greek economy and Greek labour market analysis.
- **Greek Economic Outlook:** This is a four-monthly review of the economic conjuncture which was relaunched in May 2010 after a four-year break. It concentrates on the Greek financial crisis in conjunction with relevant international and European developments. It is based on the analysis of general economic indicators, and focuses on the developments by sector of economic activity.

It is evident from the outset that KEPE devotes the great part of its dynamic in producing research outputs as opposed to organising public events, including conferences or seminars. Yet, KEPE's individual researchers are very active, representing the organisation in numerous conferences, seminars or other activities of

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public character. Moreover, and increasingly during the period in question, KEPE has been frequently quoted in numerous mainstream newspapers and TV-channels especially when it comes to its forecasts for Greece's economic performance, including amongst others the state of unemployment and Greece's development prospects. Moreover, its research is directly commissioned by different Ministries, requesting detailed and usually confidential studies on different policies related to the broader economic sector. Characteristically, the most recent report of this type, "Investment Opportunities in Greece - The path to Recovery and Sustainable Growth conducted by KEPE, was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office.

KEPE's growing visibility is due to two central and interlinked factors, external and internal to the institution's strategy. Firstly, the enhancement of participatory democracy is, arguably, a social and political demand of our times. Greece, as a member of the EU, has adopted already since 2001, a set of EU soft and hard law provisions, that specifically account for the inclusion of civil society actors in the policy-making process, all the while providing for greater transparency and increased access in public documents. Yet, the crisis factor, has brought important changes that have affected the entire transparency and accountability system of the Greek policy-making world, and consequently have affected KEPE. The Greek memorandum itself, includes specific provisions for the enhancement of transparency and accountability of policies especially when it comes to tax and economic policies. Moreover, members of the Troika, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Greek adjustment program, have regular cooperation with KEPE researchers, independently from political personnel. Discussions of this type are of highly technocratic nature and KEPE staff is regarded as independent and trust-worthy scientific personnel. For example, IMF in its most recent reports has also referred to data stemming from KEPE. Taking advantage of this "favourable" for the institution, external environment, KEPE, since 2010, has also actively strived to become more extrovert, by opening up the to the general public. This has been largely achieved by organising or participating in seminars open to the public, regularly publishing press

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releases as well as actively disseminating its publicly available studies. Not surprising, KEPE has been operating an ‘Office of Communication and Information’ since 2010. This strategy, in combination with the external circumstances, has paid off, given that KEPE is increasingly present in domestic and international media. Notwithstanding, this strategy, is common to all think-tanks, which seek to redefine their role not only as policy-making “consultants” but also as active opinion-shapers.

1.2 Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)

ELIAMEP is an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute with a focus on issues of European and foreign policy. Founded in 1988, ELIAMEP was inspired by what was at the time an ambitious and rather audacious initiative on the part of Professor at the University of Athens Thanos Veremis. In its early stages, ELIAMEP focused on strategic and security issues and concentrated on Greece’s wider geographical neighbourhood. Through the knowledge, experience and expertise it gathered, it gradually expanded its thematic priorities and activities. Finally it changed its name in the process, recognizing in a pioneer fashion the distinction between European and foreign policy. Indeed, European policies significantly blur traditional divisions between domestic and foreign policy issues.

Reflecting the changing political and social tendencies ELIAMEP has expanded its focus over the years, covering a range of fields, which have surpassed the more ‘traditional’ fields of foreign and european policy. In pursuing its objectives, the Foundation conducts research on topics pertaining to European integration, the future of Europe and international relations with special emphasis on transatlantic relations, security, migration, human rights, good governance and climate change issues. Today, its geographical area of interest includes the wider Southeast European, Black Sea, Mediterranean and Middle East regions. Additionally, it trains professionals (civil servants, politicians, journalists and academics, among others) in

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a variety of areas such as European integration, conflict prevention, management and resolution skills, monitoring of democratic elections, civic participation, civil society building, as well as the role of the media in democratic, inclusive and tolerant societies and briefs foreign journalists, diplomats, policy analysts and delegations from military academies visiting Greece. More recently ELIAMEP developed a “Crisis Observatory”, recognising the need to analyse the consequences of the ongoing crisis in Greece and provide a specialised forum for information sharing and scientific analysis. Nevertheless, a common element in the organisation’s multifaceted activities is the fact that ELIAMEP maintains a strong European focus, aiming both to act as forum for open dialogue and deliberation for the general public all the while contributing to the policy-making process by publicly providing advanced scientific knowledge.

The Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy divides its research activity in three broad umbrella categories, comprising a set of variant sub-categories related to EU policy-making. A significant part of its efforts are dedicated today to the subject of European Integration and the study of the ongoing financial crisis in Greece and the EU at large through evidence-based research, training and dissemination activities focusing including in the agenda questions of civic participation, democratisation, welfare policies, governance, youth and gender. When it comes to public activities and event organisation, ELIAMEP has a wealth of activities covering the full scope of its research interests. Characteristically, the “European Seminar” has been organised consecutively for 10 years, while from 2008 until 2012 ELIAMEP hosted 55 events, only pertaining to the subject of “European Integration.”

ELIAMEP at a glance - Research

- European Integration: Systematic research is conducted on institutional developments and prospects of the EU, EU enlargement and external policy, sectoral policies of the EU such as programmes focusing on the Media,

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environmental policies, anticorruption policies, the European identity, democratic participation and the non-for-profit sector.

- Migration: ELIAMEP research on migration includes studies regarding irregular migration, integration and multiculturalism and mobility and participation
- Security and Regional Developments: Within this umbrella various programmes are functions. These conduct research on Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, Geopolitics of Energy the Middle East and Southeast Europe

In addition to the afore-mentioned areas of research, ELIAMEP activities and publications include the following:

- Annual Seminars and training programs: The “Halki International Seminars” and the “European Seminars” are ELIAMEP’s flagship activities of this type, supplemented annually by a number of other programs a most recent example of which is the summer school “Different Stories about Europe” co-organised in Rhodes in July 2013.
- Participation in International Networks: ELIAMEP participates in a number of institutional networks including amongst others the Lisbon Network (from 2010), the network “Think Global- Act European”, the Policy Network as well as the Networks of Excellence EU-CoNSENT and RECWOWE.
- Events: ELIAMEP has hosted 147 events and workshops from 2008 to 2012.

Publications (from 2008- 2012)

ELIAMEP has a wealth of different type of print and online publications as an institution while its researchers participate as individuals in several more publications in Greece and abroad.

Policy Papers: 8

ELIAMEP Thesis: 25

Briefing Notes (from 2011): 34

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Working Papers: 30

Occasional papers/other publications: 8

Books (published by ELIAMEP): 4

Crisis Observatory (since 2012): 9 opinion articles/ 5 policy papers/ 1 research paper

Journal SEEBSS: In cooperation with Taylor & Francis ELIAMEP has been publishing for 13 years the Journal of SE European & Black Sea Studies, a peer-reviewed Journal, acting as a core academic reference for the regions in question and EU related affairs.

It is evident that ELIAMEP strives to serve in full its stated mission, to provide a forum for public debate on issues of European integration and international relations and to conduct scientific research that contributes to a better informed and documented knowledge of the European and international environment. At the same time, ELIAMEP has traditionally invested in and supported younger generations of researchers; characteristically “Halki International Seminars”, which acts as a forum for connecting senior and junior researchers and policy makers, has been organised for 20 years. It participates actively in international partnerships and networks and its researchers and staff regularly, publicly and visibly express an informed opinion on significant debates including the future of Europe, the handling of the financial crisis or the content of transatlantic relations. Typically, ELIAMEP promotes the free exchange of ideas, substantiated opinions, and critical thought while the foundation, as an organisation, maintains a long-term policy, not to expressing official positions or serving as an instrument for any actor, whether public or private. Notwithstanding, over the last ten years ELIAMEP has opened up towards the broader public, consciously seeking to raise public awareness on the issues it tackles, with a focus on advancing the debate on European integration. The Foundation contributes to the public and political dialogue and provides decision-makers, both in the public and private sectors in Greece, Europe and beyond, with authoritative and independent information, analysis and policy proposals. This process demonstrates a clear and actively pursued tendency towards bridging the gap between the broader public and policy makers, by positioning itself in the relatively ‘empty’ space of a European public sphere.

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When it comes, therefore, to the question of “striving to influence” and the position viv-a-vis the general public and policy-makers, ELIAMEP, is possibly, one of the most advanced think-tanks in Greece. Far before the start of the financial crisis ELIAMEP had established a long tradition of communication with the public while investing on network formation, along with a number of other prominent European Union think tanks. The foundation has a growing presence in domestic and international media, which has been deliberately pursued, based on ELIAMEP’s orientation towards acting as bridge between the public and policy-makers; following as such the similar trend observed in the field overall. Only in 2012, ELIAMEP’s researchers were interviewed, quoted or hosted their articles 164 times in domestic and international media. Arguably, however, this is not only due to the conscious efforts made by the institution itself, but also to the changing culture of the Greek society, driven by the developments owing to the Greek financial crisis, and the regular interaction between members of the Task Force with think-tank members.

Based on its steady, but gradual expansion, ELIAMEP was able to built on the “opportunity” present in the crisis, to expand its activities and degree of influence, despite the difficulties mainly present in maintaining its financial viability. Indeed, ELIAMEP places special value on its status as an independent non-for-profit entity and its substantially polyphonic character. Its legal status as a Foundation guarantees its institutional and functional independence, yet in Greece of 2013, it also poses an additional challenge, common to many non-for-profit entities; fundraising. In order to ensure its independence, it seeks funding from a variety of sources. The list of funding bodies for its wide range of activities is changing regularly, and comprises, currently, European Union Institutions, international foundations, donations from ELIAMEP’s members and private companies. In this respect, the ongoing crisis has brought yet another significant change. ELIAMEP, before 2010 drew about a quarter of its budget from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Today the organisation does not receive any kind of contribution from the Greek State; however it managed to expand

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its pull of donors from other sources. Fund-raising from variant sources constitutes a continuous and time-consuming endeavour. It is, however, the price to pay in order to ensure the Foundation's independence. "ELIAMEP is a window for Greece; one that is open and looking out to the rest of the world"

Communication Strategy

Last but not least, ELIAMEP has an expanded presence in domestic and international media. Commentaries written by representatives of the Foundation are regularly published in various Greek newspapers such as opinion-forming Kathimerini, To Vima and websites including www.protagon.gr and www.capital.gr. In the same wavelength, their voice is often heard in international media. Examples include Associated Press, Reuters, BBC, CNN, France 24, Bild, Global Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The New York Times, Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal. Apart from the presence in the media, the website of ELIAMEP offers a useful source of reference not only for journalists but also for analysts, students and citizens interested in its fields of research. It is daily updated offering information in both Greek and English simultaneously having approximately 600 hits by unique users per day. ELIAMEP is endeavouring to promote its activities by sending a weekly newsletter which reaches more than ten thousand recipient and by enhancing participation from the public in the social media including facebook and twitter. In the summer of 2013 the Foundation also launched its Web TV aiming at engaging more in the multimedia and offering topical interviews with its researchers following developments in the domestic and international arena.

1.3 Institute for Industrial and Economic Research

The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE) is a private, non-profit, public-benefit research organisation. It was established in 1975 with the dual

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purpose of promoting research on current problems and prospects of the Greek economy and its sectors and of generating reliable information, analysis and proposals for action that are non produced elsewhere and can thus be of high value to policy makers in the context of economic policy making. In that sense, IOBE holds a unique position in Greek society: it is the only politically independent, non-partisan body dealing with major issues of the economy, and it aspires to being pro-active, that is, it seeks to identify, at an early stage, economic issues that can become crucial in the future and to propose timely solutions for these. Moreover, IOBE is one of the oldest think-tanks in Greece.

IOBE is enjoined by its statutes to perform the following functions such as to carry out applied research on basic structural and sectoral problems of the Greek economy as well as on various aspects of economic policy making, to monitor and analyse short-term economic trends, to record the business climate, and to prepare forecasts and evaluate prospects of the Greek economy. Additionally, to provide reliable and continuously updated economic information about particular sectors of the Greek economy, to cooperate with foreign research institutions and international organisations on matters of common interest and to conduct multi-country research projects on economic issues and policies, to contribute to the public debate on economic issues and to undertake sponsored and commissioned research projects that fall within its aims and purposes

In carrying out its research work, the Foundation maintains a position of academic freedom and neutrality, which similarly to the other think-tanks, values highly. At the same time, IOBE, does not seek to express unified positions, and supports the polyphonic character of its members. The judgements expressed and the proposals contained in IOBE's publications are solely the responsibility of the researcher/writer and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of IOBE's members, governing bodies of financial supporters. Its research activities include macroeconomic and

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microeconomic analysis and policy while it also has observatories of health economics, entrepreneurship, automotive market, public and electricity sectors.

Publications:

The Institute for Industrial and Economic Research had a wide range of publications. Some of them are not free to download and cost from 50 euros to 100 euros to obtain online access.

- Sectoral Studies: These are reports on fish farming, ready meals, wine, processing tomato industry, the fruit juice/beer sector, tobacco/bakery products, textiles and clothing, building materials, packaging materials, domestic and office equipment.
- Economic Studies: The main economic studies of IOBE include research on various themes such as the obstacles to the improvement of the competitiveness of the Greek industry, the Greek telecommunication industry, the mobility in the Greek labour market, the underground economic and the fiscal priorities.
- The Greek Economy: This is maybe the most important report of IOBE, especially during the ongoing crisis. It is related to quarterly assessment of the Greek economy which inter alia is based in predictions and estimations on the course of the Greek economy. Its publication receives high attention from the media.
- Statistical data for the Business Customer Services: This is a list with various indexes such as economic sentiment indicator and consumer confidence indicator.

As it also happens with ELIAMEP, and KEPE, one of the main priorities of IOBE is its communication strategy. Since 2008, IOBE has actively turned to the broader public, organising progressively open public events (17 since 2008 as opposed to 10

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in the previous period) as well as increasing dramatically the number of presentations and public discussions in the same period (since 2009 IOBE has organised 21 presentations and open discussions) vis-a-vis the former period. It is also worth-mentioning that IOBE and ELIAMEP along with KANTOR, Transparency International in Greece and Citizens Movement are systematically organising public events on issues such as Greece's international image, corruption, bureaucracy and tax-evasion.

IOBE, however, tends to maintain a single 'public image' when it comes to the question of media presence, as in most cases it is usually represented by its General Director. Its former Director and current Minister of Finance of Greece was often interviewed by journalists at the domestic and international level. In particular, Mr Yannis Stournaras – in his capacity as Director General of IOBE – was often quoted in prestigious newspapers such as The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal and Handelsblatt.

Although IOBE is financially supported by the private sector, the Federation of Greek Industries and donations by natural persons and legal entities, it has not escaped from suffering by the lack of liquidity due to the continuous financial crisis. Therefore, on 13 May 2013 its Board of Directors decided to establish a new network in order to increase its followers and facilitated its fundraising process. This is officially named IOBE 'supporters club'. It is highly similar to an initiative undertaken by ELIAMEP in 2011 in order to give the opportunity to its friends to become members of the Foundation by paying a small fee.

IOBE, as a specialised think-tank, has 'profited' significantly, as far as its visibility is concerned, by the Greek crisis. Similarly to KEPE, its predictions about the state of unemployment or the Greek economy are quoted and repeated in the Greek media, while it is not uncommon that journalists may even compare and contrast the two institution's publications. This can only be considered as a positive development, as it, arguably, demonstrates a change in the political culture of the country and the public discourse, placing new-found value on independent sources of information. In

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this respect it is not a surprise that the Ministers of Finance and Development, required the cooperation of KEPE and IOBE by ordering in January 2013 an important strategic study for the direction of development in Greece by 2020.

2. The Crisis parameter and challenges lying ahead

One cannot understand the analysis of the state and the position of Greek think tanks in the country's public sphere, unless it is linked to the general context of developments in Greece as provoked by the unfolding financial crisis in the country. In the night of 4 October 2009 a new era started for Greece. The socialist party (PA.SO.K) won the national election and was celebrating its remarkable triumph against the conservative one (New Democracy, N.D.). This triumph can be easily explained in a traditional two-party political system where one party can benefit from the damage of the other. Specifically, in October 2009, the image of New Democracy was seriously hit after 5,5 unproductive - if not catastrophic - years in power. At the same time, PA.SO.K's leader, Mr. George Papandreou, successfully managed to deceive public opinion by promising plenty of money to Greek citizens in order to attract a larger number of voters. The celebrations of the socialist party, however, would not last long. Its victory signalled the beginning of a long and adventurous period for Greece and the European Union. The economic crisis, which had been almost ignored in the pre-election period, was crossing the threshold of the country and that of the eurozone.

Assessing developments approximately three years after the outbreak of the Greek crisis, this crisis cannot be examined separately from the European debt problem. There is no question that the European Union had failed to act in good times for bad times. At the same time, the Hellenic Republic is not the only eurozone country, which has faced serious problems accessing financial markets. Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy have also experienced the pain of the blockage from markets seeing their spread yields reaching high levels. Nevertheless, the Union has so far failed to

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provide an efficient and convincing response in order to calm markets and stop the danger for a potential breakup of the common currency. As Professor Loukas Tsoukalis observes, ‘the crisis we are going through will shape Europe and European integration for years.’

During his administration, former Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou was often referring to the European dimension of the problem. For instance, in a letter he sent to the President of the Eurogroup and Prime Minister of Luxemburg Jean Claude Juncker in July 2011 he argued:

‘Yet in no sense is our crisis over. Indeed, we together stand today at a fateful juncture in Greece’s and Europe’s ongoing economic adjustment programme. The markets and rating agencies have not responded as we had all expected. They continue to doubt (and therefore punish) our shared Greek and European reform program, and in so doing, are threatening Greece’s and Europe’s common recovery from the recession that began three years ago.

“I am now convinced, after fourteen months, that no matter what Greece does- and we have proven ready to live up to our responsibilities- if Europe does not make the right, collective, forceful decisions now, we risk new, and possibly global, market calamities due to a contagion of doubt that will engulf our common union. Strong and visionary European leadership is needed.’

Mr George Papandreou is not the only politician who has called the Union to offer a drastic solution to the European debt problem. Italy’s former Prime Minister, Mario Monti, for example, was continuously pressing for joint action to ease pressure on Italian bonds. For his part, Spanish Premier, Mariano Rajoy, is urging for a battle in Europe for the survival of the common currency. The inefficient response provided

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by Brussels along with the incapacity of Greek authorities to modernise the economy of the country, proceed with privatisations, and apply the fiscal adjustment programme have lead Greece to a deadlock.

Within this framework the international interest in developments in Greece became higher in comparison to the period before the outbreak of the debt crisis. The main reason is the threat stemming from the Greek crisis for the stability of the eurozone as the so-called ‘domino effect’ was continuously dominating the atmosphere in various capitals of the world. The period of instability and uncertainty, however, which started in October 2009 and is still in progress in Greece, has created a window of opportunity for think tanks. Although the crisis itself has influenced their fundraising activities and often blocked traditional donations from the public and private sector, it has also given momentum to their research work. In other words, as long as a political and economic vacuum was apparent, and the degree of trust to political party members diminished, experts in Greek politics and economics were expected to provide theoretical solutions to existing problems.

The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign policy, for example, constitutes a characteristic example of the new environment. Although ELIAMEP has entered a period of uncertainty in order to secure financing since the beginning of 2010, it has also managed to boost its reputation as one of the country’s most serious and independent think tanks. The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research and the Centre of Planning and Economic Research have also experienced a similar ambiguous trend during the crisis. While struggling for their economic survival they have also provided significant research material. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, some of their members are also unofficial interlocutors of the so-called Troika, the representatives of the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, who are regularly monitoring the progress of the Greek economy.

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With the economic crisis in Greece keeps unfolding, a lively debate has been generated on the potential participation of technocrats in its national government. It is worth-mentioning that members of the afore-mentioned think tanks have taken critical positions. Former Director General of the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research, Yannis Stournaras, was appointed Finance Minister of Greece after the election of 17 June 2012 and the formation of the coalition government supported by New Democracy, PA.SO.K and the Democratic Left. Additionally, member of the Board of Directors of ELIAMEP, Professor George Pagoulatos served as Senior Advisor and Director of Strategic Planning in the Office of former Prime Minister of Greece Lucas Papademos. Greek media often speculate on a similar political involvement of more representatives, principally from IOBE and ELIAMEP, in future Greek governments when the cabinet of ministers is about to be reshuffled.

The role of think tanks, however, and their alleged linkage to political power has created a sentiment of suspicion and distrust in the society. Taking into account that populism can be on the rise in times of crisis Greek research organisations could not escape from malicious rumours. The Greek blogosphere, for instance, often publishes anonymous articles associating prestigious think tanks with the interests of the country's creditors and the need for additional austerity measures and higher taxes. This is not a Greek phenomenon per se. In the years before and after the Iraq war of 2003 the Project for the New American Century in the United States was widely regarded as a research organisation which help neoconservatives politicians and intellectuals to 'highjack' the Bush presidency and imposed their plans for the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime.

3. Assessment

The previous analysis outlines the activity of the most important Greek think tanks, namely KEPE, ELIAMEP and IOBE before and during the ongoing debt crisis. The conclusion which is reached has two sides. On the one hand, the crisis has created

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serious obstacles to the operation of these research organisations, often putting into danger their economic survival. In parallel with this, the lack of financial resources also influences the hiring procedure of new researchers, mainly young ones, contributing to the problem of unemployment, which exceeds 60% for young people. It should be taken into account that Greek public universities rarely hire new staff because the Greek government had agreed with the Troika to freeze hiring. Subsequently, academia and research pay one of the heaviest prices of the Greek crisis.

On the other hand, however, the crisis has also created a window of opportunity for think tanks even if they are struggling to survive. That is because - in the context of the European dimension of the debt problem - they have become the epicentre of international attention regarding research and scientific facts. Their members and associates often participate in informal negotiations and debates with representatives of the so-called Troika while they often quoted in major international newspapers. In this way, they have managed to improve their advocacy capacity as their voice is largely considered objective and technocratic. At the same time, KEPE, ELIAMEP, and IOBE have more opportunities to expand their international networks and participate in new, future oriented research activities. That is because many think tanks all over the world are interested in finding serious partners in Greece where the European debt crisis has broken out. As a whole, ongoing research tends to consider Greece as a useful study for analysis not only concerning the reasons for the crisis but also regarding its consequences at the political, social and economic levels and potential remedies for the future.

As far as the independence of Greek think tanks is considered, this is a research question which can hardly be answered. Although these organisations and their representatives claim to be independent in their work, criticism in the press and the media is often high. This criticism may not always be justified but can construct the image think tanks which are not dependent. In an interesting case highlighting the

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problematic nature of the ‘independence’ frame a Bloomberg journalist was sceptical in using quotes by Research Fellow of ELIAMEP George Tzogopoulos in an article he was preparing on the investment of Eldorado Gold in Skouries of Halkidiki. The journalist thought that the researcher’s sponsorship by Bodossaki Foundation might create bias in his view for the story. He, finally, proceeded with using his quotes after cross-checking the independence of the researcher’s voice by accessing his general work and publications.

Finally, with reference to the impact of think tanks on policy-making, this can hardly be measured. That is because it is not straightforward to what extent policy-makers are influenced by reports and studies of KEPE, ELIAMEP, and IOBE. By contrast, what can be assessed is the quality of advocacy strategy used by the research organisations to increase the opportunities in order to spread their ideas. In that regard, communication methods are of high importance. Although the three think tanks systematically organise public events or roundtable discussion with policy-makers, ELIAMEP is perceived as having a rather more active communication strategy, including multimedia and social media. This Foundation also has a more flexible and balanced presence in the media while KEPE and IOBE are more presented by only a few high ranking media sources.

The next years, especially 2013 and 2014 will be critical for Greek think tanks. Apart from the risk for ensuring their economic survival, principally as far as KEPE is concerned, their role will be even more important. This is more related to their impact on public opinion rather than on policy-making. In an environment of political instability, deepening recession and increasing unemployment, populism is on the rise. As a result, citizens do tend to support extreme parties, including the neo-nazi Golden Dawn. Maybe the most important mission of serious think tanks, such as KEPE, ELIAMEP and IOBE will be to raise an orthodox voice against this dangerous populism. Their theoretical role as ‘knowledge providers’ has to be followed by practice.

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Appendix

Greek think tanks: Legal status and formation year. The names of the organisations are drawn from the relevant list of the Secretariat General of Information & Communication)

- Centre for Planning and Economic Research (KEPE): 1959, under the supervision of the Ministry of Regional Development, and Competitiveness [Public think tank]
- Institute for Balkan Studies: 1974, it has been an independent legal entity governed by private law, under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. Initially founded in 1953 as part of the Society for Macedonian Studies [Public think tank]
- Foundation For Economic & Industrial Research (IOBE): 1975, private, non-profit, public-benefit research organisation. [independent]
- Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, 1977 [Foundation]
- Centre for International and European Economic Law: 1978, It is registered and operates as a private legal entity, under the supervision of the Minister of Economy and Finance and enjoys complete operational and financial autonomy. [Public think tank]
- Greek Centre of European Studies and Research: 1980, non-profit institution, independent of any political or State affiliation, [Independent]
- The Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Foundation: 1983, [Partisan Foundation]
- Foundation for Mediterranean Studies: 1983, [Foundation] supervised by the Ministries of Culture and of Finance [Public think tank]
- ELIAMEP: 1988, [Independent]
- Hellenic Centre for European Studies (EKEM): 1988, entity established under private law, supervised by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [Public think tank]
- Institute of International Relations: 1989 [University institute]

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- Institute for International Economic Relations: 1993, the Greek Association of S.A. & Ltd companies. (Independent)
- Andreas Papandreou Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISTAME): 1995 – [Partisan think tank]
- Centre for European Constitutional Law - Themistokles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation, 1995, [Public benefit Institution- Foundation]
- Citizens' Union PAREMVASSI: 1995, [Independent]
- The Andreas G. Papandreou Foundation: 1996, benevolent, non-profit institution, [partisan foundation]
- Research Centre for Minority Groups: 1996, non for profit company [Independent]
- Institute Nikos Poulantzas: 1997, [Partisan]
- Konstantinos Karamanlis – Institute for Democracy: January, 1998 – [Partisan]
- Center for Democracy & Reconciliation in Southeast Europe: 1998, [Independent]
- International Centre for Black Sea Studies(ICBSS): 1998, [independent]
- Mediterranean Migration Observatory, 1999, Panteion University, [University Institute]
- National Research Foundation Eleftherios K. Venizelos: 2000, [Foundation]
- Institute of European Integration and Policy: 2002, independent, non-profit research institute. University of Athens. [University Institute]
- European Public Law Center: 2004 (effective from 2007) International organization (under MFA) [Public think tank]
- Research Institute for European & American Studies: 2006, non-profit research institute [independent]