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**The Discursive Construction of Higher Education
Policies in Greece During the Financial Crisis
(2011-2014):**

**A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Debate Around
the Policy-Making of the 4009/2011 Framework Act**

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PhD in Social Policy

2022



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I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or processional qualification except as specified.

Nikolaos Kanellopoulos

2022

The completion of this thesis was funded through the Onassis Foundation scholarship programme.

***Dedicated to my mother Katerina,
my grandmother Stella
and the love of my life Panagiota.***

“In certain cases, carrying on, merely continuing, is superhuman”

Albert Camus

Acknowledgments

I have been incredibly lucky to receive the support, dedication and enthusiasm of some very special people without whom I would not have been able to complete this research.

First of all, the support and funding provided by the Onassis Foundation as well as the Saripolio foundation made this PhD possible so I would like to express my sincere gratitude to them.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Sotiria Grek and Dr. Elke Heins. I will be forever grateful for their unwavering support, encouragement, expert advice and creative supervision meetings. They have sweetened and smoothed this academic journey. Even in my darkest times they were always there for me, making me feel stronger and motivated. It has been an honor and a pleasure to know and work with them. Special thanks also to Dr. Ingela Neumann for her constructive and much appreciated support when needed. A big thank you also goes to the school of Political and Social Science of the University of Edinburgh which offered me the best academic experience that I could have ever imagined.

Of course, many thanks go to all my interviewees for giving their time to participate. This research would not have been possible without their involvement.

I would also like to thank my family for their wise counsel when I needed it. In addition, my mother, Katerina, has always been in my thoughts and her memory has literally kept me going during very hard times.

I could not have completed this thesis without the support of some very special people, my best man Polis, my very good friends Yannis and Dimitris, and my wonderful ex-colleague Anna. All of them generously offered their assistance, by providing me with hope, support, stimulating discussions as well as happy distractions to rest my mind outside of my research.

Finally, a massive thank you to my wife, one amazing person who has always been my safe harbour during stormy seas. I can never, ever, thank you enough Panagiota, for your all and everything!

Lay Summary

During the past decade Greece has been experiencing a tremendous fiscal crisis. Within this adverse political and financial context, a major law was passed (Law 4009/2011 “Structure, function, quality assurance of studies and internationalization of institutions of higher education”) with the aim to improve the Higher Education system. This law brought changes the governance and structure of Universities while also strengthening the quality assurance procedures. Albeit being voted by a wide political margin in the Greek parliament the 2011 Law failed to be efficiently implemented within the specified time period. This failure can be attributed the strong opposition by the academic community and the inconsistent political communication and subsequent amendments of the Law.

This thesis explores the competing ideas and discourses that have been expressed regarding the content and policy aims of this Law. More specifically, the thesis critically explores the role and function of the competing discourses between the various political and public actors (politicians, academics, students, etc.) in the construction of the recent Greek HE reforms during the the current financial crisis, from 2011 until 2014. The objectives of this study are (a) to explore the political and public debate regarding the recent HE reforms in Greece been developed in the light of the current crisis; (b) how the debate has impacted on the construction and dissemination of the recent HE policies; and (c) to examine the co-articulation of the debate with the structural and contextual features that surround them.

The thesis examines the discourses of actors who have been involved in the policy-making process of the 2011 Law while also acknowledging and taking into consideration that the actors’ opinions and views are shaped but can also shape the context (i.e. the financial crisis, the influence by external policy actors). For this reason, the study follows a qualitative approach involving the analysis of parliamentary policy speeches and interviews with actors that have been involved in the policy-making process of the 2011 reforms (i.e. rectors, academics, journalists, trade union members and politicians). The framework of Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CPDAF) has been used for the analysis of the textual data.

Actors focused their discourses and the discussions on two major themes: (a) University Governance and the issue of University Councils and (b) Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education. Overall, the thesis identifies a division between the ideas and interests that influence policy

actors' discourses. This corresponds to a political and ideological polarisation with two discursive coalitions being formed: those who support the 2011 reforms and those who oppose them.

The study, however, revealed the existence of moderate and similar opinions - especially with regard to the implementation of quality assurance and accreditation processes. The external policy actors' influence along with the financial crisis have been crucial to building the common ground found in the actors' discourses.

Overall, the commonly accepted views, tend to be promoted differently by the two camps in order to maintain a perceived political and ideological division. This results in the misconception of having two distinct, polarised coalitions involved in the policy process. Consequently, this has largely influenced the way policy-making occurs in the Greek context, leading to more conflict and increasing ambiguity in regard to core issues such as the purpose of HE, its governance, academic freedom and the character of higher education degrees.

This study provides novel insights about the views and opinions of the different political and academic actors who have participated in the policy-making process of the 2011 Law. It also contributes to relevant literature by focusing on the critical analysis of the discourses that surround the particular Law as well as the whole Greek HE policy sphere. More importantly though, it provides a robust analysis of the interaction and interdependence between policy discourses and contextual factors, namely the financial crisis.

Abstract

During the past decade Greece has been experiencing a tremendous fiscal crisis. The recession ensued by the crisis along with the adopted austerity measures have dealt a severe blow not only to the basic, daily operations of Greek HE institutions but even to their very survival. Within this adverse financial context, a major framework act was passed (Law 4009/2011 “Structure, function, quality assurance of studies and internationalisation of institutions of higher education”) with a view to address some of the deficiencies and challenges in the sector. The major changes that this law brought referred to a new governance and structure model and the reintroduction and strengthening of quality assurance procedures, with the aim to set the Greek higher educational agenda one step closer to the Bologna process and the European Union directives. Albeit being voted by a wide political margin in the Greek parliament the 2011 Law failed to be efficiently implemented within the specified time period. This failure can be attributed to the interweavement of various structural and political factors, such as the strong opposition by the academic community and the inconsistent political communication and amendments taking place after the 2011 Act’s enactment.

Consequently, these developments gave rise to a variety of new competing ideas and discourses about the character of higher education reform and its social and economic implications. This thesis critically explores the role and function of the competing discourses between the various political and public actors (politicians, academics, students, etc.) in the construction and (de-) legitimisation of the Greek HE reforms during the financial crisis, from 2011 until 2014 focusing on the enactment of the 4009/2011 Law. The objectives of this study are (a) to explore how the political and public debate regarding the HE reforms that were introduced by the 4009/2011 Law in Greece has been developed in the light of the recent financial crisis; (b) how the debate has impacted on the construction and dissemination of the HE policies introduced by the 4009/2011 Law; and (c) to examine the co-articulation of the debate with the structural and contextual features that surround it.

The research is rooted in a critical realist theoretical approach that acknowledges the co-articulation and interaction between policy, discourses and contextual/ structural factors. A qualitative approach was adopted, which involved the analysis of parliamentary policy speeches and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with actors that have been specifically involved in the policy-making process of the 2011 reforms (i.e. rectors, academics, journalists,

trade union members and politicians). The framework of Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CPDAF) was used for the analysis of the textual data.

The analysis of the data revealed two overarching discourse themes: (a) University Governance and the issue of University Councils and (b) Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education. Overall, the thesis has identified a division between the ideas, imaginaries, goals and/or interests that underpin policy actors' discourses - which was discursively built upon a political and ideological polarisation. Two discursive coalitions thus emerged: those who support the 2011 reforms and those who oppose them.

However, the new knowledge discovered through this research indicated the existence of moderate or even similar opinions - especially with regard to the implementation of quality assurance and accreditation processes. The external policy actors' influence (such as the EU and OECD) along with the pivotal historical moment of financial crisis have been crucial to building the common ground found in the actors' discourses.

Overall, the commonly accepted imaginaries tend to be promoted by different coalitions in such a way that contribute to a hyperbolic account of the various differences that separate the political parties. This results in the misconception of having two distinct, polarised coalitions involved in the policy process. This has influenced the way policy problems have been defined as well as what solutions are being offered by the policy actors, creating more conflict and increasing ambiguity in regard to core issues such as the purpose of HE, its governance, academic freedom and the character of higher education degrees.

This study provides novel insights about the discourse dynamics that take place within the Greek HE policy sphere. At the same time, it contributes to relevant literature through the adoption and use of a critical discursive approach to policy-making while at the same time providing a robust analysis of the interaction between policy discourses and contextual and structural factors (such as the financial crisis).

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

HE	Higher Education
ANEL	Independent Greeks - National Patriotic Alliance
ASPETE	School of Pedagogical and Technological Education
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CL	Corpus Linguistics
CPDAF	Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Framework
CPE	Cultural Political Economy
DIMAR	Democratic Left
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEC	European Economic Community
EFEE	National Student Union of Greece
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ELKE	Special Accounts for Research Funds
ELSTAT	Hellenic Statistical Authority
EMU	European Monetary Union
ERASMUS	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HQAA/ ADIP	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KATEE	Centres of Higher Technical and Vocational Education
LAOS	The Popular Orthodox Rally
MODIP	Quality Assurance Unit

MoU	Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies
MTFS	Mid-Term Fiscal Strategy
NARIC	National Recognition and Information Centre
ND	New Democracy
ODPTE	Federation of Administrative Employees of Higher Education
OPEIVT	Operational Programmes of Education and Initial Vocational training
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement
PM	Prime Minister
POSDEP	Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association
PSI	Private Sector Involvement
SYRIZA	The Coalition of the Radical Left
T.E.I	Technological Educational Institute
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VAT	Value-Added Tax
YPEPTH	Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs

Chapter 1: Introduction of the thesis, aims and research questions

1.1 Background context and rationale of the thesis

During the 2010s, Greece experienced a deep fiscal crisis. As a response to it, a strict package of austerity policy measures and structural reforms was adopted by successive Greek governments, ultimately focusing on fiscal consolidation and gains in economic competitiveness. These austerity reforms – mainly imposed as a condition for financial support from international actors – were highly controversial and resulted in a politically tumultuous era. Within this political and financial crisis context, a series of reforms in tertiary education were proposed, with the most major ones being introduced during the climax of the Greek financial crisis, in the period 2010-2014. In 2011 the 4009/2011 Framework Act *“Structure, function, quality assurance of studies and internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions”* (Law 4009, 2011) was passed by a substantial majority in the Greek parliament with a view to address some of the weaknesses of and challenges to the sector. The major policy reforms that this new law brought about related to three different areas: first, they proposed a new structure and governance model; second, they, reintroduced and strengthened quality assurance and accountability procedures; and third, they made provisions for the internationalisation of Greek Higher Education (HE). The specific law set the Greek higher educational agenda one step closer to the Bologna process and European Union (EU) directives and policy recommendations, whose large influence on the Greek HE politics had become apparent since the 1990s.

Albeit having been voted for by a wide political margin in the Greek parliament the 2011 higher education reforms failed to be completely or effectively implemented within the specified time frame of the law – which was four years after its enactment (Law 4009, 2011, Article 80, par. 20). This implementation

failure can be attributed to the interweavement of various structural and political factors, such as the centralised character of Greek HE, the strong opposition by the academic community and the inconsistent political communication and amendments taking place after the 2011 Act's enactment (Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015). This resulted in a complex state of affairs that led to confusion about the content and aims of the education policies passed in 2011.

The financial crisis contributed significantly to the socio-political emergency in which the reforms took place, as the ensuing recession and the adopted austerity measures dealt a severe blow not only to the basic, daily operations of Greek HE institutions but even to their very survival. Overall, the austerity measures have led to substantial cuts of university funds, reduction of academic personnel, and a deteriorating infrastructure. Consequently, these developments gave rise to a variety of new competing ideas and discourses about the character of HE reform and its social and economic implications, which may have also affected the way key political actors tried to communicate and enact the law and by extension its implementation (Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015). As a consequence, Greek HE became one of the most politically debated areas within the Greek public sector.

This thesis presents a case study of the political and public discourses that have framed and informed the HE reforms introduced by the 4009/2011 Law in Greece during the crisis. It further examines the role of the crisis in the justification and push for the reforms, as well as explores the discursive construction of Greek HE and its politics in the aftermath of the 2011 reforms. The main rationale for carrying out this research lies in the consideration that the reforms in question mark a significant change in the Greek HE policy-making process. Although the 2011 law caused various reactions and received severe criticism, several of the key policies that it introduced have become widely accepted and consolidated. At the same time, the extraordinary period of financial crisis in Greece within which these policies are embedded,

constitutes an interesting research framework for investigating the effects of crisis with regard to the variation, development and retention of semiotic and non-semiotic practices in relation to the policy-making process and voting of this law.

1.2 Existing scholarship of the 2011 reforms

To strengthen the contextualisation and justification of this project, an extensive search of the literature was conducted to identify existing published work that critically discusses the 2011 Law and the overall HE policies introduced at the time¹. Several relevant books, journal articles and grey literature published around the topic at hand were identified through the literature search². However, the published work that expand on the 2011 Greek HE policies and its subsequent amendments introduced during the crisis is generally small (no more than 15 studies in total). One would expect that there had been great interest to study the 2011 Law as it introduced fundamental changes to the operation of Greek Universities. Nevertheless, the many policy changes in Greek HE during the past decade did not allow for the law to mature or even to be fully tested in practice. The many amendments that followed and its overall failure (which in a way had already been taken for granted even

¹ It should be noted that the focus of the literature search was on studies that were published immediately before and after the passing of the 4009/2011 Law (up until the completion of data collection and analysis in 2017). Studies that explored the subsequent Laws 4076/2012 and 4115/2013, which introduced changes and amendments, were also considered in relation to any potential (critical) examination of the 2011 Law. The period that interests this study is from 2011 up until the end of 2014. Any references to laws after 2014 were not considered for review.

² Initially a systematic literature review was planned to be conducted. However, most of the studies concerned with this topic were written in Greek and as such it became quickly apparent that many of them could not be found in the international, subject-specific electronic databases. As a result, various searches were conducted on Greek University libraries catalogues, through the OPAC catalogue (<https://opac.seab.gr>), Google Scholar and on specific University databases (such as the University of Patras Higher Education Policy Network database: <http://hepnet.upatras.gr/index.php/en>) based on specific keywords and search terms. These included words and phrases, such as Greek Higher Education, Law 4009/2011, Greek Higher Education and financial/ economic crisis, Greek Higher Education policies during the crisis. The reference lists of studies were further searched (pearled) thoroughly with the aim to discover additional resources on the topic.

before its passing) may have added to the fact that the 2011 policies did not become subject to extensive scrutiny and research. It is worth noting that despite the small number of published works, there is a variety of contrasting opinions regarding the character of the policies and their connection with the crisis. The literature appears to either be 'for' or 'against' the new regulations while more balanced assessments are not frequent. However, the majority of studies seem to hold an overall critical stance against the 2011 Law and its implementation attempts.

Some scholars have accentuated the positive changes that the Law aimed to introduce. Their focus lies on the "modernisation" and "internationalisation" that the introduction of the 2011 Law would finally bring to the Greek HE, as previously Greece had largely resisted and delayed the harmonisation of its HE system with EU policies and directives. They further focus on the many deficiencies of Greek HE and the ways the new policies could remedy them (Tsiligiris, 2012a; 2012b). The issues frequently mentioned in the studies supporting the reforms pertain to the over-politicisation of Higher Education and the centralised (regulatory and financial) control of the whole educational system by the Greek state (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2016; Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015). According to these scholars, the introduction of University Councils can tackle the lack of autonomy ensued by the overcentralisation of Universities' governance by the Ministry (Tsiligiris, 2012b). The financial crisis is also presented by some researchers as an "opportunity" rather than a "threat" for the successful introduction and implementation of the proposed reforms (Asderaki, 2012; Giousmpasoglou et al., 2016; Tsiligiris, 2012a; 2012b; Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015).

More critical scholars have noted the impracticability of the new law due to its many deficiencies and contradictions between the Law's objectives and the Greek Higher Education institutional framework in force - the same framework that this law intended to change (Balias et al., 2016; Papadiamantaki, 2017). Other scholars focused on the ideological foundations of these policies,

arguing that they belong to a broader neoliberal agenda that has been taking shape for some time in Greece and which was further intensified during the economic crisis (Vatikiotis & Nikolakaki, 2013). Some of them explicitly characterise them as a 'neoliberal attack' (Gounari, 2012; Sotiris, 2013) on Higher Education's public and free character in Greece, which is constitutionally prescribed by Article 16 of the Greek Constitution (Hellenic Parliament, 2008). According to them, these policies lead to the privatisation, marketisation and commodification of tertiary education, thus signifying a turn towards a more entrepreneurial university (Sotiris, 2013; Traianou, 2013).

The neoliberal character of the new reforms and their implications have been further explored through the scrutinisation of the government's discourse. According to Gouvias (2012b), the state rhetoric is mainly based on the neoliberal ideals of 'decentralisation of decision-making', 'consumerism', 'accountability' and 'efficiency', and follows the common trends and discourses of European educational policy-making - which he also characterises as neoliberal. These are however veiled by a post-modern discourse of 'social partnership', 'individual choice' and 'emancipation', which seems to dominate the official policy documents and the relevant governmental rhetoric (Gouvias, 2012b).

Critical scholars further argue that through these changes Greek governments seem to adopt a 'regulatory role' that focuses mostly on 'structures' and 'legal framework' putting aside their obligations to provide the necessary financial support, and to safeguard the constitutionally free and democratic character of HE (Gouvias 2012b, p. 283-284; Traianou, 2013). In other words, the proposed reforms are used by the government as a means to save resources and not for addressing chronic problems that Greek tertiary education suffers from, where reforms are put on hold (Gouvias, 2012b; Zmas, 2015, p. 496).

In general, most of the critics consider the opposition to these reforms as a form of resistance to external policy actors' pressures and orders which concern the implementation of a broader neoliberal scheme (Zahariadis &

Exadaktylos, 2015). What they directly or indirectly imply is that since these reforms have been introduced during the crisis period they should be viewed as a part of the general neoliberal structural reforms Greece has agreed to implement, since 'they combine both the neoliberal restructuring aspect [...] with an aggressive attempt to impose budget cuts as part of a broader attempt to reduce public spending' (Sotiris, 2013).

However, as Zmas (2015) notes, it would be quite simplistic to postulate that the recent economic crisis can be held entirely responsible for the introduction and enactment of these reforms or that they derive exclusively from it – although acknowledging that crisis has generally facilitated and accelerated the introduction of the respective HE policies (see Traianou, 2013). In fact, the first two Memoranda of Understanding did not include any conditions or reform proposals about the education sector (IOBE, 2017; Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015)³. For Zmas (2015), the economic crisis along with the gradual retrenchment of European funding, which over the years has helped the functioning of Greek universities, have just exacerbated the long-lasting lack of state financial support to the Greek HEIs. What we saw during the crisis was an attempt by Greek policymakers (who found themselves under pressure) to promote and justify unpopular neoliberal educational policies and reforms, by using the broader European discourse as an alibi (Zmas, 2015).

In sum, the literature review revealed a division between the Greek academics who have researched the 2011 HE reforms. Experts are either for or against the reforms, with very few moderate voices in the middle. While the majority of studies provide thorough and rigorous critical examinations of the content of 2011 Law as well as of its implementation (or to be precise its failed implementation), most of them fail to offer a comprehensive and critical analysis of the policy debate and discourses related to the policy-making process. Some studies do focus on the policy discussion around the

³ This changed in August 2015 when education reform proposals were incorporated in the new MoU that was agreed between Greece and the European institutions at the time.

enactment of the 4009/2011, but these mostly pertained to published academic articles or book chapters.

Most importantly though the originality and uniqueness of this study lies in its clear focus on the interplay and co-articulation between the policy discourses around the 2011 Law and the financial crisis context from 2010 to 2014 (during which the 2011 Law was introduced, debated, enacted and implemented). At the time of conducting the research and during the writing of this thesis I have not been aware of any studies that explore this issue in-depth.

1.3 Research aim and questions

Drawing on the above considerations, the study aims to *critically analyse the role and function of the competing discourses, and the various ideas and ideologies that underlie them, between the different political and public actors (politicians, academics, students, and representatives of the teaching staff trade union) in the construction and (de-)legitimation of Greek HE reforms during the country's financial crisis unfolding since the end of 2009, with special emphasis on the major reforms that were introduced in 2011.*

The following study questions were produced to guide the research process:

1. How did the political and public debate regarding the HE reforms which were introduced by the 4009/2011 Law in Greece unfold in the light of the financial crisis? More specifically:
 - a. how have the individual and/or collective discourses been structured?
 - b. what were the main ideas and 'imaginaries' that underpin these discourses?
 - c. how was the debate interrelated with the structural and contextual features that surrounded it?
2. What implications does the debate have for the construction and dissemination of the HE policies introduced by the 4009/2011 Law?

1.4 Theoretical background and methodology of the study

Theoretically, the thesis is rooted in an analysis of policy discourses as intertwined with social and institutional structures - bound with and conditioned by socio-political and economic ideologies, concerns, and interests. More specifically, the project adopts the grand-theoretical approach of Cultural Political Economy (CPE) in combination with a particular approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010; Sum & Jessop, 2013). CPE provides a useful theoretical and conceptual framework that can help us explore the complex co-articulation between the semiotic and material aspects of the policy process (Sum & Jessop, 2013).

As such, policy-making is conceptualised as a social practice/process which is dialectically shaped by discourses but also shapes them (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). In this sense, the discourses that frame the relevant HE policies constitute the medium through which particular political, social, and economic ideas, definitions of problems and solutions are formulated and elaborated during the policy-making process. Thus, discourses are viewed here as partly constitutive of the policies to which they pertain, since discursive practices are at the same time largely contingent on the institutional structures and historical, cultural, and socio-political context that surrounds them (Levin & Young, 2000).

All in all, policies are inter-discursively performed/enacted, reaffirmed and/or contested through their interaction with current socio-political structures and ideologies. The intertwining of policy discourses with social and institutional structures, bound with and conditioned by socio-political and economic ideologies, concerns and interests, constitutes the main theoretical point of departure for the present analysis of the Greek HE reforms during the crisis. As a result, the distinctive features of Greek HE, the large influence that external policy actors have exerted on the shaping of the HE policies and the

impact of the financial, political, and social crisis that hit Greece on policies and discourses about HE are taken into account in the analysis of the data.

This research employs a qualitative approach, involving the analysis of policy documents, namely the parliamentary debates and speeches of political actors, as well as face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with policy and public actors that have been involved in the policy-making process of the 2011 reforms (i.e., rectors, academics, journalists, trade union officials and politicians). This allowed the gathering of rich and detailed information from the participants (allowing them to reveal and discuss openly topics that might not had been discussed otherwise), and the detailed exploration of their arguments, discourses, and views. The data are thematically coded and analysed through the use of CDA methods. In general, CDA provides us with the necessary analytical tools to conduct a critical analysis of the dialectical relation between the discourses and the social practices, processes and institutions that frame them. More specifically, the project uses the Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Framework (CPDAF) as developed by Hyatt (2013a; 2013b). CPDAF provides an appropriate analytical framework that draws on various linguistic and discourse tools (and approaches) and has been used for research on education policy issues.

It should be noted that the study generally covers the period from 2011 (when the primary framework act 4009/2011 was passed) until 2014. As such, it also acknowledges the amendments that were voted in 2012 and 2013 (namely the laws 4076/2012 and 4115/2013), as these are largely linked to the 2011 Law. Another important reason for taking into account the 2012 and 2013 amendments is that during the interviews, which were conducted five years after the 2011 law was passed, many of the interviewees were drawing to them during their discussion of the 2011 reforms. It became apparent that the investigation of the overall debate of the 2011 Law and of the opinions of the policy actors regarding the main changes introduced, cannot ignore any of the influences that the subsequent amendments may have had on the actors' views. It would be also peculiar to limit the timeframe of the research only to

the consultation phase and the parliamentary debate of the bill, given that the research fieldwork took place five years after its enactment. As a result, it was considered more useful for the research to have a broader perspective and reflect on these factors into the analysis. However, the focus of the research remained on the changes introduced by the 2011 Law, as this was the main reference point of the HE reforms that took place at the time and of the overall debate that was developed around them in the light of the financial crisis.

Finally, the decision to set the timeframe up to 2014 was mainly based on the political developments that took place at the time. In 2015 the coalition government of SYRIZA (a left-wing party) and ANEL (a populist right wing party) came to power, promoting and enacting reforms on HE which in essence revoke many of the provisions of the 2011 law. Extending the research beyond 2014 would require the investigation of the new laws and/or amendments passed after 2015, which would be inconsistent with the aim of this research, i.e. to explore the debate surrounding the policy making-process of the 2011 Framework Act. Inevitably, some actors talked about the new laws passed after 2015 during their interviews. However, it was decided to not attempt a thorough investigation of the content of these laws, as this would divert the focus of this research from its intended course.

The critical discourse analysis of the data explores how the imaginaries of the various policy actors influence and shape the framing and semiotic configuration of policy problems and solutions by deconstructing and contextualising the discursive and legitimation strategies employed by them in conjunction with the contextual conditions that surround the whole policy process (e.g. implementation phase, material effects of the policy's implementation etc.). The articulated discourses are further explored in relation to their connection or appropriation of other texts and discourses (inter-textuality and interdiscursivity).

1.5 The main findings of the study

Two overarching themes are identified. The first refers to the changes in Higher Education governance, specifically the introduction of a new body, the Institution Council, that replaced many of the duties that were previously attributed to rectors. The second pertains to the re-introduction of quality assurance processes, whose targets were strengthened, the accreditation of degree programmes and the overall internationalisation strategies of Greek Higher Education.

The first theme constitutes the core contentious topic of the political and academic debate around the 2011 reforms. Supporters claimed that the new governance body will eliminate corruption and the over-politicisation of Greek HE leading to further autonomy of Greek Universities. Conversely, those opposing the reforms argued that the changes in governance and internal structure will contribute to further over-centralisation, privatisation and marketisation of HE that will diminish its democratic character. The second thematic foci (i.e., on quality assurance and internationalisation) revealed some common beliefs and opinions. Quality was not very much debated in the parliamentary sessions. Also, the majority of interviewees seemed to agree that Greek HE should be fundamentally reformed by adopting and successfully implementing a quality and accountability framework that will enable the stakeholders to tackle the many failings and shortcomings of the previous status-quo. The accreditation of degree programmes was viewed as a necessary instrument in this process. Moreover, internationalisation strategies were positively viewed by most interviewees, however many questioned their feasibility especially within the financial crisis context.

This thesis identifies some important differences between ideas, imaginaries, goals and/or interests that underpin policy actors' discourses. This can be partly explained by the cultural and historical particularities that characterise the political and public sphere in Greece (strong public mistrust towards the political institutions; polarisation of political debates; negative perceptions

towards public servants/ academics and trade unions) (see Balias et al., 2016). Furthermore, the political and socio-economic changes and constraints caused by the Greek financial crisis have also contributed to the highly adversarial policy-making as political parties were unable to establish cooperation.

Nevertheless, moderate voices also existed which on the one hand identified the need for reforming Greek HE and on the other hand are cautious about the neoliberal and entrepreneurial character of these changes. The resonance and acceptability of these varied to a great extent amongst the different actors involved in the field (mainly the academics and students but also politicians). Despite these differences in opinion, the majority of the academic community and political groups also seemed to share some generally accepted imaginaries and opinions regarding the reform of Greek HE, which have inevitably become naturalised and more or less sedimented, at least in regard to the ideational and discursive dimension of the policy process.

In short, the thesis reveals the ways through which the actors try to diverge (intentionally or unconsciously) from the commonly accepted opinions, that is by concealing or promoting, intensifying, or mitigating certain positions and arguments. Overall, the commonly accepted imaginaries tend to be promoted by different coalitions in a way that contributes to a hyperbolic account of the various differences that separate the political parties. This results in the commonly accepted view of two distinct, polarised coalitions involved in the policy process: those who supported the law and those who opposed it. This has influenced the way policy problems have been defined as well as what solutions have been offered by the policy actors, creating more conflict, and increasing ambiguity in regard to core issues such as the purpose of HE, its governance, academic freedom, and the character of higher education degrees. This view, however, does not accurately reflect the true nature of the discussion around the 2011 changes in Greek HE. What this research reveals is that the competing discourses expressed - in the parliamentary debates but

mostly during the interviews - proved to be more nuanced than expected, while topics and processes which previously were highly controversial have now become more accepted from (collective) actors who in the past were strongly opposing them. This is an important insight especially, in the context of Greek HE, as it challenges the commonly accepted view that there was (and still is) a strong and clearcut division between the discourses and opinions of the two discursive coalitions. It also indicates the methodological contribution of this study as it exhibits the functionality of critical discourse analysis in recognising discursive patterns and critically demystifying their underlying ideas.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework and defining some core concepts that inform methodology and analysis of the data. The theoretical and conceptual framework of Cultural Political Economy (CPE) that is adopted in this study is presented, followed by a discussion of the notions of policy, discourse, text and crisis which constitute the key theoretical themes that have steered the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the implemented research methodology by discussing the use of the methodological and analytical approach CDA. Consequently, it describes in detail the data collection process (which comprised the collection of political speeches and face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted with key policy actors) as well as the methodological and analytical approach of Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Framework which was employed for the analysis of the data. Lastly, the chapter discusses the issues of rigour, reflexivity and positionality in relation to this qualitative research, focusing on the researcher's reflections at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 4 of the thesis commences with an overview of the Greek Higher Education system, its deficiencies, and challenges. A brief historical review of the financial crisis period in Greece (up until 2013) is then provided followed

by the impact that the financial crisis had on the operation of Greek Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and higher education in general.

Chapter 5 of the thesis presents the broader external context that has influenced policies in Greek HE. More specifically the key issues of globalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation are briefly described. This chapter then concludes with an extensive overview of the influence of external actors and provides a link to policies that have been introduced in Greece since the 1980s.

Chapter 6 discusses the 4009/2011 Law commencing with a thorough description of the consultation process that preceded the bill's enactment. Consequently, it presents the major changes that the 2011 Law introduced. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion and some initial thoughts on the co-articulation of crisis and the discursive struggles around the 2011 Law that took place – thus setting the scene for the justification of the methodology adopted as well as for the analysis process to be carried out in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 7 describes the process of thematic analysis that was followed for identifying the primary discursive topics of the speeches and discussions. The thematic analysis of the data provided two over-arching themes: (a) University Governance and the issue of University Councils; and (b) Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education.

Chapters 8 & 9 present the findings of the analysis of each theme respectively. The analysis was carried out by deconstructing and breaking down the data and critically analysing the discourses and arguments of the policy actors through their simultaneous contextualisation to the phenomena of external policy actors' influence and the impact of the financial crisis. At the end of the analysis of each theme a summative description and presentation of the findings is provided.

Chapter 10 discusses the themes and the analysis developed in chapters 7 & 8 by clarifying the key issues that stem from the findings and by linking and contrasting them to the relevant literature and academic areas. It also presents the contribution and main strengths of this study to the broader research of HE policy-making. Finally, it concludes with the main limitations of the study.

Chapter 11 concludes the study by providing a summary of the study's key findings along with a brief discussion of future research possibilities.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in this thesis by discussing and defining some core concepts that inform methodology and analysis of the data. It begins with the description of the theoretical and conceptual framework of Cultural Political Economy (CPE) along with its main ontological and epistemological assumptions that have been adopted in this study and which guide this project's research (Sum & Jessop, 2013). The following sections elucidate on the notions of policy and discourse, which constitute the key theoretical themes that have steered the analysis and interpretation of the data. A further distinction between policy discourse and policy texts is presented. The last section deals with the notion of crisis and its interplay with CPE and discourse in general.

2.1 Cultural Political Economy

This section deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework of Cultural Political Economy (CPE) - as developed by Bob Jessop and Ngai-Ling Sum (Sum & Jessop, 2013) - and its main ontological and epistemological assumptions that have been adopted in this study and which guide this project's research process. CPE is characterised as a grand-theoretical approach, that combines critical semiotic analysis with critical political economy. As such CPE emphasises the contribution of the so-called cultural turn⁴ to the reduction of the world's complexity (i.e. through the process of making sense, interpreting and managing complex situations, phenomena or events). The cultural turn is concerned with the role of semiosis during the analysis of economic and political issues as these are articulated and embedded in broader social structures (Jessop, 2010; 2013).

⁴ The cultural turn is used as an 'umbrella' concept for the wide range of (re-)discoveries in the humanities and social sciences of the role of semiosis in social life: the cultural turn, the narrative turn, the rhetorical turn, the discursive turn, the argumentative turn [...]. Semiosis is the most comprehensive turn to cover all of these cultural turns because it refers to all forms of social production of intersubjective meaning' (Jessop, 2008, p. 15).

Central to CPE is the notion of semiosis⁵ and the relation it has with other aspects and elements of the (social) world. Semiosis can be broadly defined as the inter-subjective sense- and meaning-making (Fairclough et al., 2004; Sum & Jessop, 2013), thus involving not only (verbal) language but also other modalities (e.g. written language, visual language, etc.). Semiosis is viewed as an element/moment of all levels of social processes, i.e. social structures, practices and events. The relationship between the general and abstract social structures (e.g. social fields, institutions, organisations) and particular and concrete social events (e.g. actions, strategies) is mediated by social practices, which are defined as a relatively stabilised form of social activity (Fairclough, 2013).

According to Sum and Jessop (2013), when analysing semiosis, it is important to not equate it with ideology. While semiosis, i.e. sense- and meaning-making, is selective and always contains biases it does not necessarily entail that it is always ideological, i.e. inescapably attached to power and domination. As Sum and Jessop (2013, p. 164) state, semiosis “provides the raw materials of meaning-making, its affordances, so to speak, but does not predetermine specific propositions, statements, arguments, imaginaries, frames and so on”. More so, ideological effects may not always nor inevitably arise from conscious actions, as they can also be “inscribed and sedimented in signification (e.g. in the form of fetishism, the taken-for-grantedness of the foundational categories of the capitalist mode of production and so forth)” (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 169).

CPE provides a useful framework that can help us explore the complex co-articulation between the semiotic and material aspects of the policy process as well as how semiotic practices can become hegemonic through the mechanisms or processes of variation, selection and retention. Put it simply, CPE recognises a variety and proliferation of interpretations, views, narratives and any other kind of semiotic practices or events about a particular (social)

⁵ It should be noted that the use of semiosis is used instead of ‘Discourse’ (in its abstract sense) in order to distinguish it from (particular) ‘discourses’ (Fairclough, 2010).

phenomenon or the world in general (*variation*) – especially during disrupting events, such as a financial crisis, which can interrupt prevailing meta-narratives, theoretical frameworks, policy paradigms, and/or everyday life. From these only some get selected (*selection*) and become the basis for the creation of particular strategies and policies – and, of these, only some prove effective or simply manage to become hegemonic and are retained (*retention*) (Jessop, 2013).

Drawing from the above CPE view, this research could be viewed as a theoretical contribution to the analysis of the semiotic aspects and practices and more specifically to the variation of the different competing accounts that took place and were expressed around the changes introduced by the Law 4009/2011 in Greek HE amidst the serious financial crisis that hit the country at the time.

2.2 Policy and Discourse

Policy in this paper is considered a social practice which constitutes but is also constituted by semiotic/discursive and textual practices (Ball, 1993; Fairclough, 2013; Jones et al., 1998; Saarinen, 2008; Taylor et al., 1997;). This view places great emphasis on the significance that discourses have in terms of influencing the legislative and procedural practices in policies. Central to the above conceptualisation is the notion of semiosis and the relation it has with other aspects and elements of the (social) world.

Based on the above view, policy can include a number of different processes and stages, such as agenda setting (e.g. discussion about what issues policy should address) as well as work on the production of policy texts, but they can also refer to implementation processes which are never straightforward, and also to the evaluation of policy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). In this sense, then, policy may refer to both semiotic (e.g. texts) and extra-semiotic/material processes (e.g. implementation process).

Every social practice and event can be understood as an articulation of semiotic and extra-semiotic/material elements. Although these elements are different, they are not 'discrete': semiosis internalises and is internalised in other elements. In other words, they are dialectically related. For example, even though we can analyse the Greek HE field and the respective policies as partly semiotic, it would be a mistake to treat them as purely semiotic. Following Fairclough and Wodak's (1997, p. 258) definition of Discourse (in its abstract sense), semiosis can be seen 'as a form of 'social practice' that 'implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive/semiotic event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it'; thus a semiotic event is constructed/shaped by other elements of the social world but it may also construct/shape them.

Typically, the concept of discourse in education research is usually employed from a purely constructive lens. The most prominent example is the exclusively Foucauldian approach to discourse adopted by Ball (1994a) – one of the most prominent researchers of education policy discourses. According to him, discourses shape and determine actors' understandings of the policy issues, their beliefs and desires and so it is them that 'speak the policy and the actors' (Ball, 1994a, p. 115). In this thesis, however, agency, social structures and discourses are treated as concepts or phenomena that are dialectically related. On the one hand, agency can be shaped/ influenced by structural and institutional factors as well as by (other) discursive practices. At the same time, however, agency can be intentionally enacted by actors through discursive practices, which in turn can shape/ influence institutions and social structures.

It should be noted here that this view of semiosis and/or discourse ascribes to a critical realist approach, which among other things acknowledges that:

"the natural and social worlds differ in that the latter but not the former depends upon human action for its existence and is 'socially constructed'"

(Fairclough, 2010, p. 4).

The constructive effects of semiosis hence play a central role in the representation and by extension in the construction of the social world. However, since the social world is discursively represented in many and various ways (construals) which construals will come to have constructive effects depends on upon a range of factors and conditions. These factors can be both material and semiotic including for instance power relations but also properties of whatever parts or aspects of the world are being constructed (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4-5). This distinction between construal (i.e. representation) and construction thus adds a further perspective, which according to Fairclough (2010) pertains to a 'moderate' or 'contingent' form of social constructivism.

As such, Fairclough views semiotic practices and more specifically discourses as constitutive 'of situations, objects of knowledge, and of the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people', in terms of helping to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, while also contributing to transforming it (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). In this sense, discursive practices have major ideological effects as they can help express, formulate and/or (re)produce specific hegemonic as well as counterhegemonic views of social reality (van Dijk, 1998).

In this research project, the focus will be placed on the semiotic/discursive aspects of the 2011 Greek HE education policies regarding how these policies are construed and also how and to what extent these construals have materially affected these policies. Moreover, the influence of the socio-economic and institutional structures that frame the relevant discourses and policies will be further examined.

This case study draws on Fairclough's (2010; 2013) theoretical approach to CDA as the main theoretical framework that will guide the analysis of the data. His model incorporates in full the epistemological and ontological premises of CPE, i.e. the dialectical relations between semiotic (discourse, genres, styles) and extra-semiotic/ structural factors (power, ideologies, institutions, social identities, etc.). It also contributes to an understanding of discursive interaction

and thus also policy texts as 'sites of struggle' where differing discourses, ideologies and positions contend and struggle for dominance (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

2.3 Policy discourses and policy texts

The linguistic/semiotic aspects, and especially the category of 'discourses', play a crucial role in the policy practice. In order, however, to fully understand their significance, the distinction between policy discourses and policy texts should be further clarified. According to Ball (2006), texts refer to the actual words on paper, i.e. the use of certain language to denote particular meanings; but texts are also understood in a more inclusive sense, i.e. not only written texts but also conversations and interviews, as well as 'multimodal' texts (Fairclough, 2013). In turn, (policy) texts are located within and framed by broader discourses, i.e. particular and more comprehensive ways of conceptualising and representing the world. As Ball (1990, p. 17-18) puts it:

'Discourses are [...] about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning, and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations [...] The possibilities for meaning, for definition, are pre-empted through the social and institutional position from which a discourse comes [...] Meanings arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations, from social position. [...] Thus discourses construct certain possibilities for thought'.

In this sense, discourses 'mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than simply reflect social reality' (Ball, 2013, p. 7). In other words, language (i.e. words and propositions) is deployed with the aim to produce certain meanings and effects - which respectively can be changed within different discourses according to their use and the social positions held by those who use them (Ball, 2013; Edwards et al., 1999). Thus, policy discourses 'organise their own

specific rationalities, making particular sets of ideas appear obvious, common sense and 'true' (Ball 2013, p. 6-7).

Policy practices, then, can be described as 'very specific and practical regimes of truth and value' and the ways through which they are represented, their vocabularies, 'are part of the creation of their conditions of acceptance and enactment. They construct the problematic, the inevitable and the necessary' (Ball, 2013, p. 7). Policy discourses are thus paramount since they can contribute to the construction of the policy problems and thus of the imperative or inevitability for change, while they can also provide 'appropriate' policy responses and solutions which privilege certain social/political or economic goals. Within the processes of policy discourse, dominant individuals and groups of policy actors play a major role in establishing credibility and 'truthfulness', by putting 'faces' to policies and by providing ways of thinking and talking about policies that make them sound reasonable and sensible as solutions to social and economic problems (Ball, 2013).

Thus, policy ideas, problems and the solutions to them are mainly discursively constructed, represented and contested by the individuals and groups that take part in the policy practice (such as policy makers, political parties as well as the public etc.) (Saarinen, 2008), with each one of them trying to support and defend their own specific values, ideologies and views of social reality (see Fairclough, 2003). In this viewpoint, those who get to name the problem also have the power to solve it (Saarinen, 2008, p. 344), by propelling their own policy proposals and solutions - which may later become standardised and sedimented. Policy ideas, problems and abstractions (such as knowledge economy) are in turn translated by (or through) policy texts - i.e. the documents and speeches which 'articulate' policies and which are framed by discourses - into roles and relationships and (social) practices within fields and institutions that enact policy and/or are the recipients of the policy's outcomes (Ball, 2013). By extension, the enacted policies and policy ideas they disseminate also shape and influence the social positions of individuals and groups, thus

changing what people do and say as well as how they think about what they do and say.

Nevertheless, the various policy discourses are encoded and decoded in complex ways: they can be encoded via power struggles (between different actors, ideologies and positions), compromises, authoritative political and public interpretations and reinterpretations and decoded via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context (Ball, 2006, p. 44). As Codd (1988, p. 239) states:

'a policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite'; for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings'.

Policies and their respective discourses can thus be understood and interpreted in many different ways by the different players involved in the policy process (Ball, 1993; Yanow, 2000). This results from the different positioning of the various policy actors which further implies different logics of practice and differential power relations (Bourdieu, 1998; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). For example, those involved in the policy text production (e.g. the government) will often have different and competing interests with those involved in policy implementation (e.g. academics or students), potentially leading to contradictory discourses about the relevant policies.

The intended meanings and potential interpretations of policy discourses and by extension the enactment of policy goals can be distorted and reconfigured according to the complexities and constraints of the broader historical and institutional context in which they exist. In line with the above epistemological and ontological observations, the analysis of policy (viewed as a social practice) needs thus to take into account the fluid relationships between different aspects of the (social) world, such as the socio-economic conditions, the broader social structures and cultural conditions, power relations, etc. As Taylor et al. (1997, p. 15) state:

‘To analyse policies simply in terms of the words written in formal documents is to overlook the nuances and subtleties of the context which give policy texts meaning and significance. Policies are thus dynamic and interactive, and not merely a set of instructions or intention’.

Policy texts and discourses (i.e. those which frame the texts and can be detected through the analysis of the texts’ language) thus do not exist out of material reality: they are ‘rather located in specific material realities and cultural formations’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p. 14), which influence and shape the semiotic and material effects and outcomes of discursive practices. As such, policy texts and discourses constitute just a part of the policy’s semiotic aspect and thus they need to be supplemented by an analysis of the ‘broad discursive field within which policies are developed and implemented’ (Taylor, 1997, p. 25). In sum, policy when referred to in this paper, is taken to be a continuous, interactive, and unstable process (Ball, 2013), an ensemble of semiotic and extra-semiotic practices, which ‘necessarily leads to different outcomes at different scales, times and places’ (Wodak & Fairclough, 2010, p. 20).

2.4 Conceptualisation of the notion of crisis

In this last section the notion of crisis is explored, aiming to show how a methodologically inclusive discourse-analytical approach that is rooted in the theoretical premises of CPE can contribute to the exploration and comprehension of the concept of crisis (in our case of financial crisis) as both discourse and context and as a linguistic resource. The complex and dynamic features of the notion of crisis have been the subject of enquiry of many diverse disciplinary fields giving rise to multiple definitions. As the treatment of the notion depends to a large extent on the research design and objectives of the study that explores this notion, it is necessary to make clear where I position myself in the rich and varied crisis literature. This will also provide background

for a clearer understanding of the critical discourse analytical approach that is followed in this study.

This study is premised on the assumption that the processes of monitoring, management and resolution of crisis do not exclusively represent material actions but also constitute discursive practices, as their outcomes significantly depend on language use (De Rycker & Don, 2013). Moreover, in line with the main theoretical principle adopted in this study (i.e. the dialectical relationship between discursive/ semiotic and extra-semiotic), crisis is viewed as an event that shapes but is also shaped by discourses - through text and talk, in political and media discourses, in public and private spaces and so on. At the same time, as crisis is situated within historical and social contexts it is bound to mean different things to different people. In this sense, crisis is also viewed as an objective phenomenon that exists in the real world. In other words, crisis has both material and semiotic properties.

Driven by the above observations, this research adopts an explanation of crisis that acknowledge both its objective and subjective aspects. This kind of crisis conceptualisation (which are mainly associated with social sciences) can be further distinguished to three broad approaches (De Rycker & Don, 2013):

- The first pertains to a social constructionist view of crisis as being socially and discursively constructed within many different and ever-changing socio-cultural and historical contexts.
- The second pertains to theories that follow a narrative view of crisis. These are primarily based on Hay's (1996) 'crisis narrative' work where he argues that crisis is identified, defined, constituted in and through narratives and discourses that are usually promoted by the more powerful actors.
- The third provides a general political and social theorisation of crisis which conceptualises it in terms of social change, social action, and strategies, by emphasising on human agency as well as on economic, political, cultural and religious implications.

This study adopts the third approach drawing specifically on Jessop's CPE research on (economic) crisis responses (Jessop, 2002; 2013). Overall, CPE has focused on the structural and semiotic analysis of crisis with the aim to reveal its objective and subjective character (Sum & Jessop, 2013). His work has focused on the crisis (Jessop, 2002; 2013). According to Sum and Jessop (2013, p. 397) crises:

“[...] emerge when established patterns of dealing with structural contradictions, their crisis-tendencies, and strategic dilemmas no longer work as expected and, indeed, when continued reliance thereon may even aggravate matters.”

In this sense crisis is ‘objectively’ viewed as a by-product of the system-inherent contradictions, crisis tendencies and dilemmas that define our social and economic organisations (De Rycker & Don, 2013).

In terms of its semiotic/ discursive (‘subjective’) aspect crisis constitutes ‘a moment of contestation and struggle’ between diverse narratives and discourses (Sum & Jessop, 2010, p. 97). As such, crisis narratives, perceptions, ideas, rhetoric, discourses and other accounts of the social production of intersubjective meaning (i.e. semiosis) are crucial for the processes of making decisions and developing strategies and policies in response to the crisis (Fairclough, 2010; Panizza 2013; Sum & Jessop, 2010). Such semiotic practices inform the inevitable contestations between actors’ different ideologies, interests and objectives (as they struggle to make their own decisions and strategies prevail) and shape the interpretations (construals) of crisis along with the individual and collective responses to it (Sum & Jessop, 2013).

This shaping involves the complex processes of variation, selection and retention which are actualised through the co-articulation of semiotic and extra-semiotic mechanisms. In sum, crises, as Jessop (2013, p. 5) argues:

“often produce profound cognitive, strategic, and practical disorientation by disrupting actors’ sedimented views of the world. They disturb

prevailing metanarratives, theoretical frameworks, policy paradigms, and/or everyday life and open the space for proliferation (variation) in crisis interpretations, only some of which get selected as the basis for 'imagined recoveries' that are translated into economic strategies and policies - and, of these, only some prove effective and are retained."

The concept of crisis has further been associated (particularly in political science) with the notion of 'critical juncture', a concept frequently used in the domain of historical institutionalism. Based on the definition of 'critical juncture', a crisis can be broadly defined as 'a brief moment of institutional flux' that interrupts an extended period of path-dependent institutional stability and reproduction, and which is usually, but not always, connected with processes of radical change (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 341). Critical junctures are also seen as moments of choice and decision. These choices are usually associated with high-stakes moral dilemmas and are often taken in conditions of high uncertainty with imperfect information about the consequences of their decisions (Panizza, 2012, p. 7). These are further informed by particular economic and/ or political 'imaginaries'

Having a central role in the CPE approach, the term 'imaginary' is defined by Sum & Jessop as (2013, p. 165):

"a semiotic ensemble or meaning system, without tightly defined boundaries that frames individual subjects' lived experience of an inordinately complex world and/or guides collective calculation about that world."

For Taylor (2004, p. 23) the notion of (social) imaginary represents:

'the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations'.

In this sense imaginaries are necessary for individuals and collective actors in their attempt to make sense of the complex world that lies ahead of them as

they inform their discourses, their decisions helping them to move forward and relate to their environments (Sum & Jessop, 2013). Basically, all types of discursive practices are framed and informed by imaginaries. In our case study, the existing or new imaginaries that underlie actors' discourses are competing in their attempt to shape, structure and inform HE policy definitions of problems but also policy solutions to them.

Overall, crisis is identified as being embedded and produced within social relationships - hence, the significance of language and other meaning-making systems. At the same time crisis has materiality as it involves "diverse extra-semiotic factors associated with structural, agential, and technological selectivities" (Jessop, 2013, p. 7) which can create moments of disruption during which important decisions have to be made (Panizza, 2013). Crisis is thus viewed in interdependence with the performativity of language, narrative and discourse (De Rycker & Don, 2013).

2.4.1 Discursive struggles during the financial crisis in Greece

Based on the above, we can further argue that the socio-political and economic crisis of Greece constitutes a critical juncture for Greek public policy and politics. As Zartaloudis (2013, p. 163) notes:

'It meant the end for Greece of a long period of wealth and expansionary fiscal policy [...] After the signing of the Troika bailout in May 2010, the recession intensified alongside the significant and widespread cuts in public spending and benefits along with an unprecedented rise in taxation. In addition, Greece implemented a series of unpopular supply-side reforms, reformed its health and tax collection services, restructured its state apparatus, and proceeded with mass-scale privatisation'.

The financial crisis created a new economic reality that radically altered the Greek social and political life. It has also largely impacted on Greek perceptions by aggravating pre-existing trends and discourses in Greek

politics (namely political violence, populism, and nationalism) as well as the rise of extremism (Zartaloudis, 2013). Moreover, the adoption and implementation of unpopular austerity measures by the Greek government, imposed by the signing of MoUs between Greece and the Troika, has gradually led to the formation of two informal political - if not ideological - camps: those who were supporting (*memorandians*) and those who opposed it (*antimemorandians*). This distinction characterised the political landscape and public debate in Greece during the 2010s, culminating in the formation of the 2015 coalition government between SYRIZA (a left-wing party) and ANEL (a populist right wing party) - i.e. two parties with diametrically opposite ideological orientations - simply because they were sharing the same goal: to abolish the Memorandum of Understanding and the austerity measures and write off the greater part of Greece's public debt. At the same time, these developments gave rise to new meanings and construals about crisis, which further informed the way policy actors were defining, managing and coordinating crisis responses.

In general, the financial crisis has led to a proliferation of new perceptions and discourses which are mainly based on competitive and/or complimentary relationships, leading mostly to processes of discursive and thus ideological struggles (Fairclough, 2010). Based on the above theorisation and conceptualisation of crisis and its interplay with policy discourses this study assumes that the financial crisis (but also other contextual and structural factors) has largely influenced and to a great extent disrupted the ideas, discourses and beliefs of the actors who were involved in the debate of the 2011 HE reforms. At the same time, crisis in our case study is not treated only as an external/ contextual socio-political and historical phenomenon; rather it also appears as a discourse topic in the policy actors' discourses. This is where a systematic critical discourse analysis of the different interactions between discourse and crisis (i.e. 'discourses in crisis' but also 'crisis through discourses' and 'crisis in discourses') is needed in order to reveal and interpret the imaginaries and the ideological perspectives that underlie and inform semiotic practices (in our case the relevant policy debate).

Based on the above assumption this case study seeks to critically explore the political and public discourses that have framed and informed the 2011 HE reforms introduced in Greece during the financial crisis, by analysing the parliamentary debate around the 2011 bill as well as interviews with actors who were involved in the policy-making process. Jessop's theorisation and research on (economic) crisis is also closely associated with discourse analysis – as he draws explicitly on theoretical perspectives of CDA - thus rendering the synergy of CDA and CPE quite suitable. Such a combination has been used, for example, in the past for addressing the recent impact of 'knowledge-based economy' as an economic 'imaginary' on education (Jessop et al., 2008). The following chapter presents the methods of data collection and further describes the framework of CDA that was used for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 3: Operationalising the Methodological Approach

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methods and data sources employed for this study. The chapter starts with a description of the methodological resources and analytical categories offered by Critical Discourse Studies which I use for the analysis of the data. Subsequently, I discuss the data sources used for the empirical research along with the rationale behind the choice of this type of methods. Here, I am mainly concerned with two types of data sources: speeches in the parliamentary debates and interviews with key policy actors. Next, I address the challenges I faced during my fieldwork, including ethical challenges and issues relating to the complexity of analysis and interpretation. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a short discussion on the issues of rigour, reflexivity and positionality in relation to this qualitative research, focusing specifically on the reflections of my positionality and personal stance during this research.

3.2 Analytical methods and tools: Adopting Critical Discourse Analysis

The main analytical framework used in this project draws on the complex and eclectic approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA can be a valuable and suitable tool for researching policy debates, as it allows for a systematic analysis of texts and discourses along with an in depth examination of how these policy texts⁶ and discourses co-articulate with social structures and contextual features. As Taylor (2004, pp. 3-4) notes:

⁶ The concept of policy text used in this study denotes any document related to the policy process. It is thus used to refer to the legal texts of policies but also to other kinds of texts, such as speeches and press releases, parliamentary proceedings, policy reports, etc.

‘CDA aims at explor[ing] the relationships between discursive practices, events, texts and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes [...] and it is this combination of linguistic analysis with social analysis, which makes CDA a more suitable tool for policy analysis in comparison with other (discourse analysis) approaches’

Furthermore, as Fairclough (2001, p. 229) posits, CDA entails working in a transdisciplinary way, in that it ‘opens a dialogue between disciplines concerned with linguistic and semiotic analysis [...] and disciplines concerned with theorising and researching social processes’. Consequently, CDA can be combined with a number of broad-based social (and/or political) theories and approaches (in our case the Cultural Political Economy (CPE) theoretical approach) while also contributing to them in terms of providing a more systematic analytical framework.

CDA’s explicit ‘critical’ character and orientation towards revealing power relations and struggles makes it even more suitable for the aims of this project, i.e. to unpack the various competing discourses and reveal the struggle for hegemony among the different political and university-based groups. Nevertheless, CDA researchers’ explicit socio-political position and awareness of their role has received considerable criticism. Schegloff (1997) and Widdowson (1995), amongst others, have warned against the dangers of political and ideological bias, reductionism and partiality, which may pertain to both the selection and the interpretation of the data. In order to minimise the risk of being biased the researcher has to make their critical stance, position, values and research interests explicit and their criteria as transparent as possible (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 7).

In general, CDA has also been criticised for lacking a broader coherent theory (Widdowson, 1998). In response to that, CDA analysts reject the possibility of a ‘value-free’ science (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gouveia, 2003). Furthermore, they respond to ‘the risk of simply politicising rather than

accurately analysing' (Blackledge, 2005, p. 18) by suggesting the implementation of a 'triangulatory' methodological approach in order to ensure methodological validity (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This refers to the integrated analysis of linguistic data and extra-linguistic, contextual variables.

More specifically, in line with the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) within CDA, this study follows the "four-level model of context", by distinguishing between the following distinct but interrelated contextual dimensions (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 93):

1. the immediate language or text internal co-text – i.e. the content of the parliamentary debates;
2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship⁷ between utterances, texts, genres and discourses – i.e. between the parliamentary debates, the Framework Act 4009/2011 and its 'ensembles' – i.e. the Bologna Declaration, the OECD reports, interviews by politicians, as well as other EU and national policies related to other social fields;
3. the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation' – i.e. a specific HE institution such as the University of Athens but also the institutional and organisational context of Greek HE; and
4. the broader socio-political and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to – i.e. the historical and socio-political traditions of HE in Greece; the Greek financial crisis conjecture; the external policy actors' influence.

Hence, the institutional context of situation and the interest for the socio-historical and political processes and structures within which discourses are embedded (i.e. the history of the discourse itself as well as the history which the discourse is related to) constitute central concerns of CDA (Blackledge,

⁷ *Intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity* are discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3.

2005) and should be thoroughly investigated in order to effectively analyse the empirical data (see Chapters 4-6).

In short, CDA can offer a systematic analytical approach for investigating the various competing discourses and revealing the ideas/ modes of thought and social imaginaries upon which the different actors have based their interpretations of the policy problems - as well as the promotion or challenging of certain policy solutions.

3.3 Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Framework (CPDAF)

There are various versions of critical discourse analysis, drawing on a wide range of theoretical traditions in socio-psychological, critical and linguistic theory (Fairclough, 2010; 2003; 2001; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 1997). Although CDA approaches differ from each other they have some common principles. As Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 31) note CDA approaches share a common interest in addressing social problems based on the use (and analysis) of linguistic concepts – without however necessarily focusing on detailed linguistic analysis of specific items. Moreover, CDA allows researchers to be eclectic in regard to the selection of the theory and methodology that will apply to their research as far as these help to investigate the particular research objectives and social or political problems under examination.

In this study, I use the so-called *Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Framework (CPDAF)* developed by Hyatt (2013a; 2013b). This framework specifically focuses on education policy research, but it can certainly be used for discursive research in other policy topics as well (Wiggan, 2018). As mentioned above, CDA permits the researcher to draw on whatever methodological and analytical tools may be useful in exploring the problem studied. Hyatt's framework reflects that principle as it draws from various critical discourse approaches focusing on different but mutually synergistic analytical tools.

These pertain to the critical analysis of actors' representation, the investigation of legitimisation strategies and the exploration of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (see sections 3.3.1-3.3.3). Each one of these analytical tools and categories have been used and applied either separately (e.g. Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; 2009; van Leeuwen, 2007; 2008) or have been combined within specific projects (e.g. Fairclough & Wodak, 2008; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010; Wodak & van Leeuwen, 1999).

In my view, this framework can be efficiently employed to investigate the self-professed beliefs, values and interpretations of the policy actors and the means (language, discourses, practices) employed to propagate their visions and imaginaries in regard to the 2011 HE reforms. What is also important is that this framework manages to bridge linguistic analysis with critical policy investigation, thus on the one hand rendering CDA more accessible to policy analysts and on the other hand enabling discourse analysts to engage with policy analysis in their research.

In this study, the general approach of CPDAF is followed, adapted according to the specific nature of the data and the research aims and questions of the project. The specific analytical categories that I have incorporated - and will employ - for the analysis of the data have been mainly drawn from the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; 2009) and Social Actor Theory (SAT) (van Leeuwen, 2008) – which Hyatt seems to have relied on for the development of his approach.

CPDAF divides up the investigation into two distinct, but interdependent, analytical processes – *contextualisation* and *deconstruction* (as represented in Figure 3.1). Contextualisation pertains to the exploration and establishment of the “context” within which a discourse is generated. This stage thus conforms with CPE and CDA's theoretical premises regarding the dialectical relation between discursive practices and structural factors. The interrelated levels of context identified above pertain to the contextualisation process of the data. Additionally, in order to follow and understand the debates and their impact in

the making of the specific policies we need to identify the *policy drivers* and *levers* that have influenced and guided actors' interpretations and definitions of policy problems, *the setting of associated policy goals* and the preference for *particular solutions*. These mechanisms are context dependent and will be thus taken into consideration during the analysis.

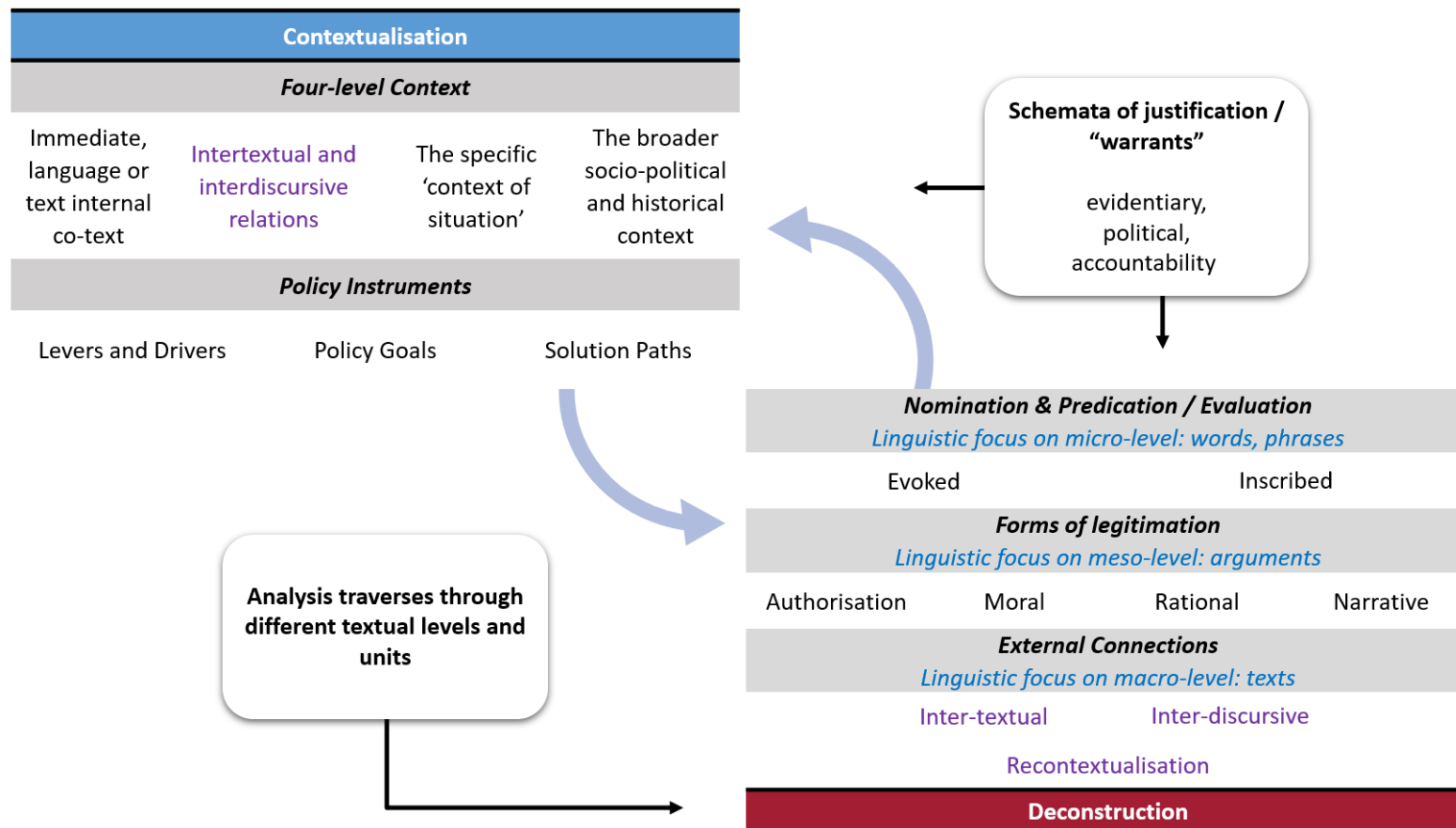
The second stage of analysis includes the deconstruction of the discourses which focuses on three heuristic enquiries (Hyatt, 2013a):

- (i) How the actors seek to *discursively construct and represent* others; how do they align others' positions with their own or oppose them through positive or negative statements and judgements?
- (ii) What are the different ways of *(de-)legitimising* the policy objectives, solutions and general themes?
- (iii) How are the articulated discourses connected to and/or appropriate other texts and discourses to support their points or contentions (*inter-textuality and interdiscursivity*)?

The following sections discuss how each one of these questions will be utilised for the investigation of the primary data.

Figure 3.1

A representation of the deconstruction and contextualisation analytical stages and their interrelation. Adapted from (Hyatt, 2013a; 2013b).



3.3.1 Analysis of Representational Strategies

The first analytical enquiry aims at investigating the political polarisation that seems to characterise the policy debate on the 2011 reforms. This enquiry will be operationalised through the analysis of the discursive *strategies*⁸ that the actors deploy for *the (positive) self- and (negative) other-representation of social/ political actors and actions* (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; 2009)

Amongst the representational strategies proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2001; 2009) for investigating self- and other-representation, the analysis will mostly focus on the following four (see Table 3.1)⁹:

- **Referential strategies or strategies of nomination:** how social actors and social actions, processes and events are discursively constructed and represented (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 94).
- **Strategies of predication:** how social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions are **discursively characterised/qualified** (e.g. labelled more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 113). The discursive characterisation/ evaluation of actors/actions/processes can be more (*inscribed evaluation*) or less (*evoked evaluation*) overt (Hyatt, 2013b).

⁸ Reisigl and Wodak (2009) define (discursive) strategies as 'a more or less intentional plan of [semiotic] practices [...] adopted to achieve a particular social, political psychological or linguistic goal' (p. 94). As Zappettini (2019, pp. 189-190, f. 9) insightfully comments, discursive strategies can be realised as linguistic enactments of both social practices and social action. In other words, we assume that speakers are more or less conscious of both their agency and their habitus. Strategies are thus approached heuristically by taking into account a "soft" determinism in communicative structures (i.e. the reproduction of some habitus) but also 'a large degree of conscious intentionality in [the actors'] discourses' (Zappettini, 2019, p. 190).

⁹ Reisigl and Wodak (2001; 2009) distinguish five main types of discursive strategies for the positive self- and negative other representation: i.e. strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, intensification and mitigation. These strategic manoeuvres can occur and be detected 'at different levels of linguistic organisation and complexity' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 94). In this study, strategies of argumentation correspond to the analysis of legitimisation strategies and the examination of warrants that speakers deploy in their discourses (see below).

- **Strategies of perspectivation, framing or discourse representation:** how speakers position their **point of view** in the reporting, description, narration or quotation of events or utterances, as well as how they express their **involvement** or **distance** with respect to the arguments and representations they deploy (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 81).
- **Strategies of intensification or mitigation:** how speakers qualify and modify the degree of their certainty and their expressiveness by *intensifying* or *mitigating* the illocutionary force¹⁰ of their utterances and discourses. These types of strategies further indicate the speakers' emotions, moods and general dispositions. They are usually applied by speakers/writers with an aim to increase the persuasive impact of their discourses and arguments on the hearers/readers (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 81).

¹⁰ The *illocutionary force* of an utterance refers to the speaker's intention when uttering a linguistic expression. In other words, it refers to the type of function that the speaker intends to fulfil or the type of action the speaker intends to accomplish when producing an utterance. In many cases, the apparent structure and literal meaning of an utterance performed does not always accord with its illocutionary force. The type of function and action of the utterance is heavily influenced by the broader cultural and situational context within which the linguistic expression is uttered. For example, depending on the circumstances and the context, the statement "*It's hot in here!*" if addressed to another person could actually mean "*I want some fresh air!*". As such the action that the speaker wants to be accomplished through this utterance is for the addressee to open the window (Thomas, 1995).

Table 3.1

Discursive strategies for positive self- and negative other-representation (adapted from Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 94).

Strategy	Heuristic questions that guide the analysis of the strategy:	Realised by/ through:
NOMINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are social actors, objects, actions, phenomena/events, processes and/or consequences named and referred linguistically? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • linguistic devices through which persons, objects, actions etc. are classified and categorised (e.g. deictics, anthroponyms, naturalising and depersonalising metaphors, etc.) • selection of active or passive voice • rhetorical tropes, such as metonymies and synecdoches • verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions etc.
PREDICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are social actors, objects, actions, phenomena/events positively or negatively evaluated? - What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, actions, phenomena/events, processes and/or consequences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (stereotypical) evaluative attributions and characterisations of positive or negative traits (these can range from single words to phrases and clauses) • collocations • implicit and explicit predicates or predicative adjectives/nouns/pronouns • rhetorical figures/tropes such as metaphors, metonymies, similes etc. • allusions, evocations and presuppositions, implications etc.
PERSPECTIVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From what perspective/ stance are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed? - How do actors articulate and negotiate their different affiliations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deictics (such as pronouns) • direct, indirect or free indirect speech • grammatical mood • discourse markers/ particles • metaphors • animating prosody, etc.
INTENSIFICATION / MITIGATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diminutives or augmentatives • (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc. • repetitions • rhetorical figures (e.g. metaphors, irony, hyperboles, litotes, etc.) • indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of assertion) • verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc.

The realisation¹¹ and critical analysis of discursive strategies will rely on the thorough examination of the rhetorical and linguistic means that the actors employ in their discourses. These can include a variety of features: i.e. rhetorical figures/ tropes (such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches), syntactic structures (such as active/passive forms), deictic features, evaluative attributes etc. Table 3.1 above presents an indicative list of the linguistic elements that will be studied. Such micro-level lexicogrammatical analysis will demonstrate how the macro features of discursive construction (and argumentation) are rhetorically enacted (Hyatt, 2013a; 2013b). Lastly, as Wodak et al. (2009) note, the use of discursive strategies (as well as their interpretation) is highly dependent on the context. For this reason, the in-depth linguistic analysis will tap into the contextualisation of the actors' strategies in order to discover the degree to which context has shaped their content.

While the strategies are presented as being distinct from each other, they can "occur more or less simultaneously and are interwoven in concrete discursive acts" (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 33). Especially in the case of nomination and predication strategies, it is very hard to neatly separate one from the other as a referential identification can already bear the feature of predication (i.e. a more or less positive or negative characterisation) and vice versa. In the same vein, perspectivation and intensification/ mitigation strategies, can also occur simultaneously with the discursive construction (nomination) and qualification (predication) of actors.

3.3.2 Analysis of (De-)Legitimation strategies

The second inquiry will be operationalised by investigating the *legitimation strategies* that actors use in their discourses. Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2007, p. 92) model, (de-)legitimation can take the following forms:

¹¹ Realisation refers to process by which meanings are manifested through linguistic means.

- **Authorisation:** appeal to authority through the use of personal references (to status and role), impersonal references (to rules), references to custom (tradition, conformity) or commendation (by expert or role model);
- **Moral evaluation:** appeal to notions of what is desirable action/outcome by referring to value systems (evaluation, abstraction, analogies);
- **Rationalisation:** appeal to usefulness of activity by referring to the goals, uses and effects of institutionalised social action (instrumental rationalisation) or to a natural order of things (theoretical rationalisation);
- **Mythopoesis:** appeal to narratives (e.g. moral tales, cautionary tales) with broader societal resonance about the consequence of a given course of activity/view – for example, legitimate actions lead to positive outcomes while non-legitimate actions are related to negative consequences.

These forms can occur separately or in combination and can be used to legitimise, but also to delegitimise. Inevitably this involves some resort to various schemata of justification which in turn are attached to the contextualisation of the policy process. These forms are categorised by Hyatt (2013a, p. 50-51) as the use of *evidentiary*, *political* and *accountability* “warrant”¹². The *evidentiary* warrant refers to the use and/ or misuse of empirical data, as actors seek to demonstrate that their preferred interpretation, goals and instruments are based in a reasoned assessment of the evidence base. The *political* warrant involves an allusion, or direct appeal to more general, evocative and positively evaluated concepts (such as liberty, choice, equality, the national interest). The *accountability* warrant seeks to ground the reason for action in the existing inadequacy of policy outcomes or the potential consequences of a failure to act. The investigation of these modes will further allow us to assess the soundness and validity of actors’ justifications

¹² This concept is relevant to the argumentation scheme / category of *topoi* (singular ‘topos’, the Greek word for place) that is used mainly in Discourse Historical Approach. It refers to the ‘formal or content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ that justify the transition from the premises (argument(s)) to the conclusion (claim) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 102). Topoi (like warrants) can be either reasonable or fallacious (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).

and arguments. It should be noted, however, that the above typology is nonrestrictive and so different, more context-dependent, types of warrants may also be identified through the contextualisation of the speakers' arguments.

3.3.3 Analysis of Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

The third inquiry focuses on the analysis of *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity*. Specifically, intertextuality refers to the ways through which texts are connected/ related to other texts - both in the past and in the present (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 90). These connections can be either explicit (e.g. through the explicit reference to a particular topic, author of another text etc.) or inferred (e.g. through allusions or evocations, through the adoption of similar argumentative schemes, etc.). Similarly, interdiscursivity refers to the multiple ways through which discourses can be connected/ related to each other – which signifies the dynamic and often hybrid nature of discourses (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). For example, discourses on the quality of Higher Education often refer to other discourses, such as discourses about finances or business. A distinct, hybrid discourse can thus be created through the intermingling of different discursal elements and topics.

In both cases, the process of *recontextualisation* is of paramount importance. Recontextualisation refers to the process of transferring given textual (e.g. words, phrases, etc.) and discursal elements (such as discourses, genres and texts) to new contexts, which results in their – at least partly – attachment of new meanings (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This is often 'textually realised in the mixing of 'new' recontextualised elements and 'old' elements', such as particular words, phrases, arguments, discourses and so forth (Wodak and Fairclough, 2010, p. 24). Given the spatiotemporal *modus operandi* of recontextualisation processes, this enquiry is also associated with the contextualisation analytical process – as it relates to (and often influenced by) broader historical contexts, socio-political changes as well as institutional frames of specific situational contexts (see the four-level model of context).

By investigating the ways in which words, utterances, texts and discourses are positioned in relation to other words, utterances, texts and discourses we can further determine the speakers' orientation to difference, while also contributing to the identification and realisation of power struggles within the texts (Fairclough, 2003). In short, the exploration of inter-textual and inter-discursive relations can be a fruitful tool of analysis as it can provide insights on the origins, suppositions and ideological underpinnings of the discourse coalitions that surfaced during and after the voting of the 2011 law (Hyatt, 2013a, p. 54).

3.4 Textual data: speeches in the parliamentary debates

The texts collected for analysis in this study include the proceedings of the discussions about the Law 4009/2011 that took place in the bill's *debate in principle*¹³ on the 23rd and 24th of August 2011. These discussions reflect and signify the culmination of the 12-month public consultation process that preceded the voting on the bill. The very nature and setting of the parliament – i.e. an “arena for open deliberation and dissent” (Ilie, 2010) – renders the genre of parliamentary debates a significant resource for exploring the diverse opinions, proposals and counter-proposals expressed by the political actors about the reforms under examination - and by extension the imaginaries that frame their political discourses. In contrast, the primarily prescriptive function and technical jargon of the official law texts provides little insight into the political struggles that take place in the policy process and thus were dismissed from the main analysis. In particular, the focus of analysis will lie on the political speeches of the following political actors (Table 3.2):

¹³ The draft bill refers to the first stage of the debate process where the discussions refer exclusively to the bill's goals and content. The second stage pertains to the debate of articles and of any amendments which commences immediately after the debate in principle and the voting of the bill's articles (Hellenic Parliament, 2019).

Table 3.2

Political actors selected for analysis, categorised according to the parties and discursive coalitions they belong to.

POLICY ADOPTION DISCOURSE COALITION (parties that voted in favour of the bill)		
Anna Diamantopoulou	Minister of Education	 The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)
Sophia Giannaka	Parliamentary majority rapporteur	
Giorgios Papandreou	Prime Minister – leader of the party	
Spyridon Taliadouros	Special speaker	 New Democracy (ND)
Aris Spiliotopoulos	Shadow Minister of Education	
Spyridon-Adonis Georgiadis	Special speaker	 Popular Orthodox Rally or People's Orthodox Alarm (LAOS)
Giorgos Karatzaferis	Leader of the party	
OPPOSITION DISCOURSE COALITION (parties that voted against the bill)		
Ioannis Ziogas	Special speaker	 The Communist Party (KKE)
Aleka Papariga	General Secretary of the party	
Anastasios Kourakis	Special speaker	 Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)
Alexis Tsipras	Leader of the party	

I decided to look at the specific actors since they constitute the main representatives of the political groups they belong to, thus expressing their party's line and positions in relation to the issues at stake. In this sense, their speeches can be indicative of the competing discourses and struggles between the different actors and interest groups as well as of the various imaginaries that underlie their opinions and arguments. It should be noted that some of the speeches have not been featured in the thesis, although they have been fully investigated through the CPDAF tools. In particular, no extracts were included from the speeches of Giorgios Papandreou, Aris Spiliotopoulos, Giorgos Karatzaferis and Aleka Papariga, as their speeches were either too short or too vague, thus not presenting enough data for analysis. Instead, the respective speeches of the special speakers were deemed more representative of their parties' political agenda and ideological orientation regarding the policy themes and motifs of the 2011 Law, and thus were preferred for inclusion in the analysis chapters.

At the same time, speeches of other parliamentarians during the debates were also explored, but they were not investigated in depth. Nevertheless, extracts from some of those speeches have been used in the analysis – particularly those which received salience through extensive media coverage – in order to illustrate strong language or radical positions. It should be stated here that some of these extracts have been already examined in other studies (e.g. Gounari, 2012), while others were highlighted and discussed by some interviewees. These analyses and commentaries will be taken into consideration only insofar as they are relevant for the analysis of this project's primary data.

3.5 Interviews with key policy actors

In addition to the texts a number of interviews with key policy actors involved in the Greek HE policy system were carried out. The rationale for this choice was that interviews generally allow members to illustrate and express their own viewpoints without having the pressure to follow group opinions or 'dominant' participants (such as in the parliament debates where members usually conform to their party's line) (Zappettini, 2019, p. 54). Furthermore, while the political parties and their members do represent the main groups of actors that are involved in HE policy-making, there are other policy actors involved in this process (e.g. academics) who cannot participate in the parliamentary sessions and thus their views are not directly or fully represented in the debates.

Another reason for conducting interviews has been the assumption that texts and their discursive elements constitute a static representation of the policy discourses. In this sense, parliamentary speeches may not be enough for examining the political and public actors' role in the policy process as well as the dynamic interactions which may exist between the conflicting parties (e.g. the politicians, the academics, the students, etc.). As the main ontological argument of this study purports to the dialectic connection of discursive and textual elements with the social action and agency - and by extension with the socio-cultural structure/ context that frames them - I considered it necessary to explore the latter in more depth by enriching the analysis of texts data with additional qualitative data.

Interviews are hence regarded in this study as an important method of investigation that could significantly integrate and corroborate the results from the analysis of the speeches with insights on the individual dimension, while also providing the opportunity to those policy actors who are formally excluded from the parliamentary debates to express their views and opinions. Furthermore, interviews could be also used in our case as an additional source of contextual information about the overall policy-making process and implementation of the reforms; about the culture and community of policy

influence and policy struggle (past and present); and lastly about the situation in the Greek Higher Education field after the voting of the 2011 bill (Ball, 1994a).

3.5.1 Sampling procedures

After exploring in depth the literature and several secondary data resources (such as policy documents, newspaper articles, etc.) I gathered information about the different actors who took part in the various stages of the policy-making process. As Stamelos & Kavasakalis (2011) note, there are two sets of actors involved in the Greek HE policy system: those who are inside the HEIs and those who represent networks from outside universities. Both of them try to shape and influence not only the educational policies, but also public opinion for topics related to HE. With this in mind, I sought to include representatives from all the relevant policy networks; i.e. politicians, bureaucrats, academics and/or civil servants who have participated in the production of these reforms, as well as Rectors, professors/lecturers, representatives of the teaching and administrative staff trade unions, as well as representatives from student unions. Based on the above, I followed a purposive sampling approach, by preparing an initial draft list of key actors that included a balanced sample of representatives from the above categories.

Prior to conducting the interviews with the target groups, I carried out pilot interviews with two professors in December 2015 and January 2016. Through the pilot interviews I sought to practice and test the interview guide and questions while gaining some experience on the process of interviewing (Bryman, 2012). My purpose was to ensure the designed interview schedule functions and flows well as a whole and to refine aspects of its design if necessary (Yin, 2011). The pilot interviews proved to be quite helpful and useful, as the actors interviewed suggested to me some additional names while also giving me some concrete advice about how to approach them. It should be noted that although both pilot interviews worked well and were quite

successful none of them were included in the final data, as one of the interviewees was not interested in participating in the research, whereas the other agreed to hold a separate formal interview during the fieldwork process.

After taking into consideration the suggestions made by the two professors in the pilot interviews, a list of desired participants was compiled. The list consisted of key actors who were involved in the processes of designing, shaping and negotiating the 2011 Higher Education policies. As one of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the different discourses and legitimisation strategies used by political, academic and public actors concerning the 2011 Law and reveal the imaginaries and ideas that underlie them, the final list of potential participants was structured in such manner so as to include a balanced sample of representatives from different parties/ ideological groups, different organisations, networks and institutions, as well as actors with different academic status and positions.

First of all, high-ranking actors who spearheaded or actively participated in the early stages of the creation and shaping of the 2011 Law were aimed for. Therefore, I contacted Ms. Anna Diamantopoulou, the Minister of Education at the time of introduction of the 2011 Law, as well as other bureaucrats, politicians and professors who had played an important role in the process of formulating the general provisions of the law and drafting the legal text. As far as the interview with the Minister of Education is concerned, the aim was to complement the analysis of her parliamentary debate speech, so as to explore in more depth her views and to reveal the basic ideas that underlie her discourse and legitimisation around the 2011 Law. Two more actors were contacted (a bureaucrat and a professor) who had worked very closely with the Ministry of Education in the drafting of the policy text; however, none of them responded to my invitation. Nevertheless, I managed to get access to other actors who had participated in the formulation of the Law either directly (i.e. by participating in the designing process) or indirectly (as consultants). Among them were two faculty members from the University of Athens and the Rector of the Technical University of Crete. It should be mentioned at this point

that it was never possible to interview one of the main drafters and the architect of the specific 2011 policies, Professor Vassilis Papazoglou (the at-the-time Special Secretary for Higher Education) as he passed away unexpectedly in 2014. This constituted a significant gap in my research that could not be filled by others.

Additionally, although I initially planned to interview the persons who served as Ministers of Education within the period 2012-2014 - in order to investigate the subsequent amendments - this was not possible as I was not successful to get access to any of them. Nevertheless, this did not cause any issue to the research as its primary focus was the policy-making process and the debate surrounding the 2011 Law. In addition, interviews conducted with other actors (e.g. Rectors and faculty members) provided useful insights on the ways in which the subsequent amendments altered the content and objectives of the 2011 Law, without however deviating from the central theme, i.e. the analysis of political and public discourses surrounding the HE policies in 2011 in the light of the recent economic crisis in Greece.

The next group that was deemed relevant to be interviewed were the University Rectors and Presidents of the Technological Educational Institutes (Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma - TEI). This group of actors is directly involved in the initial stages of policy formulation and negotiation, since every time a new bill on HE is proposed by the Ministry of Education it is commonly discussed and consulted with the University Rectors and Presidents of TEIs. At the same time, forming one of the main administrative bodies, they are responsible for implementing the laws. Furthermore, Rectors and Presidents of TEIs are responsible for supervising the application of relevant policies in HEIs. It was thus important to explore the views of these actors who practically act as the main representatives of their institutions and discuss the impact of the attempted changes on both the University and Technological sectors. Greater emphasis was placed on Rectors as the core changes promoted by the 2011 law primarily affected the organisational and management structure of the Universities.

The idea of inviting all the Rectors of Greek universities of that period was deemed unfeasible from the outset due to their large number (20 rectors in total) as well as other logistical and time restrictions. As a result, a purposive sampling strategy was chosen. Specifically, the sample of University Rectors and TEI Presidents was structured in a way that would include representatives from old and new higher education institutions as well as from those HEIs which had fully implemented the 2011 reforms and those which had only partly adopted them. First, I invited the Rectors of the two largest and oldest universities in Greece (in Athens and Thessaloniki). Both Rectors had opposed the bill and reacted strongly to the voting and later implementation of the 2011 Law. Subsequently, I decided to reach University Rectors mainly from peripheral universities. Thus, the then Rectors of the universities of Patras and Thrace (located in southern and northern Greece respectively) were invited and agreed to be interviewed. Although both Rectors had expressed some criticisms of the 2011 reforms, they partially implemented the policies. Finally, I was able to conduct an interview with the Rector of the Technical University of Crete¹⁴ who had openly stood in favor of the reforms and proceeded to fully implement them - although his effort was ultimately unsuccessful. There was also an attempt to reach the rector of the Technical University of Athens, but I was not able to retrieve his contact details. Overall, the sample of Rectors who participated in the research provides an adequate representation of the divergent views within the sector as a whole.

Lastly, the President of the TEI of Athens as well as the President of the TEI of Patras¹⁵ were approached and agreed to participate. These are two of the largest TEIs in Greece which followed a more moderate approach regarding the introduction and implementation of the 2011 reforms. At the beginning there was a plan to invite ten TEI presidents in proportion to the sample of Rectors (i.e. half from each HE sector). However, after the completion of the

¹⁴ As mentioned earlier, he was also actively involved in the design of the 2011 Law.

¹⁵ In 2013, the TEI of Patras was merged with the TEI of Messolonghi forming the so-called TEI of Western Greece.

interviews with the two TEI presidents of Athens and Patras, it was concluded that their interviews were adequate, providing comprehensive information and knowledge about the impact that the 2011 reforms had on the higher technological education sector.

The state also interacts with interest groups (specifically trade unions) during all the stages of the policy-making process with the aim to obtain a wide consensus on the proposed policies. In the Greek context, trade unions related to the HE field have a key role in influencing the choice of policy priorities and negotiating various options by bringing their own insights to the debate based on the direct experience and engagement with their membership. Their primary purpose is to ensure that the professional and labour rights of their members are not adversely affected by the provisions of the proposed policies. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to include representatives from the Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association POSDEP, i.e. the official trade union of Greek academics and the Federation of Administrative Employees of Higher Education (ODPTE) which is the official trade union of all administrative personnel of Greek HEIs. These groups are recognised by the Greek state as key interlocutors in Higher Education matters. The representatives that were invited - and eventually agreed to be interviewed included the president of POSDEP at the time of the 2011 Law passing (who is also a professor at the Technical University of Athens) and a member of the central council of the ODPTE federation.

In addition, I decided to also contact journalists who cover educational issues. The interviews with this group would contribute to the investigation of the public debate as media reports facilitate the communication of the policies to the public, while also representing and reflecting specific ideological and political positions according to the editorial leaning of each newspaper. In this way they act as political communication instruments in the public policy debate, shaping public opinion on issues related to HE by either legitimising or delegitimising the proposed policies. In addition, as both participants in the pilot interviews suggested, journalists could provide information on various behind-the-scenes

processes that took place during the policy-making process of the 2011 Act. As my aim was to cover as much of the political spectrum as possible I selected the following newspapers known to have an explicit political orientation: the newspaper “Kathimerini” which is traditionally affiliated with the New Democracy party; the newspaper “Rizospastis” which is traditionally affiliated with the KKE; the newspaper “To Vima” which was then considered center-left and politically aligned with social-democratic party PASOK; and the newspaper “I Avgi” which is traditionally affiliated with the SYRIZA party. Unfortunately, only the “Avgi” journalist responded to my interview invitation. Of the other three, one declined to participate in the research, while the other two did not respond to the invitation at all.

Finally, it was attempted to include in the sample faculty members of various ranks (namely full professors, associate professors, adjunct professors and members from Higher Education Special Teaching Staff (EDIP)) in order to record their opinions regarding the design and content of the law as well as their experiences after the introduction of the policies in 2011. Most of the teaching staff who were selected are experts on HE policy research or have commented extensively on the developments in Greek HE policy area, thus further providing some useful theoretical insight regarding the discursive construction of the 2011 HE policies. At the same time, as already mentioned, some of these professors had also actively participated in the early planning stages of the 2011 Law. The sample also varied in the sense that some faculty members had publicly supported the 2011 Law, while others had either opposed its voting and implementation or seemed to have more moderate views. Finally, some faculty members acted to some extent as representatives of their universities (especially the professors from the University of Peiraeus and Panteion University as well as the president of POSDEP who is also a professor at the Technical University of Athens) since I was not able to contact and interview the Rectors of these institutions. In total, 15 faculty members were contacted. Of them 11 responded to my invitation and agreed to be interviewed. The remaining four either did not respond to the invitation or

declined to participate. Overall, the sample of faculty members included seven well-established (full professors and associate professors), two adjunct professors and two EDIP members.

With regard to the group of political actors, it was assumed that interviews with political figures such as MPs would not add any new insights since the many political speeches during the 2011 parliamentary debates were already providing rich detail of the various discourses and ideological-political positions expressed by the then political parties. Moreover, several of the participants were either directly or indirectly associated to political parties (specifically the PASOK, New Democracy and SYRIZA parties) thereby conveying more or less explicitly the different ideological and political positions concerning the 2011 reforms.

It should be pointed out that all participants were selected based on the position they held at the time of the introduction of the 2011 Law. However, when the interviews were conducted most of them were no longer in the same position. For example, during the interviews with the Rectors and Presidents of TEIs, most of them no longer held this position either because their term had expired or because they had retired. As for the Rector of the University of Athens, he had assumed the position of Deputy Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs in the coalition government of SYRIZA & ANEL, while the Rector of the University of Thessaloniki was the chairman of ATTIKO METRO S.A.¹⁶ At the same time, a faculty member of the University of Athens had been appointed as Vice-Chancellor at the same university, while the president of POSDEP was no longer holding this position. Finally, it is worth noting that one of the professors at the University of Athens assumed the position of Minister of Education in the coalition government of SYRIZA & ANEL five months after the interview was conducted. In essence, the different roles of some of the participants contributed to the collection of richer data, as

¹⁶ Attiko Metro Public Company Limited (Attiko Metro S.A.) is a Greek public interest company that manages the design and construction of the underground railway (Metro network) in Athens and Thessaloniki as well as the construction of the tramway projects in Greece.

there was the opportunity to explore the interview topics through various points of view.

Overall, 23 interviews were conducted. The actors whose contact details were publicly available online were contacted by phone or email. In the invitation they were asked if they were interested in participating in the study. Each interviewee initially confirmed their willingness to participate by email or telephone and then a meeting was scheduled. I asked the participants to choose the place and time of the meeting, so as to ensure that their timetable is not interrupted by me and thus minimise any potential risks (e.g. discomfort, stress, refusal) that might be ensued by the research process. Furthermore, some interviews (5 in total) were conducted through snowballing (Bryman, 2012) with many participants facilitating contact with other actors and access after their own interview. One example is the interview with Ms Diamantopoulou, whom I managed to interview after one of the participants helped me to gain access to her. Those participants who assisted me to gain access to powerful actors proved extremely helpful in this regard as they did not only give credence to my research but also helped me bypass some gatekeepers (including mostly personal assistants) who affected the process of the fieldwork by neglecting, for instance, to arrange a meeting with the participant. But since I was dealing with policy elites, I was already aware of the challenges this holds for the interviewer in arranging access and interviewing them and later interpreting their voices (Ball, 1994a; 1994b; Lilleker, 2003). In general, the majority of the people referred to by others were contacted for subsequent appointments and readily agreed to be interviewed. This helped me a lot especially since several actors included in the initial list either refused, were not available or did not respond at all to my emails and calls.

Nevertheless, in some cases the diversity of the sample was affected as fewer representatives from one category were interviewed than expected (or even none). This was the case, for instance, with the category of journalists as only one accepted my invitation, and so I was not able to grasp the full range of

positions in this category. Similarly, the sample does not include actors who were affiliated to specific political parties (namely the parties of KKE and LAOS¹⁷) as some of them were not available while others did not respond to my email invitation. However, some of the participants who were supporting more or less openly the KKE party, discussed the basic political and ideological positions of the party. At the same time, the speeches of LAOS MPs during the parliamentary debate of the bill in 2011 proved to be sufficient for the analysis of the party's main positions.

Perhaps, the most important limitation pertains to the case of students, as I was not able to gather any views from them. The views of the students would be really valuable, as they were one of the main groups directly affected by the proposed policies, not only in terms of the development of their studies but also their participation in the decision-making processes of the institution. Although I had planned to interview representatives of student unions, I was not able to track anyone, as I realised during my fieldwork that the "National Student Union of Greece" (EFEE) – even though it exists on paper – in reality has been inoperative. At the same time, some students who were approached and initially agreed to participate, later refused mainly because it was a busy period for them.

The study acknowledges that the non-inclusion of the above actors may have affected the analysis and findings of this research, since there was not an opportunity to examine the views of specific groups who have been actively involved or affected by the policy-making process, and also whether there has been any change in their opinions about the 2011 Law and its impact in light of the financial crisis. Nevertheless, the small deviation from the original list of participants does not seem to have hindered the exploration of the main positions, opinions and ideas expressed around the 2011 Law, as apart from

¹⁷ After the June 2012 elections, the LAOS party was weakened and was essentially displaced by the rise of the populist radical right-wing party of ANEL and the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn. At the time of the interviews, there were no representatives of the party in the parliament. Several of its former members did not run in the following elections, while some others had joined the New Democracy party.

the students there was a balanced and representative sample of the main groups and networks that were involved in the debate of the reforms.

Also, considering that the entire effort to gain access to elite actors was difficult from the beginning, the response of the persons selected was highly satisfactory based on the initial design. Apart from the above problems and challenges, the whole process of approaching, getting access to and interviewing elite policy actors proved to be much easier than I was expecting. As some of the participants told me, my online profile on the University's website as well as the reputation of the University of Edinburgh played an instrumental role in their decision to accept my invitation. In general, all of my participants were very cooperative and answered openly to all my questions. Most of them were also willing to be contacted again if it was deemed necessary for my research.

Overall, the fieldwork lasted approximately two months (from 15th of May until 12th of July 2016) and took place in three cities: Chania (one interview), Patras (three interviews) and Athens (nineteen interviews). Most of the interviews took place in the workplace of the interviewees, while two were conducted in their home and another two in public cafés. The average length of the interviews was about one hour. There were some interviewees who had agreed to participate but only for a limited timeframe – as they had other responsibilities – and their interviews were about 30-45 minutes. On these occasions, the questions posed by the researcher were as brief and precise as possible. At the other end of the spectrum, some interviews lasted over two hours. In fact, those discussions have proved to be the more revealing ones as the participants were more willing to disclose significant information.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and most of them were recorded. There were, however, three interviewees who refused to be recorded, so, instead, handwritten notes were taken (see also below). All the interviews were fully transcribed and saved both in written and digital formats. The transcriptions also include full details about the interviews (e.g. participants

name, organisation, date of meeting, place of interview, date of transcription and additional comments). Drawing on the BERA (2011)¹⁸ guidelines for the secure storage of the collected data, the recordings and digital versions of the interviews' transcripts were stored on my personal computer and protected with a password which was known only by me. Also, the written transcripts of the interviews were stored by the researcher in a safe location. At the end of the project the recordings were deleted and the written transcripts were destroyed. The digital versions of the transcripts have been kept saved with double encryption in the personal computer of the researcher (i.e. the files and the folder in which they are saved are protected with each one having different passwords known only by the researcher).

The final list of interviews and discussions carried out during the fieldwork is presented in Table 3.3 The participants are categorised according to the academic institution, organisation or political party they come from. The table also indicates the position that participants held in 2011, when the main law came into force, as well as the position that they held during the time of the interviews.

¹⁸ The thesis acknowledges the revised version of BERA (2018) guidelines which further stipulates the compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements in relation to the secure storage and use of the collected data. It should be noted that although the fieldwork process was completed before the publication of the revised version, the processing and management of the collected data (including participants' personal data) comply fully with the revised guidelines and requirements.

Table 3.3

Number of the interviews conducted and categorisation of the participants.

Category of interviewee	Academic institution or organisation			No of interviews	Participant codes
	Position held in 2011		Position held during the interviews		
Academics	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (est. 1837)	Well established (associate professors, full professors)	• 1 professor: Vice-Rector of the University of Athens	7	AC 1-23
		Rector of the University	• Deputy Minister of Education (SYRIZA-ANEL government)	1	
		Higher Education Special Teaching Staff (EDIP)		2	
	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (est. 1925)	Rector of the University	• Chairman of Attiko Metro S.A.	1	
	Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (est. 1927)	Early career (adjunct professor)		1	
	University of Piraeus (est. 1938)	Early career (adjunct professor)		1	
	University of Patras (est. 1964)	Well established (full professor)		1	
		Rector of the University	• Not holding the position in 2016 • Professor in the University of Patras	1	
	Democritus University of Thrace (est. 1974)	Rector of the University	• Not holding the position in 2016 • Professor in the Democritus University of Thrace	1	
	Technical University of Crete (est. 1977)	Rector of the University	• Not holding the position in 2016 • Professor Emeritus	1	
	TEI of Patras (est. 1970) > merged with TEI of Messolonghi in 2013 forming TEI of Western Greece	President of the institution	• Not holding the position in 2016 • Professor Emeritus	1	
	TEI of Athens (est. 1974)	President of the institution	• Not holding the position in 2016 • Professor Emeritus	1	
Journalists	Greek newspaper 'I Avgi' (translation: 'The Dawn'). Politically affiliated with SYRIZA party			1	

Table 3.3

Number of the interviews conducted and categorisation of the participants (continued).

Category of interviewee	Academic institution or organisation		No of interviews	Participant codes
	Position held in 2011	Position held during the interviews		
Member of ODPTE	Federation of Administrative Employees of Higher Education (ODPTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not holding the position in 2016	1	AC 1-23
President of POSDEP	Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Associations (POSDEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not holding the position in 2016• Professor in the National Technical University of Athens	1	
Education Minister	Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not holding the position in 2016• President of the "DIKTIO" Network for Reform in Greece and Europe (a think tank organisation based in Greece)	1	
Total number of interviewees: 23				

3.5.2 Ethical and confidentiality issues

During the conduct of the research, I remained attentive to ethical concerns arising from the issues of confidentiality and informed consent (Bryman, 2012; Esterberg, 2002). As I was dealing with influential policy actors, I had to be careful that they would give informed consent to participating in the research and they would also be assured of the confidentiality of information that they would share.

As mentioned above, each interviewee initially confirmed their willingness to participate by email or telephone. Then at the beginning of each interview, a consent form along with an information sheet (which explained the research in a non-technical sense) were given to the interviewees (Appendix 2). Contrary to what I had assumed, the vast majority of the participants (i.e. 18 of the 23) were willing to be both named and audio recorded. One possible explanation, according to Walford (1994, p. 225), is that since almost all of them 'are aware of what academic research involves, and are familiar with being interviewed and audio recorded' they did not feel that these interviews and the results of the research will pose any significant threat to their positions. Another possibility is that they may have seen this research as an opportunity to further promote their - already known - views. There were indeed some cases where the speakers were repeating statements that they have already made in their speeches. In any case, most of interviewees seemed to be very able and well prepared to answer the questions I posed to them; others were genuinely interested in my research and immersed into the interviews; others treated them as informal discussions.

Not surprisingly, some of them requested me to send back the interviews transcripts in order to review them and change (or delete) some parts, if necessary, while others indicated during the meetings what they wanted to be attributable or not: either by explicitly stating it during the discussion or by asking the researcher to pause the audio-recorder. Only five participants (the two members of the Special Teaching Staff (EDIP) and three professors)

wanted to remain anonymous in the reporting data – and three of those five also refused to be recorded – without mentioning the exact reason of their decision¹⁹. To ensure and preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of those five participants - and by virtue of consistency - I have decided to pseudonymise participants by using the coding protocol indicated in Table 3.3. Only one participant is named in the research after ensuring that she has given informed consent to be identified in the study (Ms Anna Diamantopoulou). This was mainly due to the significance of her interview but also because the extracts from her interview contain information that would have either way made her easily identifiable. It should be noted that some of the other quotes used in the analysis may also include identifiable information; however, I have ensured that these have been extracted from those interviewees who have given their consent to be named.

3.5.3 Type of interviews and topics discussed

For this study, the type of interviewing conducted was that of semi-structured interviews. This format allows the researcher to adopt a flexible approach where they can combine closed-ended and open-ended questions (Bryman, 2012). The question guide includes some initial core questions, which are designed in such a way that enables the researcher to ask further questions, hence leading into a wider discussion of related issues.

As all research methods, this method has also a number of limitations which pertain precisely to the flexibility of the interview schedule and the nature of open questions. As semi-structured interviews do not typically have a fixed format, there is always the risk they can lead to irrelevant and redundant information, cause confusion or even annoy the participants (Cohen et al.,

¹⁹ As two of them characteristically told me, they were not feeling comfortable to be named 'for various reasons'.

2007). For this reason, the preparation and design of the interview guide had to be thorough.

Therefore, I developed a set of ‘topical frames’ to guide the structure of the interviews before I began my fieldwork. These had been derived from the preliminary analysis of the documents (i.e. the official legal texts and the parliamentary debates) and the review of research studies related to the history of Greek higher education (Krzyżanowski, 2005). This helped me to identify a set of general themes of conversation and formulate some core questions before the start of the fieldwork (Appendix 1). Almost all interviews began with the following general questions: the first was about their views in regard to the current situation in Greek Higher Education while the second was asking their opinion about the role and purpose of Greek University Education as it is set out by the 2011 Framework Act. Then the focus was shifted to the following particular topics pertinent to the law’s provisions (see also section 6.2):

- the new management and governance model of institutions – focusing on the introduction of University Councils
- the re-introduction and re-definition of quality assurance procedures.
- the international influence
- the internationalisation of Greek Universities
- the impact of crisis on the operation of Greek HEIs.

In short, the participants were asked to report on their views and interpretations of the key-themes of the reforms, the external policy actors’ influence and the impact of crisis on them.

Nevertheless, the schedule and focus of interviews was further developed and changed as the fieldwork was progressing and I was exposed to new material and information. Some additional or complementary issues were also raised by the participants which then formed part of the later interviews. Therefore, I tried to be well prepared before each interview by checking the structure and content of previous discussions as well as the profile of the participant in order

to prepare a set of specific questions for each one of them. My attempts to be prepared as much as possible and my continuous engagement with the material I had collected helped me further in this regard.

It is noteworthy here that many topics I had assumed would dominate the discussions proved not to be so salient (such as the issue of academic asylum and the representation of students by the 2011 Framework Act) as the interviewees did not place special emphasis on them. Instead, other themes were widely foregrounded by almost all the participants which were more or less expected to be salient. One of these was the governance of Universities and the introduction of the so-called *University Councils* (Greek: *Συμβούλια Ιδρυμάτων*), which according to the majority of the interviewees was one of the major changes introduced by the Act 4009/2011 and also one of the most contentious aspects of the law. Evidently, this topic emerged as the most dominant one, as it was the first issue brought forth by several participants when asked about the current situation in Higher Education.

In general, most of the interviewees presented long and spontaneous accounts and seemed to be very comfortable with the interview process. Like Ball (1994b, p. 98) I also experienced that the interviewees who have since left office were more revealing (e.g. former Rectors) than those still in relevant positions. In general, my intention of using open-ended questions and prompts was that participants would feel enabled to present freely their opinions without the feeling of being directly “interrogated” or “questioned” (see Krzyżanowski, 2005), while further explaining and qualifying their responses. This allowed me to gain more feedback about the opinions and views of the different actors and interest groups who supported or opposed the 2011 reforms, without having to use leading questions. Furthermore, the broad structuring of the thematic frames helped me elicit a very differentiated set of interviewees’ opinions, which gave a deeper understanding of the perceptions and views of the social and political context of Greek universities (Krzyżanowski, 2005).

Inevitably, this also left room for some elite policy makers and politicians to use the interviews as an opportunity to project a particular image of themselves and the institutions or political parties that they represent. These interviewees often talked in terms of their official capacity (Fitz & Halpin, 1994) hence invoking and/or applying some already “well-rehearsed” statements on particular topics or using some standard elements of their party’s discourse (Krzyżanowski, 2005). I tried to minimise this by either playing the role of devil’s advocate or by making my questions more concrete (e.g. supporting them by using quotations from available documentary sources).

3.5.4 Interpretation of interview data: some challenges and considerations

When I started the interviewing process, my predilection was to treat the data gathered from the discussions as ‘background’ data or contextual information that would supplement the speeches’ analysis. In other words, I was planning to deal with them as a general commentary on the policy-making process which will give some general information about the discourses, contradictions and constraints that have informed and affected policy actors (Ball, 1994a, p. 123). Nevertheless, as Ball (1994a) points out, we can engage with interviews more deeply, by viewing them as ‘evidence’, i.e. as a more precise description that indicates the when, where and who of the policy-making process. In our case, the interviews proved to be extremely informative in terms of delineating the institutional and cultural-political context as well as indicative of the micro-political and ideological struggles within the Greek HE policy field. Hence, the actors’ ‘voices’ elicited in the fieldwork, can and should be understood and interpreted in both ways.

Certainly, this distinction does not fully cover the many different types and levels of interpretation to which each one of the interviews (or even any one snippet of them) can be subjected. Reflecting upon the interpretational work he had conducted for his study “*Politics and Policy Making in Education*”, Ball

(1994a), presents a set of three interpretational modes through interview data could be processed more thoroughly:

- First, interviews can be **treated as ‘real stories’** (Ball, 1994a, p. 115), i.e. as accounts of what happened, who said what, whose voices were important. What is of interest here are descriptions of events and key figures, moments and debates ‘inside’ the policy-making process. For Ball this is *‘the ‘how’ of policy, the practicalities’* (Ball, 1994a).
- Second, the data can be treated as **interest representation** (but not in any simple pluralist sense). This means that data can be indicative of structural and relational constraints and influences which play in and upon policy making - what I call (following Sum & Jessop’s (2013) terminology) the extra-semiotic or material factors²⁰. This is what Ball calls *‘the ‘because’ of policy’*.
- Third, each interview can be further treated as **discourse and/or narrative**. By discourse I mean here²¹ the ways of talking about, representing and conceptualising policy, which can be generally identified and associated with the subjective position and/or perspective of each actor – or with the position(s) and/or perspective(s) of a group of actors (Fairclough, 2013). In this sense each interview corresponds to each actor’s individual narrative through which they construe the various policy issues. The assertions, judgments, axioms and interpretations of individual or collective actors as well as their beliefs and values are central here. The reiteration of basic principles in and between interviews is further important. In a sense, this level constitutes the ‘why’ of policy. This mode could also provide insight on

²⁰ These can refer, for example, to the socio-economic conditions that frame the policy-making policy, the ways in which HE policy making is materially related to the ‘needs’ of the market and civil society and/or the technical or structural problems and deficiencies of the HE field.

²¹ As explained in section 2.2. I use discourse here somewhat different than Ball who adopts an exclusively Foucauldian approach to discourse.

the ‘social imaginaries’ that underpin the actors’ core understandings about how the world works and what is the appropriate action in the world.

In general, Ball’s typology provides a useful guide that can be productively used in the interpretation of this study’s interview data. It enables us to engage not only with the discursive/ semiotic features and aspects of the policy process, but also with the material and contextual features that frame the participants’ responses. Lastly, it is congruent with the theoretical framework as well as the methodological tools of CDA and so it will be used along them for the analysis of the interview data.

3.6 Secondary textual data

Last but not least, an extensive set of secondary textual data was also collected and used as complementary sources for the analysis of the primary data (see Appendix 3 for a full list). These include the central legal text of the Framework Act 4009/2011 (‘Structure, Operation, Quality Assurance of Higher Studies and Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions’) which sets out the reforms explored in this project as well as other policy texts that frame or directly refer to it.

Since the enactment of the 2011 reforms a number of laws have followed (mainly the laws 4076/2012 and 4115/2013), which either amend, set in force or complement the 2011 Framework Act. The main changes introduced by the 2012 and 2013 laws, mostly pertain to technical and practical issues. Therefore, I decided to selectively consult the subsequent laws - with respect to the main themes identified - as long as they were mentioned in the interview data. As mentioned above, the legal texts will not be analysed in detail through CDA methods but treated as ‘points of reference’ for the analysis of the data.

Other policy texts include previous laws, governmental speeches and statements, position papers by trade unions and other documents related to the consultation process. Also assessed were policy documents produced by

the European Union, such as national reports that assessed the Bologna Process implementation in Greece, OECD reports on Greek Education, and reports from the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) regarding the external and internal evaluation of the Greek Higher Education Institutions. The collection and examination of this type of texts – what Ball (1993) calls ‘policy ensembles’ – allows the researcher to gather more information about the overall discursive field of the policy process, as it is not only the discourses enacted during the debates (and/ or the legal text’s discourse) that inform the existing policy scene but rather their interrelation and interaction with the discourses of other relevant policy genres (e.g. external policy reviews and reports).

The majority of the policy texts (e.g. the Parliamentary proceedings, the official legal texts, as well as the EU official documents) were gathered through online sources. The OECD reports were obtained via e-mail after personally contacting the organisation. In addition, some of the data were also collected at later opportunities, particularly through internet searching, while others were identified and provided to the researcher by interviewees or collected from university libraries in Greece during the fieldwork period (between May and July 2016).

3.7 Description of the methodological and analytical processes

After reading the literature to gain an insight into the history and current situation of Greek higher education, the study proceeded to examine the 2011 HE reforms that were introduced during the period of the financial crisis as well as the changes that took place at the EU level, and the associated responses of higher education institutions at the local level. In this way a greater insight was gained into the problem under scrutiny. Subsequently, appropriate theoretical and methodological tools were applied that would allow for a systematic approach to the semiotic and extra-semiotic practices that

constitute the policy process, and which would provide a deep and thorough interpretation of their dialectic relationship.

The selection of the theoretical framework and the methodology to address the research questions of this project was informed by a review of various research studies in order to see what research methods had been previously used and how. Most of them provide general examples of how to examine the discursive practices embedded in the policy process. Only a small number refer directly to the Greek case, which however do not venture deeper into the various aspects of the changes introduced in Greek HE in 2011. Eventually, after drawing from the macro-theoretical approach of Cultural Political Economy (Sum & Jessop, 2013), I decided to utilise the analytical resources of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as developed by Fairclough (2010; 2003) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009; 2001).

The first level of the analysis process included a thematic analysis of the data in order to map out the content of all the speeches and interviews²². First, both the speeches and transcripts of the interviews were read several times in order to begin my hermeneutic engagement with the data (Ezzy, 2013; Zappettini, 2019). Furthermore, I immersed myself in the interview data by using the interpretational modes and tools identified above (Ball, 1994a). Second, the speeches and the transcripts were coded by using the NVivo software to achieve a taxonomy of themes and “nodes”.

During the research process, the themes and categories identified in the speeches and interviews were repeatedly reviewed and re-coded. As mentioned earlier, most of the themes had been more or less identified by the researcher prior to the fieldwork (based on the literature review) and constituted some of the questions covered in the interviews (e.g. the theme of the overall governance of Universities). Some topics also emerged in the discussions as the most dominant ones after being emphasised by the majority

²² This was certainly quite time-consuming but not necessarily less objective as critics of content analysis may argue.

of the interviewees (e.g. the topic of the external policy actors' role in the formation and dissemination of the reforms). Overall, the coding of this study's data indicated a wide diversity of topics. The identification of the themes/ discursive topics and the way these have been incorporated into the analysis of the data will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The second level pertains to the 'in-depth' critical discursive analysis of the data by unfolding the *deconstruction* and *contextualisation* analytical processes. The *deconstruction* method focuses on the analysis of the linguistic/ discursive means deployed by the actors/ speakers by drawing on the tools and categories offered by CDA. In short, the representational and legitimisation strategies will be identified and critically explored under each theme, indicating (1) the way speakers discursively construct actors, actions, events as well as their positioning and orientation (e.g. whether they express positive, negative or 'in-between' views) and (2) the legitimisation or de-legitimation of the various views, arguments and perspectives by the different actors and interest groups involved in this process. At the same time, the themes/ topics – as these have been discursively maneuvered by the speakers – are examined in relation to their intertextuality and interdiscursivity, by looking for example how these issues are dealt with in the OECD reports or in other policy texts, reports etc. Lastly, the influence of the context and structural elements on the way actors enact their discursive practices (*contextualisation*) will be examined too by being integrated within the main discursive analysis.

Both types of data were thematically coded and analysed in their Greek version and then only the excerpts that were presented in the thesis were translated into English. Finally, the findings established through the application of CDA methods were further filtered by applying CPE's theoretical framework in terms of identifying the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic imaginaries and understanding their co-articulation with structural/ extra-semiotic factors and contextual features (e.g. the external policy actors' influence, the financial crisis conjecture, the institutional and organisational context of Greek HE, etc.).

3.7.1 Applying Corpus Linguistics tools: some challenges and considerations

After the collection of the parliamentary speeches and the transcription of the interviews, I was initially planning to apply Corpus Linguistics (CL) tools in my analysis, as an ancillary method through which I could systematically and effectively work with the large size of data that I had assembled. The main reason for selecting this method was its compatibility with CDA. In fact, a number of studies have effectively combined this method with CDA approaches, to examine the linguistic manifestation of inequalities and power struggles within large corpora of media texts. A distinctive example is the research conducted by Baker et al. (2008) who examined a 140-million-word corpus of British news articles about 'refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants', looking at the ways these groups were discursively constructed.

Corpus Linguistics is not characterised by a single method of analysis but is instead a set of methods and procedures for the exploration of language. There are different approaches to data within CL through the use of different tools, which allow the researcher to search words in context. These include word frequency analysis, which specifies how many times each word occurs in a corpus; investigation of concordances, which is the alphabetical index of all the words in a corpus of texts showing every contextual occurrence of a word; analysis of collocates which pertain to the words that occur in the neighbourhood of the word under investigation; and analysis of keywords which are words that are more, or less, frequent - and thus salient - in one corpus than in another corpus to which it is compared (McEnery & Wilson, 2001).

With the above in mind, I processed the data using the WordSmith Tools software (Scott, 2016) by looking at concordances and collocations of keywords. Nevertheless, the results generated were not as anticipated. For example, when comparing the parliamentary debates of the Green Paper and

other governmental statements, only a small number of keywords was found, which was not enough to carry out an analysis. In addition, the wordlists of the debates and interviews did not indicate any exceptional or surprising findings. Moreover, by looking at lexical units and their concordances instead of larger textual and discursive units (e.g. paragraphs, argumentative schemes etc.) the analysis was shifting from its primary macro- and meso-level focus on the dynamic and nuanced discourses of the actors to a more detailed linguistic analysis of the texts. Therefore, since the findings generated through the application of Corpus Linguistics did not assist the process, I decided instead to proceed with the thematic analysis of the data, as described in the previous section.

3.8 Rigour of the study

It has been widely acknowledged that qualitative social research needs strategies and criteria to assess the quality of its methodological process as well as the robustness of its interpretation. Traditionally, such evaluation has centred on the assessment of reliability and validity, which have been used for establishing rigour in quantitative studies. Within this paradigm the concepts of reliability and validity have distinct meanings and ensure the generalisability (or external validity) and objectivity of the findings. Many concerns however have been raised about how rigour can be attained in qualitative inquiry.

Various qualitative scholars have rejected these classical concepts (validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity) as being less applicable, non-pertinent or even incompatible to qualitative enquiry, while others have argued in favor of their applicability given that these have been accordingly modified (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Leininger, 1994; Morse et al., 2002; Baxter & Jack, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Others have further suggested the adoption of alternative criteria for determining rigour in qualitative inquiry by substituting or adding new ideas to the concepts used in

the evaluation of quantitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Leininger, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Morse et al., 2002; Seale, 1999).

The most influential of those suggestions was developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989). Instead of the traditional concepts of validity and reliability, they proposed the parallel concept of trustworthiness, as a more appropriate standard for determining rigour in qualitative studies. Trustworthiness can be attained by ensuring that the research satisfies four criteria, with each one having an equivalent criterion used in quantitative research: credibility (instead of internal validity), transferability (instead of generalisability or external validity), dependability (instead of reliability) and confirmability (instead of objectivity). Each of these criteria can be addressed by adopting specific methodological strategies for demonstrating qualitative rigour, such as recording an audit trail, providing a rich description of the context, peer debriefing, member checks or confirming results with participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The four criteria are presented and briefly described in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Trustworthiness criteria for establishing rigour in qualitative studies.

Credibility	It refers to the degree to which the presentation and interpretation of the findings by the researcher are accurate and compatible with the views of the participants (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are many strategies to address credibility that include “prolonged engagement”, member checks or member validation (i.e. presenting the findings to the respondents and checking whether the participants confirm or feel that the researcher’s representation of their perspective is accurate and fair) (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Transferability	It relates to the ability of the study ‘s findings to be transferred to similar contexts, settings or participants. Because qualitative

	research is specific to a particular context, it is important to provide a detailed account of the research process, the context and culture in the research, thus allowing the reader to assess the possible transferability of findings (i.e. whether the knowledge acquired and the concepts used in one context are meaningful, relevant and applicable to other contexts) (Bryman, 2012).
Dependability	It ensures that the decisions made before and during the research process are recorded clearly and described in sufficient detail to facilitate another researcher to repeat the work (rich description of the setting and participants) (Bryman, 2012). This requires a detailed audit trail that would allow peers to audit and evaluate the researcher's documentation of data, their theoretical and methodological decisions, and also whether or how proper procedures have been followed. (Bryman, 2012)
Confirmability	It is concerned with ensuring that the study is not deliberately swayed by the researchers' preconceptions, but it derives clearly and effortlessly from the data, findings and conclusions of the research study (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This again entails an audit trail where peers and readers can trace the original sources of the findings and can also discern and assess the way the enquirers have arrived at the themes and their interpretations (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Nevertheless, various concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of Guba and Lincoln's proposed framework. A key criticism is that these criteria have similar if not the same meaning as the traditional terminology used for quantitative studies (Baillie, 2015). At the same time, the framework has been criticised for essentially being a prescriptive and standardised checklist of technical procedures, whereas some of the methodological strategies may create some practical difficulties in the context of qualitative research (Barbour, 2001; Bryman, 2012). Guba and Lincoln themselves have however warned that this model constitutes a "primitive effort" of codifying and

formulating specific strategies for establishing rigour in qualitative research (Guba, 1981, p. 76). As such it should be used as a set of guidelines and not as another prescribed framework (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). In any case, Guba and Lincoln's model has been quite prominent within the qualitative research community, with many researchers now acknowledging and using the above criteria to establish and assess rigour in their qualitative studies (Bryman, 2012). Many aspects of Guba and Lincoln's criteria have also contributed to the development of additional standards used to assess the quality of qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002).

What is certain is that the process of evaluating qualitative research differs in many respects from the way in which rigour is achieved in quantitative research. The flexible, more open-ended and context-specific nature of qualitative, interpretive approaches does not offer fertile ground for producing objective statements or determining generalisable relationships (Morse et al., 2002; Baxter & Jack, 2011). Furthermore, due to the differential nature of data collection methods and techniques used in qualitative studies, it is difficult to establish a single and clear formula for assessing the rigour of all the varieties of qualitative methods. More so, given the various interpretations and the different ways that these criteria have been applied by researchers, there is a contradictory and fuzzy picture around Guba and Lincoln's framework that renders its application a difficult task.

Based on the above discussion, this study argues that the process of establishing rigour in qualitative studies should take into account the data production and data collection techniques as well as the specific theoretical and analytical frameworks used in the qualitative study. The study also adopts the assertion that it would be unproductive to reduce the assessment of rigour in qualitative research to technical procedures and standardised formulas (Barbour, 2001). Therefore, the strategies for establishing rigour in qualitative studies should be determined each time by the research situation at hand, aiming at the evaluation of the overall impact, relevance and logical coherence of the qualitative research design, the data analysis process and

the interpretation of the findings (Morse et al., 2002). Bearing in mind the negative criticism that Lincoln and Guba's framework has received, I decided not to adopt their criteria for establishing rigour in this study. However, as per Lincoln and Guba's suggestions, the strategies that they propose were treated as general guidelines during the research design process.

More specifically, the study follows the suggestions made by CDA scholars for establishing validity and reliability (or trustworthiness in Guba and Lincoln's terms) of the research process and the interpretation of the findings (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In essence, I tried to ensure that the research process is operationalised in a scientifically robust and transparent way and that the interaction with the data is insightful and thorough, so as to generate a trustworthy interpretation of the findings.

In practice, this study adopted a theoretical approach that takes into account various contextual perspectives. This model (which is described in section 3.2 and elaborated in Chapters 4-6) provides a thick description of this study's context that supports the thorough analysis of the data. This further contributes to the interpretation of the findings from different contextual perspectives, thus minimising the risk of being biased (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Methodological triangulation was also applied by carrying out interviews along with the investigation of political speeches. This contributed to the enrichment of the empirical data of this study, providing useful background information on the policy-making process of the 2011 reforms, while also enabling me to immerse myself into the context of the research study. The interviews with key policy actors also helped to discuss my own assumptions and observations regarding the reforms under question with them and uncover any divergences or contradictions between my interpretations and those of the participants (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Furthermore, a detailed documentation and justification of the methodological and analytical process that was followed in this study has been provided to

ensure transparency. More specifically, I have tried to provide a clear description of the data collection methods and a detailed account of the interviewing process, while also explicating the ways these were used for the purposes of this research, so that readers may judge the relevance of these methods and their use to similar research contexts or target groups. The sampling process of the interviewees was presented and explained in detail, to prevent unsubstantiated transferability. All ethical standards were also attained to ensure that the process had been transparent and scientifically robust. More specifically, the participants were informed in detail about their overall participation in the study, the aims of the research and the way the data will be processed and analysed. All contact with participants was carefully documented and stored, and appropriate measures were taken to ensure and preserve confidentiality. I also ensured that the data collected could be easily accessed by participants if they asked so.

Last but not least, I engaged myself into a reflexive process. Reflexivity is a central strategy for ensuring rigour in qualitative research and especially in CDA. In my view, the researcher's biases are an inescapable and inseparable part of qualitative research. As particular individuals conduct research, it is hard to imagine these individuals as detached researchers not involved in their research – regardless of possible efforts to pretend that they abstain from any involvement. Researchers inescapably and sometimes unconsciously bring into their research their personal voice, their own perspective, and their unique interpretations. Therefore, the opposite assumption, that any intervention or bias on the part of the researcher can be entirely avoided seems paradoxical and impractical. As Wodak & Meyer (2009, pp. 31-32) note:

“strict ‘objectivity’ cannot be achieved by means of discourse analysis, for each ‘technology’ of research must itself be examined as potentially embedding the beliefs and ideologies of the analysts and therefore prejudicing the analysis toward the analysts’ preconceptions”

It is thus important (especially for CDA researchers) to clearly reflect on their own potential biases and presumptions, to scrutinise their background, and to make explicit and acknowledge their critical stance, position, values and research interests in relation to the topic and context that they are researching. The explicit reflection on my background and the ways I may be biased or affect the study, if transparently presented, may reinforce the robustness of my conclusions and trustworthiness of my findings. This can further contribute to the final discussion, interpretation and explanation of the investigated topic. In the following section, I reflect on my pre-understandings, positionality and personal stance during this research.

3.8.1 Reflexivity and positionality: reflections on my research and personal stance

My experience as a researcher conducting a critical discourse analysis of political and public discourses around the substantial changes that the 2011 Law introduced in Higher Education during the financial crisis in Greece was both challenging and enjoyable. The risk of presenting a biased account and interpretation by favouring some discourses over others was always there. During the period the bill was introduced I was completing my undergraduate studies in Greece. The discussion around the proposed changes found me vacillating between my personal socio-political standpoint (which was in opposition to the underlying ideas that supported the proposed policies) and the bill's enticing promise to tackle ill situations through the introduction of measures that constitute the norm abroad and have been tried and tested in various cases. While not being directly affected by the new proposed changes, as the bill was introduced in the last year of my undergraduate studies in Greece, the newly erupted financial crisis and its devastating social policy ramifications made it hard for me to embrace and positively accept the new reforms.

Despite my reservations, however, I tend to place myself within the ‘moderate voices’ expressed about the character and objectives of these reforms. This also explains in part my decision to conduct my PhD thesis on this subject in a foreign HEI. I believe that the heated debate and sometimes extreme positions expressed in the Greek HE context around these issues would have complicated the whole research process. Interestingly, the institution that I carried out my PhD was governed by the same policy ideas that the 2011 Law proposed in Greece. This however did not influence, nor it affected my research. On the contrary, it helped me shape a more comprehensive view on the radical changes that were introduced in the Greek HE context at the time.

In general, what concerned me in this project was the diffusion of specific ideologies and policies in Higher Education and their frequent representation as the only valid policy changes (such as the notion of knowledge-based economy or the marketisation of education and budgetary austerity) while also exploring the discourses of resistance and opposition that are quite prominent in Greek HE field. By making explicit my stance and approach of critique I employ, the aim of this research is to analyse all the relevant political and public discourses in order to demystify and critically examine both ideological/political sides (i.e. both the governmental and oppositional ones). In my view, this decision largely minimises the aforementioned risks of bias, reductionism and partiality.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the data sources and the analytical methods used in this study and explained the procedures through which the research was carried out. Moreover, the limitations, challenges and problems related to the data collection as well as to the procedures of the data analysis were also pointed out. The research examines the content of the parliamentary debates as well as interviews with key policy actors in order to shed light to the debate that takes place between the different parties regarding the 2011 HE reforms

in Greece during the crisis. The methodological and analytical approach of Critical Discourse Analysis is used for the systematic analysis and thorough interpretation of the data by examining, in particular, the discursive and legitimisation strategies in the competing discourses of the different policy actors (or groups) who are involved in the higher education policy process. I believe that being socially and politically concerned and paying close attention to the context of the discursive events allows for a more effective and efficient analysis of the data, especially when it comes to the analysis of political debates. This type of analysis and interpretation clearly emphasises the discursive/ semiotic point of entry in policy analysis; this study, however, does not exclusively focus on discourse. Overall, in this thesis, the aim is not to provide an intricate linguistic analysis of the various and diverse discourses concerning the changes in Greek HE after the introduction of the 2011 reforms. Rather it aims to engage in a critical discussion of the semiotic features (i.e. the debate that surrounds the reforms), as they are mutually implicated or dialectically related (Fairclough, 2010; Harvey, 1996) with structural, organisational and contextual features in the construction and promotion - or contestation - of the changes that were introduced in Greek HE.

Chapter 4: Financial Crisis, Political Turbulence and Higher Education (HE) in Greece (2010-2013)

4.1 Introduction: Greek Higher Education (with)in crisis

In 2010 Greece entered an unprecedented financial, social, and political crisis. During the period 2010-2015 successive Greek governments adopted a series of austerity measures and structural reforms, as a condition for the financial assistance package that was agreed with the EU Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB) (also known as the 'Troika') - in response to the fiscal economic crisis that emerged in 2009 in the country.

As a result, draconian cuts in salaries and pensions for state employees, reductions in the social provision as well as tax increases were implemented, which indisputably took their toll on the Greek population, prompting massive social and political unrest. As was to be expected, this situation also led to unprecedented turbulence in Greece's political landscape. The old bipartisan system between the parties of The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK - social-democratic, centre-left) and New Democracy (ND - liberal-conservative, centre-right) which was dominant for almost 30 years broke down. This resulted in the polarisation of the Greek electorate with the sudden emergence of radical extreme political groups, such as the rise of the Neo-Nazi party, Golden Dawn²³, in 2012 (Pappas & Aslanidis, 2012). The political crisis reached its peak in the February 2015 elections, when the anti-austerity, left-wing movement led by The Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) party

²³ On 7 October 2020, in a historical court decision, Golden Dawn's political leadership and six other prominent members and former MPs, were sent to prison as they were found guilty of ordering the murder of leftist rapper Pavlos Fyssas and for running a criminal organisation. In the previous general election of 2019, the party already lost all its parliamentary seats. It has now become almost defunct having shut down its central offices in Athens as well as most of its branches around the country to survive financially (Samaras, 2020).

achieved a historic victory, forming a new coalition government with the right-wing populist party of Independent Greeks - National Patriotic Alliance (ANEL).

As a consequence, Greek HE could not escape from the dire consequences of austerity measures that subsequent governments had to implement in response to the crisis. The major issues included substantial cuts to HE funding as well as cuts to staff salaries. During the crisis, longstanding issues, challenges, and inefficiencies of the Greek tertiary education system, such as the tight centralised control of the education system by the state and the overt political intervention in the internal operation of HEIs, were also brought to the surface. This troublesome situation turned HE into one of the most debated and politicised areas within the Greek public sector (Traianou, 2013). Moreover, the chronic problem of insufficient state funding of HE (Zmas, 2015) - which worsened during the economic recession - has further deteriorated the performance and quality of tertiary institutions.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Greek Higher Education system during the early years of the financial crisis (i.e. between 2009-2013). More specifically, the Greek HE regulatory frame is presented along with a description of the Higher Education sectors, the internal academic and governance structure of the institutions and lastly the structure of study levels.

Subsequently, the progress of the financial crisis in Greece is described and examined in detail, focusing on the period between 2009 and 2013 when the last modification of the 2011 Law was passed. The subsequent amendments of the 2011 Law²⁴ – which actually aimed to the abolishment of many of its core provisions – are beyond the scope of the current research and thus the period that follows (2013 and onwards) are not included in this chapter's overview. The impact of the financial crisis on Greek Higher Education is further explored, looking at the impact of the economic crisis.

²⁴ The amendments that took place after 2013 focused on the abolishment of University Councils, by reinstituting the Senate and the Rector's council as the core governance bodies of HEIs.

4.2 Higher Education in Greece: an overview

This section begins with some general information about Greek Higher Education focusing on the role of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH). Subsequently, the structure and sectors of tertiary education are illustrated. Finally, this section concludes with a critical discussion of the structural deficiencies and problems of the Greek higher education system.

4.2.1 Greek Higher Education: legal regulation

According to Article 16, par. 4 of the Greek Constitution (Hellenic Parliament, 2008), education is free at all levels of public education institutions and constitutes a responsibility of the Greek State²⁵. HEIs are further defined as ‘fully self-governed public law legal persons’ but their operation is supervised by the state (Hellenic Parliament, 2008). In particular, the entire Greek Educational system including all its sectors, services and levels is under the remit of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The Ministry is responsible for the planning and development of education, by drawing up and implementing national higher education policies, acts and presidential decrees that determine educational matters (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). All HEIs are identified as fully self-governed organisations by the constitution, but their operation is supervised by the Ministry of National Education. Some state institutions also fall under the supervision of different ministries, such as the higher military education schools, the higher police academies, and the merchant marine academies.

²⁵ Over the last couple of decades there have been many debates in the Greek Parliament regarding the amendment of this article for allowing the establishment of private non-profit or for-profit HEIs that would adhere to certain quality prerequisites and will be supervised relevant quality assurance and accreditation agencies (Alivizatos, 2007).

The Greek HE sector is primarily funded by the state. The main sources include the regular state budget and the Programme of Public Investment which consists of national and European funds (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). The allocation of funds is determined by the Ministry of Economy and Finance in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, with HEIs being also involved in the process (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008).

The overall number of new students allowed to enrol in each Higher Education Institution is annually decided by the Ministry of Education, implementing a *numerus clausus* policy. Students' admission to undergraduate study is based on their performance in the national examinations at the end of the third year of upper secondary education; the order of their study preferences which they submit electronically after the publication of their results; and the number of available places in each department (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008; Papadiamantaki, 2017). Upper-secondary education graduates who are over the age of 23 can also apply for admission to the Tertiary Education system either via the alternative of the Hellenic Open University or by participating in the national state exams (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). Furthermore, students who were not able to successfully complete the final year of their upper-secondary education and wish to be admitted to a higher education institution can return to school and take part in the national exams after repeating and successfully completing the final grade of upper-secondary education. Lastly, the graduates of HEIs who wish to enrol to an undergraduate study programme of another department, can take special entry exams according to the regulations and decisions set by the General Assembly of the receiving department (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008).

4.2.2 Higher Education sectors and their structure

In accordance with Law 2916/2001, in 2011 Higher Education in Greece consisted of two sectors: the 'university' sector, including Universities

(Panepistimio), National Technical Universities (Polytechnio) and the Higher School of Fine Arts, and the higher 'technological' education sector, that comprises the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) and the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE)²⁶. In the academic year of 2010-2011, in Greece there were a total of 38 public institutes of Higher Education: 23 Universities and 15 TEIs (ELSTAT, 2021a; 2021b). Both sectors are governed by the same constitutional provisions regarding their organisation and operation (Gouvias, 2011).

The mission of University Education is to ensure a high level of theoretical and all-round training for the future scientific and managerial workforce (depending on the discipline). Compared to Universities, TEI studies have a more applied and practical character, thus offering studies which combine the development of the appropriate theoretical, scientific background with high standards in practice through the collaboration with the industry (Eurydice, 2015). Undergraduate degree programmes at universities typically last for eight semesters (four years)²⁷ whereas in TEIs they can last from seven to eight semesters. Undergraduate studies lead to the 'Ptychion' (bachelor's degree) in the relevant field, which leads to employment or further study at the post-graduate level either domestically or abroad. In Greece post-graduate studies lead to the award of a "Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis" (post-graduate Diploma of Specialisation equivalent to MSc/MA) which then can be followed by doctoral studies leading to the award of a "Didaktoriko Diploma" (PhD). Although there are no tuition fees for undergraduate studies (except at the Hellenic Open University), according to Law 2083/1992 institutions are allowed to charge fees to postgraduate courses if they decide so. The number of postgraduate study programmes has almost tripled (from 371 in 2006 (Apostoli, 2006) to approximately 1100 in 2019 (eduguide, 2019). However,

²⁶ See Tables 6.2 and 6.3 (pp. 147-151) for the full list of Greek HEIs during the period 2009-2014.

²⁷ In Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Engineering and Agricultural Studies, studies last for ten semesters; in Medicine, they last for twelve semesters.

the number of postgraduate courses free of tuition fees has been considerably reduced. In 2006, 83% of master's programmes did not charge fees (Apostoli, 2006) whereas in 2019 the percentage was only around 25% (eduguide, 2019).

4.2.3 A critical evaluation of the Greek Higher Education system

There have been several attempts in the history of modern Greece to reform the HE system, in order to tackle long-term structural problems such as political intervention, unaccountability and nepotism due to the tight control of HE by the state (Prokou, 2010; Tsiligiris, 2012a) and to keep up with the increasing demands and needs of a rapidly changing social, political and economic environment (Gioumpasoglou et al., 2016; Koniordos, 2010; OECD, 2011; Seiradaki, 2011). It can be argued that in the past few decades Greek policy makers have engaged in fierce debates about the state of Greek higher education and its future prospects.

A common topic of this debate is the allegations about favouritism, nepotism, clientelism and party politics in the way public HEIs are managed (Koniordos, 2010). Closely related is the issue of the high politicisation, in terms of the active involvement of political parties through their youth branches in the internal governance of Greek HEIs. This has been widely criticised as a source of corruption and clientelistic relations among political parties, academics and students (Tsiligiris, 2012a; 2012b). At the same time, the highly centralised (regulatory and financial) control of the whole educational system by the Greek state has transformed Greek HE system into a bureaucratic, outdated, and cumbersome system (Kazamias, 1990; Kazamias & Roussakis, 2003).

Another long-standing problem in HE is the lack of accountability (Asderaki, 2009; OECD, 2011; Papadimitriou, 2011). This phenomenon co-existed with an increased intervention in the planning and funding of HE, within a context of political opportunism (Tsiligiris, 2012a; 2012b). A good example here

pertains to the number of available places in HE, which has been used by both the PASOK and New Democracy governments in the past as a means to attract voters (Psacharopoulos, 2003). The ruling political parties had also introduced a number of new university faculties and/or departments in rural cities without any planning, simply to satisfy local voters' pressures (Koniordos, 2010). According to Balias et al. (2016), the factionalism and clientelism that traditionally characterises Greek public administration has also influenced the space of HE.

A relatively recent topic of debate has been the formal recognition of private universities the operation of which is prohibited by the Greek constitution (Hellenic Parliament, 2008). Numerous private institutions, which are often franchises of European and American universities (Colleges), but also non-profit accredited institutions and branch campuses of foreign universities, have been operating since the 1990s. Officially, these are not recognised as HEIs by the Greek government and so the education and training services that Colleges provide are considered part of non-formal post-secondary education (Eurydice, 2021). Consequently, qualifications awarded by Colleges are recognised in the private sector but not in the public sector, creating a differentiation of employment opportunities between those who studied in private against those who studied in public higher education establishments (Gioumpasoglou et al., 2016; Jackson & Krionas, 2003).

Moreover, with few exceptions, the Greek government refuses to recognise three-year university degrees (EHEA, 2012; OECD, 2011). Students who completed a bachelor's degree in a foreign country can find it difficult to secure employment in the public sector, as in many cases their degree is not considered equivalent by the Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre (Hellenic NARIC) to Greek university degrees. Specifically, the recognition of three-year undergraduate degrees may also require additional credits through exams in particular university courses or can be combined with

a master's degree to be considered equivalent to a four-year undergraduate degree (Law 3328/ 2005).

Another topic that has been under intense scrutiny in Greek HE is the enduring phenomenon of 'eternal' (or stagnating) students, namely students who remain at HEIs much longer than their expected years of study, usually during the undergraduate cycle (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). The annual proportion of graduates in recent years amounts to about 18% of all active students, which indicates a rapid increase in the total number of stagnating students (Ministry of Education, 2016). Papadiamantaki (2017) notes that the number of students in 2015 who exceeded the prescribed period of studies had doubled since 2003 without any significant increase during the crisis period. The above data observation indicates that although crisis has negatively impacted on students' timely completion of their studies, it is not necessarily the primary cause of this phenomenon. According to the Ministry of Education (2016) report, administration and management issues within institutions, the structure and quality of teaching, and the lack of student care, have also been affecting the completion rates.

Overall, it can be argued that the financial crisis intensified the longstanding issues, challenges, and inefficiencies of the Greek tertiary education system. Indeed, the economic recession - and the political crisis - it ensued further complicated and divided opinion on the matter, turning HE into one of the most debated and politicised areas within the Greek public sector (Bougioukos, 2013; Traianou, 2013).

4.3 The background of the economic crisis in Greece

4.3.1 The Greek (financial) crisis and its causes

At the beginning of the new millennium and after its inclusion in the Eurozone, Greece enjoyed a period of fast growth of about 4% (Matsaganis, 2012).

However, the widespread sense of prosperity, which was driven by strong consumer demand and boosted by the availability of cheap credit, turned out to be just a façade that was concealing the excessive, uncontrolled borrowing of previous governments, the chronic fiscal and external deficits, the uncompetitive Greek economy and a large public debt (Baldwin & Gros, 2010; Matsaganis, 2011; Nelson et al., 2011). The profound deficiencies of the Greek economy started to become visible after the snap elections of October 2009 called by then PM Kostas Karamanlis, the president of the liberal-conservative, centre-right New Democracy (ND) party. The reform-minded social-democratic party of PASOK, led by George Papandreou, won the election by a landslide, upon the promise to widen and boost public spending (Pappas & Aslanidis, 2012). His campaign was dominated by the slogan “Money is there!”²⁸. Nevertheless, Greece suffered one of the longest and most severe economic recessions in its post-war history, which developed into a social and political crisis.

Papandreou’s commitment was unattainable: soon after the 2009 election, the social-democratic government broke the news that earlier budget deficit data were misreported by the previous conservative government (Tooze, 2018). As a result, the deficit for 2008 was corrected from 5% to 7.7% (and later revised to 9.4%) of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) while the estimate of public debt was raised from 99.6% to 115.1% of GDP in 2009 (Matsaganis, 2011). In February 2010, the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) first published a reviewed version of Greece’s 2009 budget deficit projection, (correcting it from 3.7% to a staggering 12.7%) which was then revised again

²⁸ This slogan has become the subject of wide derision as in the public’s consciousness it ended up signifying the beginning of the Greek financial crisis and recession. The line also became a valuable communicative weapon for Papandreou’s political opponents. It should be pointed out that Papandreou used this line in many of his campaign speeches mainly to criticise New Democracy government for corruption and for its inability to streamline Greece’s public finances. The slogan implied that public spending could substantially support the public sector, if only it wasn’t spent on corrupt deals and by corrupt political leaders and public servants. Although isolated from the various contexts that it was used in, the line was clearly used by Papandreou for communicative and voting purposes in his attempt to win the elections.

by Eurostat to 13.6% on 22 April 2010 and finally to 15.4% in November 2010 (Eurostat, 2010a; Eurostat, 2010b). After the final revision Greece's deficit became the largest government deficit in percentage of GDP amongst the EU member states at the time (Eurostat, 2010b).

This was the turning point for Greece; it essentially signified the beginning of the worst political-economic crisis that the country had faced since the end of the military dictatorship in 1974 and the most severe crisis in the recent history of the European Union (Markantonatou, 2013). Starting as a fiscal crisis, it quickly led to serious fears of the country moving to a disorderly default on its sovereign debt (Matsaganis, 2011).

Many economists have highlighted the deeply entrenched ills of Greek economy and society, such as 'the pervasive state control of the economy, a large and inefficient public administration, endemic tax evasion, and widespread political clientelism' as underlying triggers of the financial crisis in Greece (Nelson et al., 2011, p. 2). However, the causes of the Greek sovereign debt crisis and the subsequent recession, appear to be the result of a combination of endemic ill practices and exogenous global-external events (Tooze, 2018; Zahariadis, 2013). The shockwave coming from the global financial crisis that broke out in 2007-2008 constituted one of the main external factors that triggered many sovereign debt and banking crises in the Eurozone, with Greece being hit the most (Pisani-Ferry et al., 2013; Theodoropoulou, 2014). At the same time, the Greek financial crisis and the subsequent 2010 Eurozone crisis exposed the structural weaknesses, heterogeneities, and deficiencies inherent within the Euro's policy framework and banking system, and of the European integration in general (Baldwin & Gros, 2010; Featherstone, 2011; Markantonatou, 2013). As such, the Greek crisis can also be seen as a manifestation of a wider crisis of global capitalism on the one hand, and as an aspect of the broader European integration deficiencies that emerged with the economic crisis in 2008 on the other hand (Vasilopoulou et al., 2013).

4.3.2 Rescue plans and austerity measures: a brief overview

On 2 February 2010, the Greek government announced a first set of stability and deficit-slashing austerity measures, including wage freezes and tax rises, in order to calm the public and the 'markets', as there was widespread nervousness after the publication of the corrected deficit (EC, 2010). On 3 March 2010, the government introduced an additional financial package of austerity measures of over 2% of GDP, which included additional public-sector pay cuts and an increase of VAT by 2%, with the aim to achieve fiscal consolidation (EC, 2010). The announcement of the austerity measures decreased the government's popularity while failing to soothe the markets. At the same time, by the end of March 2010, the leaders of the Eurozone together with the IMF agreed to provide Greece with a joint financial support of a 22bn euro, and in April 2010 they approved a 30bn euro emergency loan for Greece by the IMF (EC, 2010). A 'rescue plan' was considered a better solution by the European leaders than the costly alternative of a Greek exit from the Euro (Tooze, 2018). This rescue programme would adopt a strategy of "internal devaluation" of the Greek economy, based on the idea that competitiveness would increase through wage and pension reductions, public sector downsizing, and privatisations (Markantonatou, 2013).

To prevent the danger of an uncontrolled default and to restore Greece's credibility in international markets, George Papandreou eventually resorted to aid. On April 23, 2010, the Greek PM announced to the Greek nation the activation of the financial support mechanism. After much procrastination on all sides, an unprecedented €110 billion rescue package provided via pooled bilateral loans was agreed with the EC, ECB and the IMF, which would be disbursed over the period May 2010 through June 2013 to cover the country's borrowing requirements (EC, 2021). The financial assistance was provided on condition that the Greek government will adopt a strict package of austerity policies with the aim to reduce the country's public deficit below 3% of GDP by

2014 (EC, 2010; IMF, 2010). On May 3, 2010, the Greek Parliament ratified the first 'Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies' (MoU), which included the conditionality terms (structural adjustment policies) as agreed with the EU, the ECB and the IMF (EC, 2021).

The measures of the First Greek Programme included widespread public expenditure cuts and steep tax increases. The salary cuts included the reduction of the new recruits' minimum wage by 20% along with 15-30% salary reduction and cuts of allowances in the public sector (Markantonatou, 2013). Specific privileges associated with pensions benefits were also abolished (Koutsogeorgopoulou et al., 2014). The public sector was downsized with significant staff reductions in local government, public health, and education. A ratio of 1:5, later increased to 1:10, was set for recruitments with respect to retiring public employees. Meanwhile, a series of VAT and other indirect and emergency taxes were further levied, e.g., upon real estate property (Markantonatou, 2013).

While the policy response succeeded in preventing the Greek default, it was not so successful in restoring Greece's debt sustainability (the credit agencies eventually decreased the Greece's debt ratings to junk status in April 2012) nor did it avoid the spill over of the Greek crisis to other Eurozone countries, affecting Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland (Baldwin & Gros, 2010; Nelson et al., 2011). The Greek economy was still highly unstable and the situation was getting even worse.

On 29 June 2011, the Greek parliament passed a new austerity package known as the Mid-Term Fiscal Strategy (MTFS 2012–2015; "Mesopróthesmo" in Greek) with the aim, among others, to ensure the release of the next bailout loan tranches and to activate the extension of loan repayment by 7.5 years that was decided in March 2011, on condition of more wage and pension cuts (Markantonatou, 2013). This resulted to further personnel reductions within the public sector in the form of redundancy programmes for tens of thousands of public sector employees (Markantonatou, 2013). In addition, a debt "haircut"

of 50 percent had already been proposed in the Eurogroup meeting of 26 October 2011. This would have reduced Greek public debt down to 120 percent of GDP by 2020 with “Private Sector Involvement” (PSI), on condition of more austerity and reforms before the first loan tranche (Markantonatou, 2013).

Due to their severe economic and societal consequences, the austerity measures were met with strong criticism and negative public reactions in the form of massive general strikes and demonstrations throughout 2010 and 2011 with most public and private employees, trade unions and students participating (Kyriakidis, 2016; Matsaganis, 2011). Eventually, as the first programme and MTFS were proven to be not enough, in February 2012 the Greek parliament agreed an additional austerity package, which activated a new bailout deal with the EU leaders. This final programme included the unreleased amounts of the first package, the PSI haircut and an additional €130 billion for the years 2012-14 (later extended to June 2015) (EC, 2021). The PSI, the MoU and the relevant Loan Agreements for this second programme were signed in March 2012 (Kyriakidis, 2016).

The Second Programme included, among others, new expenditure cuts, the deregulation of collective labour bargaining, further public sector downsizing, flexibility in dismissal procedures, supplementary pension reductions of 15–20 %, insurance fund mergers, and recapitalisation of banks after debt restructuring (Markantonatou, 2013). The national minimum wage (which was then at 876.6€ per month) was further cut by 22% for employees aged above 25 (683,8€ per month) and 32% for workers below 25 (596,10€ per month) (Koutsogeorgopoulou et al., 2014).

4.3.3 The social and political impact of the recession.

What is evident from the strict implementation of the austerity programme in Greece and is that the ‘shock treatment’ approach has deteriorated the

situation (Giousmpasoglou, 2014). The severe austerity measures have been criticised by many, not least due to the enormous social costs, with even the IMF becoming critical of its own policies (IMF, 2013; The Guardian, 2012). As Markantonatou (2013) points out, the so called 'rescue programme' had a dramatic social, political and economic impact which increased rather than decreased Greece's national debt. According to Eurostat data (2012), Greece's public debt increased from 145% in 2010 to 165.3% of the GDP in 2011 and it still remained high in 2012 (156.9% of GDP). The MoUs also worsened rather than alleviated social suffering through enormous cutbacks in social welfare, inducing closures and mergers of social services ranging from schools and universities through to hospitals and psychiatric units (Kotroyannos et al., 2013; Markantonatou, 2013).

The impact of the recession can clearly be detected on the rate of unemployment which rose tremendously up to 27.5% at its highest point in 2013, while youth unemployment (for those in the 20–29-year group) reached a staggering 47.4% in the same year, the highest rate in the last 20 years (Eurostat data, 2015a; 2015b; OECD, 2021). The recruitment of new employees has decreased (from 1,143,920 to 839,015) and wages have been substantially reduced, leading to more insecure and precarious employment relationships (Karantinos, 2012; Labropoulou & Smith-Spark, 2012). There was a deterioration in living standards with more than a third of the population officially reported in 2014 as being 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' (highest rate during the crisis) (Eurostat data, 2015c) while suicide and depression rates have been raised due to the repercussions of the financial crisis (Euro Health Net, 2011).

As expected, the political arena was also substantially affected by the impact of the financial crisis. From 2009 to 2015 five elections were held: fragile governments were succeeding each other, further deepening the decline of social consensus and the breakdown of the country's political landscape. During the economic crisis, Greek governments aligned themselves with the

Troika imposing harsh reforms which nevertheless had no success in alleviating the crisis. This provoked a strong domestic reaction that further prompted a rapid rise of far-right and left-wing groups. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the main political events that took place from the resignation of PM George Papandreou in 2011 to the landslide election victory of SYRIZA in January 2015.

Table 4.1

Timeline of major political events from 2011 until the beginning of 2015.

11 NOVEMBER 2011	George Papandreou resigns.
15 NOVEMBER 2011	A national coalition government was formed between New Democracy, PASOK, LAOS ²⁹ with Dr Loukas Papademos serving as the PM
6 MAY 2012	<p>The first national elections after the financial assistance programmes and the beginning of the crisis were held.</p> <p>PASOK achieved a poor 13.2% of total votes.</p> <p>New Democracy received 18.9% of the popular vote.</p> <p>The SYRIZA party came in second place (with 16.8% of all votes).</p> <p>The neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn got elected to Parliament for the first time with 21/300 MPs.</p> <p>No party thus obtained a clear majority or was able to form a government (Pappas 2003).</p>
17 JUNE 2012	<p>Repeat elections were held.</p> <p>A coalition government was formed between New Democracy, PASOK, and the minor centre-left party Democratic Left (DIMAR).</p> <p>This election confirmed the collapse of the country's bipartisanship system.</p>

²⁹ The Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) was a radical right-wing party, founded in 2000 by George Karatzaferis, a former ND deputy. LAOS adopted mainly far right populist themes, such as anti-Americanism, antisemitism, and spreading various conspiracy theories, while also investing in the historical continuation of the ethnic and religious identity of the Orthodox Christian Greek from ancient Greece to recent wars against Turkey (Pappas & Aslanidis, 2015).

DECEMBER 2014	<p>The Eurogroup decided to extend the Second Programme by two months to allow for the adoption of additional adjustment measures.</p> <p>Presidential elections were held by PM Antonis Samaras earlier than scheduled (in February 2015).</p> <p>The candidate proposed by the government parliament did not obtain the majority of parliamentary votes necessary, and snap elections were announced for January 2015.</p>
JANUARY 2015	<p>The SYRIZA party won the elections for the first time in its history, receiving 36% of the popular vote and getting 149 seats in the Parliament (two short of an absolute majority).</p> <p>SYRIZA formed a coalition with the national-conservative, anti-austerity party of ANEL.</p>

Although the memoranda of understanding officially expired in 2018, Greece as of 2021 is placed under “enhanced surveillance” on sustaining its objectives and keeping to the implementation of all key reforms adopted and initiated under the ESM programme (EC, 2021).

4.4 The impact of economic crisis in Greece on Higher Education

The agreements on the Greek debt resulted in large cuts in overall public funding and, consequently, severe reductions in the funding for higher education. In general, the country's total education budget was cut by approximately 20% from 2009 to 2014 (IOBE, 2017). As such, HEIs, which rely primarily upon public financial support, were adversely affected (Koulouris et al., 2014). While in the period 2005-2008 the funding of HE increased by 33%, from 2009 until 2013 it dropped by 22% (IOBE, 2017), affecting university research, investments and infrastructures as well as student support financing and stipends (IOBE, 2017; Stratis, 2014). Overall, between 2009 and 2013 government expenditure per student dropped by 27.4% (Ministry of Education, 2016). Given that insufficient state funding of HE had been a chronic problem of Greek Universities before the crisis, the economic recession and the tough austerity measures pushed Greek higher education to the brink of collapse, further deteriorating their operation and quality (Smith, 2013; Zmas, 2015).

With respect to non-academic budget demands, since the beginning of the crisis in 2009 operating costs were cut by 66% in 2015, while cuts in the public investment budget for maintenance, scientific equipment for research laboratories and infrastructures were reduced by 60-80% (IOBE, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2016). As a result, many institutions were forced to cover maintenance and repair costs at bare minimum levels. One shocking example that demonstrates the impact of economic crisis in 'free' public education is the poor situation of the top universities' facilities and the student accommodation in Athens and Thessaloniki: poor building maintenance, piles of garbage everywhere, lack of basic amenities (such as lack of toilet paper in the restrooms), as well as instances of drug trafficking, looting and vandalism - mainly due to lack of security staff-, have substantially impinged on the regular operation and academic culture of Greek HEIs (Papakonstantis, 2020; University of Macedonia, 2018). At the same time, however, there are a few HEIs that have managed even in austerity times to produce high quality academic research and teaching (eKathimerini.com, 2013; QS World University Rankings, 2015).

The impact of the imposed austerity measures was also devastating for the university academic and administrative staff whose salaries were reduced by 30-40% (Asderaki, 2012; Gouvias, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2016). The public sector's recruitment ratio of 1:10 (one recruitment for every ten retirements) was extended to all HE institutes and organisations leading to the suspension of new academic personnel recruitments (Aggelopoulos & Astrinaki, 2011). This led to the substantial reduction of academic staff from 24,636 in 2009-2010 to 14,685 in 2014-2015 (Ministry of Education, 2016). An ever-increasing number of academic staff were also forced to modify their retirement plans because of the rapid changes in the existing pension plans and the continuously uncertain economic environment (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2016; Koulouris et al., 2014). As Papadiamantaki (2017) reports, retired professors have been informally teaching in undergraduate programmes to cover the substantial shortage of staff. The funding shortages also resulted in

cuts in the part-time and temporary staff budget and the ending of many contracts (Ministry of Education, 2016; Papadiamantaki, 2017). This created further problems for many institutions, which relied heavily on temporary staff for lectures and lab work (Koulouris et al., 2014). The non-replacement of the retired staff combined with the non-renewal of part-time and temporary staff led to the elimination of many faculty positions. The situation got even worse when in 2013 the government decided to include 1,349 administrative and support staff from eight universities in the so-called “mobility scheme”, essentially a form of job suspension that in many cases can lead to layoffs (Bougioukos, 2013; The Economist, 2013). This created a large deficiency in human resources and resulted in the disruption of HEIs’ operation.

The above-described conditions placed students and their families under huge pressure. The limited financial support that tertiary education students in Greece receive during their studies further obstructs them to graduate within the prescribed study timeframes. The absence of a network of grants and scholarships puts the entire burden of the undergraduate cost squarely on the shoulders of the family (Gioumpasoglou et al., 2016). The austerity measures have increased the number of families (particularly middle-class), who are unable to finance the education costs of their children (Marseilles, 2014). Before the financial crisis, university students from financially weak families had to get a job in order to attend their studies. Today this is the case for the vast majority (apart from the richest) of Greek students in tertiary education. Under those circumstances, the number of students who were unable to complete their studies steadily grew (Papadiamantaki, 2017). Nevertheless, a large number of students during the crisis managed to obtain their degree in the prescribed time despite the institutional shortcomings and financial difficulties. Between 2004-2014, on average 50,000 students graduated each year from Greek HEIs which corresponds to approximately 66.6% of new students entering tertiary education each year (Ministry of Education, 2016).

On another note, Gioumpasoglou et al. (2016) argue that the most significant challenge for tertiary education students in Greece amidst the crisis was to complete their studies and obtain their degree in the set time unhindered, since there were many occasions that their institutions shut down due to demonstrations and occupations. As a result, a substantial disparity was created between those studying in Greek HEIs and Greek students who study abroad and normally complete their degrees on time, without experiencing any substantial interruptions during their studies (Gioumpasoglou et al., 2016). In this sense, those who studied abroad are more prepared to enter the highly competitive and challenging labour market. According to the OECD's Education at a Glance 2013 report (OECD, 2013), Greece was the country with the largest number of people studying abroad, in proportion to its population.

The link between HE and economy had always been weak even before the eruption of the crisis. There is a clear disparity between the structure and needs of the Greek labour market (both private and public sector) and the high rates of highly educated Greeks (Balias et al., 2016; Labrianidis, 2011). This mismatch was further exacerbated by the financial crisis and austerity measures. The low salaries and staggering rates of youth unemployment have forced many university graduates, skilled academics and in general highly skilled young professionals to seek work opportunities or to continue their studies abroad, leading to a substantial amount of "brain-drain", i.e. the migration of skilled and highly qualified workforce (Christopoulos et.al, 2014; Labrianidis, 2011). Overall, the outflow of high-skilled individuals may have significant long-term implications for the growth potential and competitiveness of the country of origin, with heavy losses in both its financial and human invested capital (Christopoulos et al., 2014; Gropas & Triantafyllidou, 2013).

Press reports estimate that more than 200,000 young Greek professionals and scientists have moved abroad since the beginning of the crisis in 2010 (Kiprianos, 2016; Smith, 2015; Trachana, 2013). However, the exact number

of all Greeks that have migrated during the crisis has not been fully explored and so definite conclusions cannot be drawn.

Labrianidis and Pratisnakis (2016) also highlight the high prevalence of university graduates migrating to other countries, confirming the existence of a substantial brain drain. Specifically, 75% of the post-crisis migrants hold a university degree and 25% of the total sample are people with post graduate degrees, doctors, or graduates of the polytechnic school (Labrianidis & Pratisnakis, 2016). They also note that the majority of immigrants consist mostly of (upper) middle-class young people who migrate out of necessity seeking to live a decent life (Koniordos, 2010; Labrianidis & Pratisnakis, 2016).

Overall, it can be argued that the crisis illuminated but also intensified the long-standing issues, challenges, and inefficiencies of the Greek tertiary education system, pushing the system to its limits. At the early days of the recession the Ministry of Education at the time was already planning to introduce major reforms not just to HE but to the whole education system of the country; these reforms were unrelated to the rescue programmes and the austerity measures that would come soon afterwards.

Chapter 5: External policy actors and the Greek Higher Education System

5.1 Introduction

Although the analytical viewpoint for education systems used to be predominantly national in the past, since the last quarter of the 20th century we have experienced an increasing tendency for education policy to be formulated and thus analysed not only in national terms, but also through a supra-national and global lens (Henry et al., 2001; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). The construction of education policy has not been limited only to the authority of a nation-state and its government but has also been influenced by and converged with globalised policy discourses and agenda-setting pressures that extend beyond national boundaries (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). In regard to education policy, this new 'rescaling of contemporary politics' (Lingard, 2009) reflects an emergent global education policy field where policy discourses and texts are framed not just in national terms, but considered multi-layered, stretching across the local, national and global levels (Lingard et al., 2005; Robertson et al., 2006).

As a consequence, the power over policy construction has been extended from the full control of national governments (i.e. to regulate its education system) to external actors who exercise (discursive) power and influence to coordinate national policies (Lange & Alexiadou, 2010; Nordin, 2014; Saarinen, 2008;). As Rizvi & Lingard (2009, p. 14) point out, 'the discourses that frame education policy texts are no longer located merely in the national space but increasingly emanate from international and supranational organisations' (such as the OECD, the World Bank and the EU). These actors usually rely on 'soft-governance' practices (e.g. through negotiation, persuasion, peer pressure, and voluntarily agreed performance) and tools (such as measurements, comparisons, and benchmarking) (Grek, 2008; Lawn, 2011). This mode of

influence and governance has been widely evident in the case of Greek HE policy practices.

Nevertheless, this shift from national to global or transnational education policy processes does not mean that the nation-state has lost its significance for setting their policy priorities and expectations (Nordin, 2014). The nation-states' capacity for policy-making has rather changed and broadened when embedded in transnational spaces, as nation-states now have to take into account different, more complex, non-linear and open-ended rationalities and processes (Nordin, 2014; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009).

The policy proposals of various international organisations, such as the OECD and the World Bank, have played a crucial role for the developments that have taken place in Greek HE over the last fifty years. In addition, dominant education discourses and realities (such as the move to 'recognition of degrees', 'life-long learning', 'competitiveness', 'comparability' 'evaluation', 'quality assurance', 'accountability' and 'efficiency') that were prevalent in the EU's education policy agendas have permeated and largely informed the relevant Greek policies and the (political) discourses that frame them, including the structural reforms of the 2011 Law (Gouvias, 2012b; 2012c). The 2011 Law has brought Greek HE one step closer to similar changes at European level and are a clear reminder of prevailing trends in educational policy-making across the EU and globally (Gouvias, 2012a).

This chapter will present the influence of European and international policy actors in the Greek HE policy field. First, the frequently used concepts of globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation in the relevant research around external policy influences in HE will be discussed. The beginning of the Europeanisation process in Greek universities as well as the influence of external policy actors (such as the EU and the OECD) will be further explored by providing an overview of how their policy proposals and discourses have influenced the respective HE education policy in Greece from the 1960s until the mid-2000s. The last section will briefly present the main internal reactions

and resistance that were expressed in Greece against the external policy proposals and discourses, and their eventual policy adoption.

5.2 Globalisation, Europeanisation, and Internationalisation of Higher Education

Terms such as ‘globalisation’, ‘internationalisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’ have prevailed in recent education research, particularly when exploring the influence of global, international and peripheral actors on the character, role and function of HEIs (Enders, 2004; Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012). Indeed, HEIs have been rapidly transforming into global organisations, in the same way as other industries and services (Naidoo, 2006). As a result, these terms have been also key themes on relevant research around the changes and frameworks of higher education policies (e.g. trends and challenges; policy reform proposals; broader European HE policies; or national policies on internationalisation) (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012; Papadiamantaki, 2017).

Due to the dynamic and fluid character of the processes that these terms describe, their meaning has always been somewhat elusive and complicated; indeed, some might argue that their purchase lies precisely in their vague and adaptable character (Altbach, 2007). The frequent use of these terms also in the mainstream media makes it harder to uncover their differences or similarities and also how these processes impact on higher education policies and practices (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012). In the following section the meaning of these terms will be defined and elucidated in relation to the contemporary expansion of higher education.

5.2.1 Globalisation and HE

Globalisation can be generally understood as ‘an umbrella concept that seeks to capture the growing interconnectedness and integration of human society at the planetary scale’ (Jones, 2006, p.112). There are many complexities associated with the concept, leading to many different definitions of globalisation. Held et al. (2000, p.16) provide a comprehensive definition of globalisation as:

“[...] a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.”

In this sense, globalisation can be viewed as a set of processes that forge interconnectivities and networks among different distant localities, nation states or cultures. These relationships are realised in terms of economic, political, cultural and strategic factors, which also reflect the different aspects of globalisation’s influence (Levin, 2001; Marginson & van de Wende, 2007; Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012). Especially in Greece, when referring to the phenomenon of globalisation, many scholars tend to focus more on its economic aspect and the respective changes, developments and trends that are induced globally (Gouvias, 2002; Vergidis & Prokou, 2005). Globalisation is further linked to the technological advancements that have been taken place over the last couple of decades, which have been widely understood as facilitators of worldwide economic changes and indicators of economic world power.

This aspect of globalisation has impacted the field of education by giving rise to new concepts such as the ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘knowledge society’.

One of the major influences of globalisation in education is the commodification of knowledge, whose value is measured by its production and dissemination processes and by its practical applications, but also its transformation into a symbolic power resource (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012). Globalisation along with the process of knowledge production 'has created a relatively coherent set of policy themes and processes through which policymakers (at national, international and trans-national levels) are reshaping education systems' (Ozga et al., 2006, p. 8). New educational technologies, processes and contents have emerged and shared in various parts of the world, leading to noticeable convergences between national education policies (Ali, 2009). Such a global convergence in education policy has inescapably led to an emerging 'global education policy' arena (Henry et al., 2001; Lingard et al. 2005; Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Rizvi et al., 2005).

The 'global education policy field' is broadly characterised by cross-national policy borrowing among different education systems and the formation and adoption of international policies among institutions (Lingard, 2000). International and supranational organisations (such as the EU, World Bank, IMF, UN, UNESCO and OECD) can play a key role in the global flow of policy ideas and institutionalisation of shared mechanisms creating a complex network of global interconnectedness that extends beyond the nation state (Appadurai, 1996; Lingard, 2000). New organisational processes and organisational forms have also emerged within this field (such as decentralisation, deregulation, privatisation and new ways of education governance) which have essentially emphasised global economic competitiveness giving rise to new mandates and expectations for education systems worldwide (Robertson & Dale, 2008). Thus, education systems have been submerged into a culture of competition and peer pressure, where they are expected to operate against certain externally-defined global standards. By extension, this has invoked new modes of evaluating performance through metrics and techniques focused on measuring and comparing education performance. This has reshaped the education arena at the global level,

leading to a new form of soft education governance through metrics, evidence-based modes of accountability and comparability systems (Ozga, 2019) – what Grek (2009) calls ‘governing by numbers’.

As far as the Higher Education field is concerned, globalisation has had a major impact on the priorities and strategies of higher educational institutions. As knowledge is turning into a commodity, HEIs are developing a commercial and consumerist mind-set that views research and education as exchangeable products in an open market (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). At the same time, the search for power and prestige of symbolic knowledge as well as the pursuit of research and academic primacy, have led higher education institutions to a competitive race for increasing their market share and knowledge production (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). As a result a transformation of labour/management relationships has taken place in HE into limited obligation, contingent and sporadic contracts, by removing permanent, full-time status from the working contracts of many teachers and staff specialists (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012).

Further, the ‘global education policy field’ can also be perceived as a discursive terrain within which the education policy is discursively constructed, (re)produced and debated at global, regional or national levels (Rizvi et al., 2005). Through the promotion of relevant discourses, globalisation’s narratives and ideas can be introduced and legitimised within national education policy and even prevail over certain national policy goals and choices (Ali, 2009, p. 62). Together, the processes and discourses that comprise the global education policy field ‘create the global conditions for national policy-making and, in this way, impinge on the national sphere of authority of the state’ (Ali, 2009, p. 62).

Overall, globalisation can be understood as a process with strong economic, political and cultural aspects, with competition being one of its dominant elements, that can lead (if not already initiated) to a major paradigm shift in the field of education policy. In this respect, globalisation constitutes a challenge

at both national (Greece) and regional levels (EU) (Papadiamantaki, 2017; van der Wende, 2003). The aspect of globalisation constitutes an important contextual and analytical dimension as it is linked to the various reform attempts that have been made over time in Greek HE. More specifically, it relates to the supranational influences in terms of disseminating specific policy proposals, discourses and benchmarks, involving Greece in a competitive race to transform and improve the operation of university institutions based on specific pre-defined global standards.

5.2.2 Internationalisation and HE

Although having different uses and meanings, globalisation and internationalisation have been frequently confused with each other. Clarification is provided by Mitchell & Nielsen (2012) who distinguish globalisation from internationalisation on the basis that the former is something that *happens* to HEIs while the latter is something that HEIs *do* – internationalisation is the engine of globalisation. In this regard, they describe internationalisation as being primarily focused “on the intentional actions of individual, groups and social institutions as they actively seek to cross national borders in pursuit of social, economic, political or cultural benefits” (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012).

According to Knight (2004), there is much confusion around the term of internationalisation within HE as its frequent use has created many different meanings. Looking at HEIs, internationalisation can refer to:

- a series of international activities and practices in HE. These include academic mobility and movement for students and faculty as well as international linkages, partnerships, new international research initiatives and convergence in academic programs (Knight, 2003; 2004). The attempts of HEIs to attract international students can be also

considered an internationalisation mechanism (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012).

- the decentralisation and dispersal of education programmes delivery across national borders through new types of education and spatial arrangements, such as the provision of on-line, distance education programmes, and the establishment of research centres and campuses in other countries (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012)
- the inclusion of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process (Knight, 2004).

One could argue, however, that internationalisation encompasses all the above different aspects and meanings. What is certain is that internationalisation has been for a long time present within HEIs especially with regards to its primary aspect and mechanism, i.e. the exchange and mobility of students and staff (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012; Stier, 2003). Together, the processes of internationalisation and globalisation have resulted in a global economic, political, and cultural interdependence which has transformed the character and organisational and operational activities of HEIs.

Internationalisation also constitutes one of the main features and aims of the 2011 Law. Focusing on the extroversion and modernisation of HEIs, internationalisation is linked to the dimensions of knowledge transfer and the accreditation of degree programmes, research excellence (e.g. by increasing the participation of Greek HEIs in international competitive programmes) and lastly to the mobility of students and academic staff (e.g. by attracting more international students and expanding collaborations with other HEIs abroad). In this sense, the target of internationalisation in the Greek context, further relates to the Europeanisation process of homogenising and converging HE systems in Europe, with the aim of establishing a cohesive and strong European HE region that can compete with other parts of the world.

5.2.3 Europeanisation and HE

As described above, globalisation has impacted upon the field of education in such way that has resulted in the emergence of a globalised space of education governance. In the same vein, the convergence of education policy processes within the EU have also transcended into the so-called European education space. Starting in the 1960s as a shared project and shaped around common cultural and educational values (such as peace, social equality and solidarity, freedom of opinion, progress and innovation, cultural diversity, and tolerance), the European education space finally became a common supranational governance space. This development corresponds to the overall Europeanisation process that takes place within as well as beyond the EU. Following Radaelli's (2004, p. 3) definition, the concept of Europeanisation refers to a process of:

“(a) construction (b) diffusion (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.”

Europeanisation is seen as Europe's response to the broader trend of globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge economy; to the demands and the severe economic challenges of both the education and the wider market as they came to the fore in the beginning of the new millennium (Grek, 2014). The aim set in the Lisbon Agenda (EC, 2000), to make the EU the ‘most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world’ has been adopted as the overarching purpose and means of working for creating a strengthened European education policy area. The management of education policy by EU under globalisation, had further emphasised the adoption of shared benchmarking and indicators, thus pushing the ‘growth and jobs’

agenda forward (Grek, 2008). The global ideas of the knowledge economy and lifelong learning became the policy objectives in the EU since 2000, constituting the major aspects of Europeanisation of education policies. These new education policy recommendations, tools and discourses have been working as devices of soft governance³⁰ that, through negotiation and co-option - together with cross-comparison, competition and peer pressure - have drawn national systems closer into European and global frameworks and practices (Grek, 2009).

The following sections provide a brief overview of the influence of external policy actors since the 1960s focusing specifically on the Europeanisation process of Greek HE.

5.3 The influence of European and international discourses and their impact on the Greek HE reforms

5.3.1 International Influences in Greek HE Policy in the 1960s and 1970s

The interventions (and influences) of international organisations in Greek educational politics had already begun in the 1960s (Prokou, 2003). At that time Greece was experiencing a period of economic growth, undergoing a process of modernisation and economic 'internationalisation', that included the entrance of foreign capital and transfer of technological knowledge and developments. One of the major actors influencing the Greek education policy was the intergovernmental Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

One of its earliest contributions was the provision of technical assistance and guidance to Greece, as a part of the so-called Mediterranean Regional Project.

³⁰ Soft governance involves rules and practices that are flexible and not formally binding, but they are expected to have practical effects and to produce results (Trubek et al., 2005).

This project aimed at the development and modernisation of the educational systems of six Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, former Yugoslavia and Turkey). Its general philosophy was based on the assumption that education goes hand in hand with economic growth and social advancement (OECD, 1965; 1982). In 1965 the organisation conducted a review of the Greek education system (OECD, 1965), focusing particularly on higher technological and vocational education and its link to economic advancement. As stated in the report, its primary object was:

‘to specify in quantitative terms the changes that must be introduced into the [Greek] education system in order to meet the needs arising out of population growth, rising incomes, increasing social demand for education, and the growth and structural transformation of the economy.’

(OECD 1965, p. 20)

The World Bank also intervened in Greek education policy by funding the first higher technological institutions, known as *KATEE* (Centres of Higher Technical and Vocational Education) during the dictatorship period (1969-1974). Their task was to train quickly and efficiently the required skilled human capital for big enterprises, thus contributing to economic growth and ‘efficiency’ (Persianis, 1978; Prokou, 2003).

Drawing largely on the principles of Human Capital Theory, the educational ideology of both the OECD and the World Bank was based upon the assumption that higher (technological) education - as a producer of human capital - was of vital importance for productivity and rapid economic growth and was thus considered to be a significant investment (Henry et al., 2001; Prokou, 2003). As a result, their discursive interventions imbued the Greek HE reform agenda with pertinent motifs, such as *modernisation* (in terms of the contribution of education to the modernisation of the social, economic and political institutions of the country), *democratisation* (education as an instrument for democratising society) and *economic development* (in terms of the contribution of education to economic growth), which along with the themes

of equity (in terms of the expansion of the Greek education system) and efficiency went on dominating the Greek education policies during the whole 1960s-1980s period (Prokou, 2003).

5.3.2 International and Supranational Influences in Greek HE Policy in the 1980s-1990s

Since the mid-1970s the quest for democratisation³¹ and modernisation of universities became more intense. Moreover, when the social-democratic party of PASOK took power in 1981, the issue of social justice and equality of educational opportunities became the guiding principle, thus signifying a shift from the “human resource development” goal of education to that of “social demand” (Prokou, 2013). At that time the education agenda of the OECD had also shifted its orientation from a more narrow economic or human capital view of education policy to also include the promotion of social justice or equity agendas, which continued up until the early 1990s (Lingard & Grek, 2007; Rizvi & Lingard, 2006).

The goal of democratisation was expressed in law in 1982 after the enactment of the Framework Act 1268/1982. This law aimed at addressing, among others, the following issues: (a) the rationalisation of the administrative and educational functions of the University, (b) the participation of all members of the academic community to the processes of the elections of the governance bodies of the University and (c) the abolishment of ‘chairs’ – an institution of German origin – which were replaced with ‘departments’ – an institution of Anglo-American origin – thus giving junior faculty and student representatives a voice in policy making (Mattheou, 2001, p. 247–251; Prokou, 2013). As

³¹ Democratisation was mainly associated with the participation of all members of the academic community in the administration of the University, as well as with the abolishment of the omnipotence of the University Chair (Prokou, 2010). The latter refers to the Deans of faculties or schools who were awarded with near absolute authority over a group of associated departments. This strictly hierarchical system had operated in Greek Universities since their establishment in the 19th century.

Dimitropoulos (2013, p. 155) aptly notes, these changes ‘reflected the shift in the global cultural hegemony that took place during the 20th century with respect to the organisation and administration of universities and their relationship with the state’.

Other changes included the expansion of regional universities and the creation of new ones, the restructuring and enrichment of study programmes and the promotion of postgraduate and doctoral studies (Karmas et al., 1988).

After the accession of Greece to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981, the EEC would become the major supranational organisation responsible for influencing Greek HE policy. For example, the foundation of TEIs (Technological Educational Institutions) in 1983 (Law 1404/1983) which represented a significant change to the Greek model of higher education institutions was based on the European and international model for higher technical education. It consists of two main types of tertiary education institutions: the universities and university type institutions, the so-called *AEI* (Highest Educational Institutions); and non-university institutions, the *TEI* (OECD, 1997). The establishment of the *TEI* was justified by the official governmental rhetoric as a response to the demand of equality of educational opportunities (i.e. by opening higher education to students who would typically not attend university and would choose technical subjects), but also to meet the aim of economic efficiency, a central theme in the 1980s reforms (Prokou, 2013). In the particular case of Greece, the latter objective was based upon the expectation that the higher technological sector would contribute to the economic development and modernisation of the country (Bouzakis, 1992). The restructuring of the HE system was also seen as a necessity in the process of European single market formation and for Greece to compete on equal terms with other EU member states which had already established a non-university sector (Zmas, 2015).

At the same time, since the mid-1980s the EU started to place more emphasis on the establishment of a common European education policy framework

through the cooperation between member states. In the Communication entitled “Education and training in the European Community: Guidelines for the medium term, 1989-92” (Commission of the European Communities, 1989) the Commission identifies seven areas for action on education in the European community, which mainly deal with: free movement and mobility through youth exchanges and the promotion of ERASMUS programmes; continuous education and training of the workforce; the effect of technological developments on education; the improvement of quality of education through cooperation (e.g. through the help of the ‘Eurydice’ network³²); and the strengthening of the European dimension in education (Commission of the European Communities, 1989, p.1).

In the beginning of 1990s, the pressures for harmonisation and convergence of education policies and systems of EU member states became the main topic of discussion as well as the central goal of the Commission for the next decades – but also one of the most controversial and debatable issues within the education communities (O’Callaghan, 1993; Saarinen 2005; 2008). At the same time, a growing interest in the maintenance and improvement of quality of Higher Education starts to emerge as it becomes evident from the 1989 Communication as well as from subsequent EU policy documents. In 1991, the influential EU *Memorandum on Higher Education (COM (91) 349 final)* was published, focusing on similar subjects as the 1989 Communication, such as access, open and distance education, university–industry and member states’ cooperation, continued training, and the ‘European dimension’ (Rudzki, 1995; Saarinen, 2008). The document also places special emphasis on the “quality of higher education” portraying it as “a horizontal issue of fundamental importance”. As the Memorandum further states:

“The strongly competitive nature of modern society and its dependence on human knowledge and skills is such as to place

³² The Eurydice network facilitates the collection, monitoring, processing and reliable circulation of comparable information and data on education systems and policies throughout Europe and has been often described as an important factor of strengthening the cooperation in education in Europe (Grek & Lawn, 2009).

increasing emphasis on the question of quality. This emphasis is heightened by the large investment of public finance in higher education which makes assurance of quality a necessary part of political accountability and, in some instances, a basis on which public funding is allocated. [...] This growing interest in quality is reflected in the concerns of the Member States that structures should exist which would enable the higher education institutions themselves to monitor the quality of teaching and research work going on within them and which would encourage an increased consciousness of and emphasis on quality in all that they do.”

(Commission of the European Communities, 1991, p. 13-14)

This extract signifies the EU’s attempt to promote the idea of competitiveness as an inherent feature of the modern society and the notion of quality of higher education as essential for the process of competitiveness but also as a criterion of ‘political accountability’ in terms of determining whether the public investment in higher education is justified (Saarinen, 2008; Shahjahan, 2012).

With the prospect of Greece joining the European Monetary Union (EMU), the influence of the EU became more intense during the 1990s. The modernisation and democratisation agendas came again to the fore under a more neo-liberal rationale with a special emphasis on competition and the establishment of an overall evaluation system for the tertiary education sector (Prokou, 2013; Zmas, 2015).

A major reform effort on Higher Education was undertaken with the introduction of Law 2083/1992 (“Modernisation of Higher Education”) by the government, led at the time by the party of ‘New Democracy’. As the title denotes, the 1992 Law focused on the modernisation and upgrade of Greek HE by bringing many novel (and radical for that period) changes, which include among others:

- the establishment of the institutional framework for the self-government of universities,
- the institutionalisation of postgraduate studies in Greece and the organisation of university studies in two cycles,
- the institutionalisation of an evaluation system for Greek universities and the introduction of a "Committee for the Evaluation of the Work of Universities" at the Ministry of Education,
- the introduction of provisions that would allow the operation of private universities.

The 1992 Law also stipulates the establishment of the Hellenic Open University as a response to the increasing needs and requirements for lifelong learning and distance learning in Greece. This development brought Greek HE in line with almost all the countries of Europe, where Open Universities had been established since the 1970s.

According to the explanatory report, the goal of the 1992 Law was to design a functional, modern, flexible, competitive and highly efficient university characterised by the values of meritocracy, transparency, competition and equal opportunities (Ministry of Education, 1992). Following the European and global HE policy trends of that period, the major concern was to establish stronger links between Greek higher education and the economy, and to further solidify Greek HEIs' active and equal participation in the educational and scientific developments that took place in the broader European and global context.

What is important to note is that the specific law was the first to enact a systematic evaluation process for all the activities of Greek HEIs. Specifically, Article 24 of the 1992 Law stipulated the establishment of an evaluation system for both Departments and HEIs and particularly the creation of an 'Evaluation Committee', that would assess the strategy plan of each HEI and would connect the evaluation results with additional funding from the Ministry of Education. Moreover, according to the law specific benchmarks and

performance indicators would be established by specialised scientific committees instituted by the Ministry following advice of the Evaluation Committee (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014; Law 2083/ 1992).

Nevertheless, the changes introduced were never fully implemented due to the strong veto exercised by the academic community, who were skeptical about the true intentions of the ministry and the state (Zmas, 2015). For example, the evaluation committee that was planned to operate within the Ministry of Education was never set up, as its operation clashed with the principles set by the Rectors of the universities. More so, the academic community was concerned that through this law the ministry's intended to set up a "punitive" evaluation system which could lead to further reduction of public funding of HE – by affecting for instance part of state funding for the evaluated HEIs (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014; Zmas, 2015). As a result, the provisions of the 1992 Law on the establishment of an evaluation system in tertiary education were never implemented at the time in Greece, although evaluation and its underpinning philosophy and imaginary was actively promoted by the EU (Commission of the European Communities, 1991; Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014).

The theme of evaluation was also prominent in the policy proposals of the OECD, which in 1997 conducted a review report regarding the education policies of Greece (OECD, 1997). For example, some recommendations included: the introduction of private funding along with the authorisation of private higher education, the decentralisation of HE in terms of giving a larger degree of effective autonomy and governance to the HEIs, the rationalisation of HE expenditure, the improvement of the links between the HE system and the labour market (OECD, 1997). In general, the policy proposals of the OECD report were mostly focused on economic efficiency issues rather than on the promotion of social justice and equity (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006). This has been the main trend of OECD's education agenda since the early 1990s which, according to Lingard & Grek (2007, p. 8-9), has been characterised by:

‘a particular economic view of educational aims linked to the requirements of a global knowledge economy and ideas about educational governance linked to new public management, which increasingly promote corporatised and privatised administration of education, outcome measures and knowledge as commodity.’

Nevertheless, Greek universities had already begun to become familiar with evaluation mechanisms by being involved on their own in European evaluation projects since the mid-1990s (Zmas, 2015). According to Zmas (2015), this can be attributed to the following factors:

- The peer pressure on Greek universities, prompted by the institutionalisation of evaluation mechanisms in other European countries. As Greek universities were concerned that they might become isolated, they strived to keep themselves up to date with the European HE developments.
- The European Union funds that Greece received in the 1990s and 2000s, which contributed to an increased ‘Europeanisation’ process of Greek universities. These funds refer the Operational Programmes of Education and Initial Vocational training (OPEIVT I & II) which were part of the Second (1994-1996) and Third (2000-2006) Community Support Frameworks. The OPEIVTs significantly contributed to the restructuring and expansion of the Greek educational system (Gouvias, 2011; Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). In particular, these programmes were the most influential mechanisms of ‘opening up’ the access for new socio-economic groups in Greek HE, establishing new study programmes and preserving the free character of studies by largely contributing to overall funding of Greek HEIs (Gouvias, 2011; Zmas, 2015).

According to Papadiamantaki (2017), there was no disagreement about the social feasibility and necessity of the Greek HE expansion; however, the main objections were centred around “the issue of funding, the orientation of expansion and the lack of strategic planning” (Papadiamantaki, 2017, p. 219).

More specifically, many concerns were expressed about the sustainability of the new institutions, departments and curricula after the completion of the EU funded programmes (Papadiamantaki, 2017; Zmas, 2015). Others focused on the potential mismanagement of the EU funds (Mavrogiorgos, 2003). The policy of expansion was further criticised as negatively affecting the development and proper operation of existing institutions and departments, leading to many changes in the conditions and workload of academics (Lakasas, 2002; Mastoras, 2002). Lastly, some argued that the OPEIVTs have contributed to the commercialisation of Greek universities by weakening humanistic education in favor of programmes of more utilitarian and practical orientation and introducing an economistic mentality within universities that finally led to the imposition of fees for postgraduate programmes (Zmas, 2015).

5.3.3 EU and Greek HE policy during the 2000s

During the 2000s, the so-called “Bologna Process” would become the main driving force behind the reform of HE in Greece. Greek HE had been in a long process of transition and transformation. Various policies have been introduced between 2000 and 2015 committed to the adoption of the EU principles and standards and thus to the alignment and adjustment of the Greek HE with the demands and targets of the so-called common “European Higher Education Area” (EHEA).

The EHEA refers to the role of HE in the new century at European and international level. The main framework and aims of EHEA were laid out in the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declarations. More specifically, in the Joint Declaration of Ministers of Education of 29 European countries (among them Greece) that met in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999, it was stated that the signing countries should aim at ‘increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of Higher Education’ (Bologna,

1999). Subsequently, in the Prague Conference (2001) of European Ministers in charge of higher education, who represented 32 signatories, the commitment of establishing the European Higher Education Area by 2010 was reiterated (EHEA, 2001; Prague Communiqué, 2001). While EHEA targets are in line with the EU's education policy priorities, the EHEA goes beyond EU as non-EU countries also participate in this process.

The main targets of EHEA are the harmonisation of educational systems across the European continent to strengthen their quality assurance mechanisms, to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability (EHEA, 2020). This process relies on the adoption of common key values, such as freedom of expression and free movement of students and staff, autonomy for HEIs and independent student unions (EHEA, 2020). This requires a certain degree of convergence and compatibility among the various HE systems. The process of convergence takes place through the deployment of two main mechanisms: The first refers to the creation and application of a concrete set of standards, indicators and benchmarks that allows cross-comparison and facilitates evaluation of the various systems, whereas the second pertains to the globalisation of methods of educational management and the introduction of new governance technologies for education (Grek et al., 2009; Ozga et al., 2011).

Since the signing of the Bologna Declaration, Greece has responded to the EU's pressure for change through the enactment of a series of policies. The most important law prior to the policy attempts during the Greek economic crisis was the Act 3374/2005 which made provision for the implementation of an evaluation and quality assurance framework in Greek HE. The passing of this law was another attempt (following the unsuccessful implementation of the 1992 Law) to introduce evaluation mechanisms to Greek universities – which had been a long-standing yet unfulfilled commitment of Greece. These measures aimed at harmonising Greek Higher Education with the changes and developments that had been taking place within the EHEA (International Committee, 2011; OECD, 2011). In particular, Law 3374/2005 determined:

- the mechanisms for internal and external evaluation of HEIs and their departments,
- the creation of the “Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency” (in Greek: ADIP; in English: HQAA) which would be responsible for organising the quality assurance processes and for guaranteeing the transparency of the evaluation processes,
- the certification of students’ degrees and the accreditation process of study programmes; the use of evaluation indicators,
- the establishment of ECTS³³,
- the provision of a Diploma Supplement.

Specifically, in regard to the evaluation procedures, these would take place every four years in two phases. The first refers to the internal evaluation of HEIs. For this purpose a unit of internal evaluation is formed in each HEI (Quality Assurance Unit or MODIP) that would organise and complete the internal evaluation procedures and provide the report of internal evaluation to ADIP. After gathering the data from the internal evaluation reports of HEIs, ADIP would then organise the external evaluation and publish a report upon its completion (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014).

Two years later another law was passed (Law 3549/2007) which essentially supported and maintained the insitutionalsied quality assurance introduced by the 2005 law, while also reproducing the discourse of similar EU projects (using terms such as attraction’, ‘openness’, ‘development’, ‘quality’ and ‘transparency’) (Zmas, 2015). One of its major supplements was the establishment of evaluation procedures in every HEI (such as the production of a 4 year Development Academic Planning) as prerequisite for the award of public funding (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014).

³³ The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is one of the main tools of the EHEA that has contributed to the European mobility of students, one of the fundamental priorities of European policies. It serves as a mechanism for counting and transferring credits taken at one higher education institution to another. In this way, ECTS facilitates the movement of students and enhances the flexibility of study programmes for students (EC, 2020).

The passing of the law 3374/2005 prompted intense debates and disagreements among the various Greek policy actors (Prokou, 2010). According to Papadiamantaki (2017), two coalitions were formed in relation to the issue of evaluation and quality assurance:

- The first coalition, whose main actors were based at the Ministry of Education at the time, supported the implementation of the Bologna's and EHEA's policies in general. For the first time the Ministry of Education is formulating an explicit policy discourse in favor of the Europeanisation of Greek HE, recognising it as a process that offers alternatives to the pressures of globalisation (Papadiamantaki, 2017, p. 230).
- The second coalition expressed a contradictory discourse against the process of Europeanisation included the majority of academics, the administrative staff, the youth political branches (but not the whole student community) and the parties of opposition at the time. Their main argument was that the provisions of the 2005 law would increase marketisation of university studies and will limit academic freedom (Zmas, 2015).

Although the second coalition seemed to be winning the battle for influence in public opinion, reform supporters gradually increased as the need for change and the pressures of Europeanisation and harmonisation with the Bologna Process became more prominent (Papadiamantaki, 2016; Zmas, 2015). Academics became also more willing to discuss the proposals of the Ministry of Education mainly because many of them were more or less ideologically affiliated with the major parties of PASOK and New Democracy who had supported the reforms (Zmas, 2015). At the same time, the change of course by POSDEP (Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Association), i.e. the official trade union of Greek academics, changed the conditions of the dialogue. This created a rift within the trade union with many academics forming their own movements according to the position they hold about the reforms while others decided not to be represented by POSDEP due to their

extreme opposition to the law (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014; Papadiamantaki, 2017; Zmas, 2015).

What is certain is that most of the above policies in Greek HE had only been partially or not at all implemented while the internal chronic challenges and dysfunctions of Greek HE continued to exist. According to Pasiás (2010), this was mainly due to the internal asymmetries and distinctive features of the system, namely:

- strong opposition to any radical changes and external influences,
- lack of communication between the state and the academic community,
- significant ideological differences within the academic community and
- the inability of the state to adequately fund the proposed changes.

Finally, as Prokou (2003) suggests, one of the main reasons for Greece's difficulty in adapting to the EU standards all these years also pertains to the incompatibility of the respective HE reforms with the state of the Greek economy and the clientelist nature of the Greek state - which after the outbreak of the recent financial crisis became more evident than ever.

Within this new global and international landscape, the process of converging the different national systems and models of Higher Education at the European level has been intensified. Bologna process and the creation of EHAE on the one hand aims at the structural, constitutional and functional reforming of the European university sector through processes of convergence, compatibility, and acceptance, while at the same time supporting the relationship of the university with economic, social, and political parameters such as the improvement of quality of studies, the enhancement of competitiveness and efficiency (economic targets), and the promotion of attractiveness of HEIs (political target) (Nikolakaki & Pasiás, 2010). In the Greek HE policy field, these developments have led to major political conflict and academic debates. From the strong reactions against the introduction of Quality Assurance by the 2005 Law, Greek HE policy moved forward to the introduction Law 4009/2011 which

radically altered the governance model and internal structure of Greek HEIs while also re-establishing the quality assurance framework and explicitly incorporating the dimension of internationalisation into the policy targets and rhetoric of Greek HE. The next chapter explores the new attempt of HE reforms that took place in 2011, right at the beginning of the economic crisis.

Chapter 6: The 2011 Higher Education reforms in Greece

In the beginning of the financial crisis period the Ministry of Education announced a series of bold reforms in tertiary education with a view to address most of the deficiencies and problems of Greek Higher Education. The first measures were introduced with the passing of a major Framework Act on the 24th of August 2011, entitled “*Structure, Operation, Quality Assurance of Higher Studies and Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions*”. According to the official explanatory memorandum of the 4009/2011 bill, the proposed regulations aim to improve the framework of organisation and operation of Greek HEIs and to facilitate their adjustment and development within the evolving social, economic and scientific conditions, in the light of the modern international academic context. This act accounts for the major and most significant reform in Greek higher education since 1982.

This chapter begins with a thorough description of the consultation process that preceded the bill’s enactment. It then deals with the core changes introduced by the 4009/2011 Law. In addition, the major amendments that followed are briefly discussed focusing on the 2011 Law’s unsuccessful implementation.

6.1 Context: Public consultation process before the parliamentary discussions and passing of the bill

Prior to the debate and passing of the bill in the parliament, a public consultation process was held lasting approximately 12 months. During this period, various domestic and international actors and stakeholders involved in the field of Higher Education took part and contributed to the dialogue, including Rectors of Universities and Presidents of TEIs, students, the academic and administrative staff of Universities and TEIs, trade unions

involved in Higher Education but also international organisations and committees.

At the 64th Conference of Rectors (28 July 2010) the Minister of Education, Anna Diamantopoulou presented the main axes of the government's reform plans. On 26 September 2010, in the international meeting on the future of Greek Higher Education which was held in Delphi, Greece, the then Prime Minister George Papandreou along with Anna Diamantopoulou and the Deputy Minister of Education George Panaretos outlined the government's future policy plans. In their attempt to persuade the public about the necessity to change the governance regime of universities, the government heavily criticised Greek HEIs of being absent from global university rankings and of being incapable to participate on equal terms in the global competition (Papadiamantaki & Fragoulis, 2016).

One month later, on 23 October 2010, at the 65th Conference of Rectors of Greek Universities held in the city of Rethymnon, Anna Diamantopoulou released the first document for consultation, entitled "Local Government, accountability, quality, extroversion", which delineated the new university organisational model as envisaged by the government. Most of the ideas contained in this document were included in the final text of the law, such as the introduction of the Councils as the highest unit of governance.

The Conference of Rectors raised several questions and made comments on this text, without, however, receiving any official response on behalf of the State. On 29 November 2010, the Ministry of Education published its National Strategy for Higher Education for online public consultation, which ended on 14 January 2011. The total number of answers and proposals submitted during the online public consultation was 360. At the same time, a committee with representatives from all the political parties was created in order to achieve a dialogue among the different parties regarding education issues, including the reform of Higher Education. No further action was then taken by the Ministry or any other stakeholder until February 2011, when Minister Diamantopoulou

discussed again the changes with the Rectors in the 66th Conference of Rectors. Yet no development was made: Rectors had still many objections and complaints regarding the new changes (Hellenic Universities Rectors' Synod, 2011a).

In the same month, an International Advisory Committee of nine international scholars³⁴ (which was formed in 2010 by the Ministry of Education) issued a report where they critically assessed the situation in Greek HE and reviewed the future HE policy plans of the Ministry of Education. In the published report, the committee presents a bleak picture of situation in Greek HE and links the launch of new reforms with the conjecture of financial crisis:

“This is a critical time in Greece’s history, characterised by a financial crisis with serious ramifications for the country’s existing social and political structures. Addressing the challenge [...] requires fundamental and meaningful reform not only of the Greek financial institutions but of educational institutions as well.

Greece’s system of Higher Education suffers from a crisis of values as well as outdated policies and organisational structures. The tragedy is that leaders, scholars, students and political parties that aim to promote the public good have been trapped in a system that subverts the goals they seek, corrupts the ideals they pursue and forsakes the public they serve.”

³⁴ The members were international scholars who hold positions as presidents of major universities from Europe, the USA, Asia and Australia. More specifically, the committee included: Patrick Aebischer (Professor of Medical Science and President of the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne); Gavin Brown (Professor of Mathematics and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney - retired as Vice-Chancellor on 10 July 2008); James J. Duderstadt (Professor of Science and Engineering and President Emeritus, University Professor of Science and Engineering at the University of Michigan and Director, the Millennium Project); Gudmund Hernes (Professor of Social Science and President International Social Science Council (ISSC)); Linda Katehi (Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Chancellor at University of California, Davis); David Naylor (Professor of Medicine and President of the University of Toronto, CA); Jozef Ritzen (Professor of Economics and President of the Universiteit Maastricht); John Sexton (Professor of law and President of New York University); Lap-Chee Tsui (Professor of Biology and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong).

(International Committee, 2011, p.7).

The report predominantly concluded in favour of the new changes, while also providing some suggestions to the Greek government for the improvement and strengthening of its policy proposals (Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, 2011b). In my interview with Anna Diamantopoulou, the former Minister of Education mentions the following regarding the impetus behind the formation of this committee and the use of the results by the reports. as well as the reactions that followed the report's publication:

"I tried to escape our national, domestic consultation. I formed a group of 11 (sic) top scientists³⁵ in the world who had experience in university administration as professors, while others had served as ministers in their countries putting forward reforms in education. And they gave us an approximation of what should be done in Greece based on the data gathered and the reports published by the OECD.

*This text was accepted with a great deal of hostility because [according to the opposition] it was [generated by] **foreigners**³⁶. [...] During my term, however, the Troika was not influencing the Ministry of Education. It was a period during which no one was telling us what to do."*

(Interview with Anna Diamantopoulou, 2016)

In addition to the committee's report, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched a report about Greece's education policy in 2011 under the request of the Greek Ministry of Education. The report outlines the structural weaknesses and deficiencies of the Greek education system, while also describing the necessary actions that Greece needs to take in order to improve its education system (OECD, 2011). In

³⁵ The official members of the committee were nine. The Minister probably in the flow of speech mixed up the number of scholars that took part.

³⁶ Interviewee's emphasis.

addition to the above general problems of Greek HE, the OECD report identified a number of more specific issues related to the system's efficiency and effectiveness which Greece need to address. These include:

- the high percentage of students entering tertiary education but comparatively low completion rates and an inefficient allocation of students among the tertiary institutions and academic departments;
- the proliferation of small departments and degree programmes, with many of them enrolling few students and producing few graduates;
- mismatch of tertiary education provision with labour market needs;
- the ineffective internal governance and management of institutions resulting from the persistence of severely out-dated centralised governance, political intervention and dysfunctional internal governance and management structures;
- the limited capacity of the Greek state to steer the system in terms of ensuring that tertiary institutions, as well as the overall size and shape of the system, are accountable for implementing essential reforms;
- inadequate information systems and lack of consistent data which are essential for the appraisal, management and accountability of tertiary institutions;
- low levels of non-public funding, including limited cost-sharing by students within the constraints of the Constitutional mandate for free education.

(OECD 2011, p. 63)

The formation of the international advisory committee and the invitation of OECD appear to be a concerted effort by the Ministry of Education, to shift public and academic opinion about the situation in Greek HE and to prepare but also legitimise the introduction of the new proposed reforms.

The next and final stage included the publication and subsequent submission of the last draft of the bill to the parliament on 21 July 2011. This move was accompanied with the negative reaction of a large part of the academic

community, as this was mainly expressed through the relevant decisions of many Universities' Senates and the constant meetings held by the Rectors' Synod throughout the summer of 2011 (Chrysogonos, 2012; Papadiamantaki & Fragoulis, 2016, p. 228). On 24 July 2011, after considering a large number of documented opinions from eminent constitutional experts of the country (Anthopoulos, 2011; Chrysogonos, 2012), the Extraordinary Conference of Rectors asked the parliament not to vote for the bill, while at the same time urging the academic community to oppose the new changes (Hellenic Universities Rectors' Synod, 2011b). In its last meeting on the 22 August 2011, one day before the start of the bill's debate in the plenum, the Synod again asked the Parliament:

“not to vote for the bill as it stands and to defend the constitutionally established public and self-governed character of University”

(Hellenic Universities Rectors' Synod, 2011c, p. 2).

Nevertheless, the recommendation of academics was not translated into practice: with few changes and additions, the bill was passed by a very large parliamentary majority on 30 August 2011.

Public consultation had been consistently presented as highly paramount by the government. As the Minister of Education at the time, Anna Diamantopoulou, states:

“[Public consultation] is important because as a country we have no culture of consensus. It is perceived as a good will to negotiate. Whereas consensus is a profound political and technocratic process. That is a process that pertains to the institutional framework, to social structures and to a political culture that has to be cultivated. So, public consultation in Greece does not pertain to a self-explanatory and well-organised process. Thus, what I tried to do was to coordinate the public consultation.”

(Interview with Anna Diamantopoulou, 2016)

She further argues that, although it was hard to organise the consultation, she ultimately managed to do it in a thorough way, engaging as many stakeholders as possible. Finally, she grounds the failure of achieving a wide consensus on the combination of financial crisis, the highly confrontational and visceral rhetoric expressed at the time and the lack of rational discourses and argumentation with respect to the new changes (Interview with Anna Diamantopoulou, 2016).

Nevertheless, as some academics argue there was insufficient time for the stakeholders (i.e. the university departments and schools) to analyse and comment on the proposed fundamental reforms (Zmas, 2015). The period of approximately two months - from the submission of the final draft until the final passing of the law - was extremely short, if one takes into consideration the immense importance of this legislative change of the status quo and the strong adversarial political climate at the time. On top of that, the government's choice to introduce the new reforms during the summer, a period in which the academic community and the administrative operation of universities are usually out of office, was arguably not fortuitous. What is certain is that more time was needed for a thorough dialogue and consultation on the new reforms. Instead, the whole period of consultation was marked only by conflict between the Ministry of Education and the academic and student community.

6.2 Content and key provisions of Law 4009/2011

The 2011 reforms introduced significant changes in the governance of tertiary institutions, along with policies related to the system's modernisation and internationalisation, and the establishment of a more efficient accountability framework. The following sections present the key provisions and changes included in the reforms.

6.2.1 New forms of management and governance

Until the passage of the new reforms, the management structure of HEIs consisted of three main governing and administrative bodies: the Senate (or Technical Education Institutes' (TEI) Assembly), the Rector's Council (or TEI Council) and the rector (or President for TEIs). Moreover, in regard to the election process of the University Rectors (or TEI Presidents), they were directly elected by the total of the (i) teaching and research staff members of the University, (ii) undergraduate and postgraduate students and (iii) other internal stakeholders (such as administrative staff representatives, teaching assistants, scientific personnel, etc.) (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). The Senate/Assembly³⁷ was responsible among others for the establishment, supervision and application of the laws and internal regulations of the institution as well as for the regular annual budget. The Rector's/TEI Council had a more intercessory role by introducing the annual budget and various projects in the Senate where the final decisions were taken. Finally, the Rector/President - being the most powerful body of the institution - was responsible for the control and supervision of the whole operation of the university, the application of the law and internal regulations, the institution's expenses as well as for the coordination of all the collective bodies of the university, the academic staff and the students (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008).

The new governing model of HEIs is the cornerstone of the new Framework Act. It is presented as a democratic and collective model of governance that has been internationally tested (Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, 2011a). The responsibilities of administration, supervision, control, approval, and strategic-development planning are divided into three governing bodies: the Council, the Senate and the Rector. The Council (in

³⁷ The Senate/ Assembly consists of the rector, the vice-rectors, the faculties' deans, the presidents of the departments and elective representatives of students, teaching, and research staff as well as administrative staff.

Greek: Συμβούλιο Ιδρύματος) constitutes the new governing and administrative board that was established with the Act 4009/2011. This would include internal members (i.e. full or associate professors coming from within the HE establishment and one representative of the University students) and external members (including academics from other HEIs in Greece and abroad or representatives of professional associations and local businesses). Many of the competences and responsibilities of the Rector Council and the Senate were moved to the Council. Overall, the Council were to be the main responsible body for establishing and approving policies for the institution, including the allocation of human resources and funding within the institution. It would also be responsible for the appointment of University Rectors (or (TEI) Presidents) by selecting the candidates (two or three) after an international call for expression of interest. The Rector or President (who comprise the second administrative body of governance) would then be elected only by the professors and lecturers of the institution via a direct and secret vote. The third regulatory body would be the Senate (or the TEI Assembly) which along with the rector or president would be responsible for the educational and research policy of the institution as well as the academic management. The duties assigned to each of the governing bodies as established by the 2011 Law are presented in detail in Table 6.1.

According to the explanatory memorandum, this combination provides a balanced relationship between administrative and academic bodies, strengthens the self-governance of the institutions, and ensures that there are institutional counterweights to the identified administrative distortions (Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, 2011a). But the fundamental aim of this change was to limit the active involvement of youth political parties in the governing procedures of HEIs, and also to reduce the extensive powers of the Rectors/ Presidents. This would allegedly improve transparency, social accountability and effectiveness by disentangling HEIs from previous phenomena of bureaucratic inertia, opaqueness and over-politicisation (Gouvias, 2011; Tsiligiris, 2012a).

Table 6.1

Duties and responsibilities of the main governing bodies of Greek HEIs (University Council, Rector and Senate) as provided by the 4009/2011 Law (edited by the author).

University Council	Rector	Senate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs the strategic development of the institution at local, national, European, and international level. • Oversees and controls the operation of the institution in accordance with its Organisational Framework and Internal Rules of Procedure (also approved by the University Council). • Takes initiatives to establish links between the institution, the society, and the economy and to cooperate with educational institutions and scientific and social bodies domestically or abroad. • Lays down the guidelines for the development of the institution, on the basis of which the Rector prepares the draft programme planning agreements. • Approves, oversees, and monitors the implementation of those agreements on an annual basis. • Approves the annual regular financial budget, the institution's final financial statements and the public investment programme for the institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heads and directs the institution, is responsible for the smooth operation of its services, oversees compliance with the laws, the Organisational Framework and the Internal Rules of Procedure and ensures the cooperation between the institution's bodies, the teaching staff, and students. ▪ Participates without the right to vote in the meetings of the University Council of the institution. The Rector may also participate without voting in the meetings of all the other collective bodies of the institution. ▪ Represents the institution in court and out of court. ▪ Convenes the Senate, prepares the agenda, chairs its work, and ensures the implementation of its decisions. ▪ Prepares the drafts of the Organisational Framework and Internal Rules of Procedure, which are then proposed for approval to the University Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 2011 Law. ▪ Prepares and revises the annual regular financial budget and final financial statement of the institution, as well as the financial reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs the educational and research policy of the institution as well as ensuring quality in education and research. • Approves the execution of funded projects, although the management of the funds is entrusted to the private legal entity responsible for research funds according to article 58 of the 2011 law. • Approves the execution of continuing education, training and lifelong learning projects. • Approves the special registers of internal and external members of the selection committee of professors or the faculty development committee. • Approves the regulations for the first, second and third cycles of study, as well as the regulations of the short-cycle and lifelong learning programmes. • Decides for the structure and organisation of study programmes in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves the annual planning and report for the utilisation of the institution's assets as well as the final report of the activities and general operation of the institution. • Elects and terminates faculty deans. • Supervises, selects, and terminates the executives/ members of private legal entity, which is intended to replace the institutions' Special Accounts for Research Funds* (ELKE). • Establishes or not tuition fees and defines their amount for the institution's postgraduate curricula, after taking into consideration the opinion of the dean's council of the school. 	<p>for the public investment programme, which is then submitted to the University Council for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepares and revises the report of the activities and general operation of the institution, which is then submitted to the University Council for approval. ▪ Announces the positions of teaching staff, issues the appointments of the institution's staff and grants the leaves of absence of the staff. ▪ Can request from any collective body of the institution, except the University Council, information and documents on any case of the institution. ▪ Convenes any collective body of the institution, except the University Council, college, when it unlawfully fails to take decisions, and chairs its work without the right to vote. ▪ Takes concrete measures to address urgent issues where the competent governing bodies of the institution, other than the University Council, are unable to operate and take decisions. ▪ Is responsible for taking measures for the protection and safety of the staff and property of the institution. ▪ Appoints the general managers of the institution. ▪ Distributes the credits to the educational, research and other activities of the institution, 	<p>collaboration with other HEIs and domestic or foreign research centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers an opinion to the Rector of the institution on the Organisational Framework, the organisation or abolition of study programmes, the planning and distribution of all the credits to the educational, research and other activities of the institution, under the respective programme planning agreement. • Provides consent to the University Council's regarding the Internal Rules of Procedure. • Delivers an opinion to the University Council's on the establishment or abolition, merger, division, renaming or change of headquarters of schools.
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under the respective programme planning agreement.

- Organises and abolishes the study programs by decision, which is issued after the opinion of the Senate and approved by the University Council.
- Exercises those responsibilities that are not assigned by law specifically to other bodies of the institution.

*** The purpose of the Special Account for Research Funds (ELKE), is the allocation and management of funds originating from various sources, which are designed to cover any kind of spending, which is necessary for research, education, training seminars, development projects, ongoing training projects as well as for other related services or activities that contribute to linking education and research with production and which are performed or provided by the scientific staff of the University and with the cooperation of other specialists (Joint Ministerial Decision, 1996, Article 1, Paragraph 2).**

6.2.2 Changes in the institutional structure of HEIs

As mentioned above each Greek HEIs consists of three distinct institutional levels: the schools/faculties, departments, and sections. The faculties include departments of cognate disciplines, and the departments include sections that correspond to specific components of the department's discipline. Until the introduction of the Law 4009/2011 the department was the main functional academic unit covering a discipline and awarding degrees (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). The 2011 Law abolished departments and established schools/ faculties as the primary academic institutional units. This measure, however, was never implemented and after one year from the passing of the law, the previous status of departments was reinstated (see section 6.3).

6.2.3 Degree structures

Even though the establishment of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) had already been regulated by previous laws and ministerial decisions (mainly the Law 3374/2005) by obligating HEIs to use it compulsorily in the first and second cycle programmes, it was after the 2011 reforms that ECTS credits were fully adopted in terms of being used as an official credit accumulation system. Thus, in the Law 4009/2011, ECTS was used for describing and stipulating the duration and structure of the degree programmes in all three cycles (undergraduate - postgraduate - doctoral). More precisely the degrees were defined as follows: the first cycle was to correspond to a minimum of 180 ECTS credits (for a three-year degree) and lead to the award of a certificate (*Ptychion*) or diploma; the second cycle would include courses corresponding to a minimum of 60 or 120 ECTS and would lead to the award of a Postgraduate degree (*Metaptychiako Diploma Spoudon*); and the third cycle would comprise the attendance of a doctorate study programme, including courses that correspond to at least 60 or 120 ECTS credits as well as the thesis preparation. The minimum duration for its

completion was three years and would lead to the award of a doctoral diploma (*Didaktoriko Diploma Spoudon*).

6.2.4 Funding arrangements

Although all undergraduate programmes are free of charge (except the Hellenic Open University), tertiary institutions were allowed to charge fees for postgraduate study programmes on the Senate's decision (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008). Nevertheless, the majority of postgraduate programmes are still free of charge. From the middle of the 2000s, due to the limited funding provided by the state, HE institutions have been actively seeking private fundings (from the industry or other institutions) in order to increase their revenues or to finance research projects (Zmas, 2015). With the introduction of the 2011 reforms, a further emphasis has been given to private investments, by asking HEIs to generate as much income as possible through tuition fees (mainly in postgraduate studies), external funding, sponsorships, donations and business-oriented research (Sotiris, 2013).

6.2.5 Accreditation and quality control

Quality assurance was re-introduced and particularly emphasised in the 4009/2011 Law, while the issue of accreditation of degree programmes and institutions was further added. The so-called "Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education" which was first established by the Law 3374/2005 was renamed to "Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education" (ADIP³⁸) by the 2011 Law due to the changes in its formal responsibilities. Specifically, the independent authority took over additional responsibilities in relation to the accreditation of internal quality assurance systems and of the academic curricula of Departments (after

³⁸ The acronym remained the same.

completing the internal and external evaluation procedures) (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014)³⁹.

In particular, as part of its mission, ADIP certifies the quality of the operation of HEIs and exercises the periodic accreditation of the internal quality assurance systems of HEIs and study programs, while also recommending to the Minister of Education and the governing bodies of HEIs ways and means for assuring continued high quality. Accreditation was defined as “a process of external evaluation based on specific, predetermined, internationally accepted quantitative and qualitative criteria and indicators that have been published in advance” (Law 4009, 2011, Article 66, par. 4). The importance of the internal Quality Assurance Unit of HEIs (MODIP) for ensuring the quality of teaching and research work of the academic unit and the efficient operation and performance of its services, in accordance with the practices of EHEA and the guidelines of ADIP was further accentuated (Law 4009, 2011, Article 14, par. 1).

Assessment and validation processes of departments and courses were to be conducted on the basis of indicators such as quality and effectiveness of teaching and research as well as the suitability of the teaching staff and the quality of study programmes. More specifically, the general criteria for the accreditation of programmes of study included amongst others (Law 4009, 2011, Article 72, par. 1):

- a) the academic character and orientation of the programme of study,
- b) the learning outcomes and expected competences,
- c) the structure and organisation of the programme of study,
- d) the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as evidenced by students' assessments (e.g. surveys),

³⁹ As Kavasakalis and Stamelos (2014) point out, this was a major change as prior to the 2011 Law the establishment of an academic curriculum programme in a HEI Department was approved by the Ministry of Education – thus granting automatic accreditation to that programme (pp. 67-68).

- e) the quality of the teaching and research work and the degree of their linkage,
- f) the demand from the labour market for the qualifications obtained

For the first time, state funding was clearly linked to the performance of HE departments and their courses, as ADIP is authorised (according to the provisions of the Law 4009/2011) to recommend the allocation of public funds to the HEIs or even the total or partial suspension of their funding based on the results of their quality evaluation processes.

6.2.6 New types of studies

Part-time courses (mainly for working students), long-distance courses, e-learning courses and adult-education courses – through the establishment of Life-Long Learning programmes in Higher Education Institutions – were introduced. This provision along with the re-introduction of ECTS, accreditation and quality assurance procedures aimed to contribute to the mobility of students and internationalisation of studies.

6.2.7 University Sanctuary

Furthermore, another significant change was the repeal of the so-called University Sanctuary (also known as *University* or *Academic Asylum*) rule, which has been the subject of wider public debate regarding its abolition or not. According to the rule, which was first introduced in the Law 1268/1982 (Article 2), the intervention of authorities, including the police, on the premises of public higher education institutions is prohibited without the permission of a three-member panel consisting of the rector and representatives of the faculty and students, except when a felony or a crime against life had been committed. The Law referred to this rule as “university asylum” (πανεπιστημιακό άσυλο). Its main aim was to protect and extend the freedom of thought and expression

of ideas within the campuses of HEIs, which had been largely encroached by the repressive and violent actions of the 1967-1974 military dictatorship against the students' movements (culminating in the brutal suppression of the National Polytechnic School student occupation in 1973). Subsequently, the rule was retained in Law 3549/2007 (Article 3) as "academic asylum" (in Greek: *ακαδημαϊκό άσυλο*). In the 2011 Law, the provision on the academic freedom rule as stated in Law 3549/2007 is essentially repealed.

The particular rule has been widely criticised as an outdated part of the law that has been abused and violated by various extremist groups resulting in unethical and unlawful behaviour within universities or even to the constriction of academic freedom (Grigoriadis & Kamaras, 2012; Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008; Tsiligiris, 2012a). On the other hand, various academics as well as the majority of the student unions have been against its abolition, arguing that the specific law still serves as a protective measure that guarantees the free movement of ideas within HEIs while also safeguarding students' protests from being harassed by police forces (Sotiris, 2013).

6.2.8 Provisions for student attendance

A mandatory enrolment of students in each semester as well as restrictions on the maximum period of study were also introduced by the law. If students fail to enrol in a semester, they will lose their student status. Moreover, a time limit on the maximum length of the study period was introduced (up to two years after the official duration of studies), in which students have to complete their studies. The aim of this measure was to tackle the phenomenon of the so-called long-term students (also known as "eternal students"), i.e. students who remain at HEIs much longer than their prescribed period of study, usually during the undergraduate cycle (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008).

6.2.9 Mergers and closures of departments and schools

The law also stipulated the closure and/or merger of low-performing departments and even entire institutions. This resulted in closing some TEIs, merging small TEI and university departments with schools at other larger institutions, and/or merging smaller universities with other larger universities with similar profiles. In the following years after the law was passed, these mergers were implemented, albeit at a very slow pace. In 2012 the Minister of Education Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos introduced the so-called “ATHENA Plan” which aimed at the geographical restructuring of Greek higher education (Ministry of Education, 2013). Departments (mainly within TEIs) that seemed to have fragmented academic subjects and incomplete study programmes or even cases of duplication⁴⁰ were the main candidates for mergers or closures, causing a fierce conflict between the Greek government at the time and the academic community (Papadiamantaki, 2017). Eventually, the proposed closures and mergers of departments and institutions were executed with most of the closures taking place in the higher technological sector. Overall, during the academic year 2009-2010, 23 Universities (including the International Hellenic University and Hellenic Open University) and 267 departments were in operation whereas in the 2013-2014 academic the numbers decreased to 21 Universities and 261 departments (Table 6.2). With respect to TEIs, during the academic year 2009-2010, 16 institutions (including ASPAITE) and 221 departments were in operation whereas in the 2013-2014 academic the numbers decreased to 13 TEIs and 178 departments (Table 6.3). It is clear here that the shrinkage of Greek higher education during that period was not as large as its expansion in previous decades, given that the system remained to a great extent geographically scattered (Papadiamantaki, 2017)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ For example, the academic discipline of Nursing could be found in both a university department and a TEI department in the same city.

⁴¹ Further merges and closures took place in 2018-2019 however this goes beyond the aim of this section.

Table 6.2

List of Universities and Technical Universities along with the number of their Schools and Departments during the period 2009-2014 (the data were synthesised from available reports by the Hellenic Statistical Authority; ELSTAT 2021a; 2021b).

	Academic Year 2009-2010			Academic Year 2010-2011/ 2011-2012/ 2012-2013			Academic Year 2013-2014		
Higher Education Institutions	Institutions	Schools	Departments	Institutions	Schools	Departments	Institutions	Schools	Departments
Total number	23	71	267	25	70	268	23	106	261
Universities	19	62	253	20	61	254	18	85	247
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	1	6	32	1	6	33	1	8	33
University of the Aegean	1	6	17	1	6	17	1	5	16
University of Thessaly	1	5	16	1	5	16	1	5	18
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	1	8	41	1	8	41	1	11	41
Democritus University of Thrace	1	3	20	1	3	20	1	8	19
Ionian University	1	1	6	1	1	6	1	3	6
University of Ioannina	1	6	17	1	5	14	1	6	14
University of Crete	1	5	17	1	5	17	1	5	16
University of Patras	1	5	21	1	5	21	1	5	24
Athens University of Economics and Business	1	1	8	1	1	8	1	3	8
Panteion University	1	1	9	1	1	9	1	4	9
University of Piraeus	1	1	9	1	1	9	1	4	9
University of Macedonia	1	1	10	1	1	10	1	4	8
Agricultural University of Athens	1	1	6	1	1	6	1	2	6
Athens School of Fine Arts	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2

Harokopio University of Athens	1	1	4	1	1	4	1	3	4
University of Peloponnese	1	6	10	1	6	10	1	5	9
University of Western Macedonia	1	3	6	1	2	6	1	3	5
University of Central Greece	1	1	2	1	1	2			
University of Western Greece				1	1	3			
Technical Universities	2	2	14	3	2	14	3	14	14
Technical University of Crete	1	1	5	1	1	5	1	5	5
National Technical University of Athens	1	1	9	1	1	9	1	9	9
International Hellenic University	1	3			1	3	1	3	
Hellenic Open University	1	4			1	4	1	4	

Table 6.3

List of TEIs and the number of their Schools and Departments during the period 2009-2014 (the data were synthesised from available reports by the Hellenic Statistical Authority; ELSTAT 2021a; 2021b).

	Academic Year 2009-2010			Academic Year 2010-2011			Academic Year 2011-2012		
Higher Education Institutions	Institutions	Schools	Departments	Institutions	Schools	Departments	Institutions	Schools	Departments
Total number	15	57	221	15	57	226	15	57	226
TEI (Technological Educational Institutes)	15	56	216	15	56	221	15	56	220
TEI of Athens	1	5	36	1	5	37	1	5	36
TEI of Crete	1	5	19	1	5	19	1	5	19
TEI of Thessaloniki	1	6	24	1	6	24	1	6	25
TEI of Kavala	1	4	11	1	4	11	1	4	11
TEI of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace									
TEI of Western Macedonia	1	4	19	1	4	20	1	4	20
TEI of Thessaly									
TEI of Western Greece									
TEI of Larissa	1	5	20	1	5	21	1	5	20
TEI of Patra	1	4	17	1	4	17	1	4	17
TEI of Piraeus	1	3	12	1	3	13	1	3	13
TEI of Central Macedonia									
TEI of Serres	1	3	7	1	3	7	1	3	7
TEI of Kalamata	1	3	8	1	3	8	1	3	8
TEI of Messolonghi	1	3	8	1	3	8	1	3	8
TEI of Chalkida	1	3	8	1	3	8	1	3	7
TEI of Lamia	1	3	7	1	3	7	1	3	8
TEI of Peloponnese									
TEI of Central Greece									
TEI of Epirus	1	4	13	1	4	13	1	4	13

TEI of Ionian Islands	1	1	7	1	1	8	1	1	8
ASPAITE (Higher School of Pedagogical and Technical Education)	0	1	5	0	1	5	0	1	6

Table 6.3

List of TEIs and the number of their Schools and Departments during the period 2009-2014 (continued).

	Academic Year 2012-2013			Academic Year 2013-2014		
Higher Education Institutions	Institutions	Schools	Departments	Institutions	Schools	Departments
Total number	15	57	211	13	58	178
TEI (Technological Educational Institutes)	15	56	206	13	57	174
TEI of Athens	1	5	33	1	5	28
TEI of Crete	1	5	18	1	5	14
TEI of Thessaloniki	1	6	22	1	5	20
TEI of Kavala	1	4	11			
TEI of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace				1	4	10
TEI of Western Macedonia	1	4	18	1	5	14
TEI of Thessaly				1	5	15
TEI of Western Greece				1	6	19
TEI of Larissa	1	5	19			
TEI of Patra	1	4	17			
TEI of Piraeus	1	3	10	1	2	9
TEI of Central Macedonia				1	3	9
TEI of Serres	1	3	7			
TEI of Kalamata	1	3	8			
TEI of Messolonghi	1	3	8			
TEI of Chalkida	1	3	7			
TEI of Lamia	1	3	7			
TEI of Peloponnese				1	4	7
TEI of Central Greece				1	4	15
TEI of Epirus	1	4	13	1	5	9
TEI of Ionian Islands	1	1	8	1	4	5
ASPAITE (Higher School of Pedagogical and Technical Education)	0	1	5	0	1	4

6.3 Policy action and implementation

In terms of policy action, however, little changed. Most of the 2011 policies were partly implemented or not implemented at all. The implementation process of the 2011 reforms was further uneven across institutions. Some peripheral Universities and TEIs managed to adopt most of the principles of the 2011 Law, while others (mainly the central Universities in Athens and Thessaloniki) did not manage to make any significant changes due to the subsequent amendment of the 2011 Law.

In addition, the financial crisis consequences along with the bureaucratic sluggishness of the Greek education system and the reluctance of Greek governments to implement these changes (due to the strong reactions of the parties of the opposition, the academics and the students) led to considerable delay or even the abolition of specific articles through subsequent laws or ministerial decisions (Gouvias, 2012a; Traianou, 2013; Tsiligiris, 2012a; Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015). For example, the closures or mergers of low-performing departments and schools were significantly delayed – with most mergers taking place only in the 2018-2019 academic year. Also, the disenrollment of students whose study period had lapsed was delayed until 2014. The changes in governance, as mentioned above, were also delayed and eventually did not take place as planned. The only provision that seems to have been carried forward was the accreditation process of degrees and the quality assurance reports by the HQA through the internal and external evaluation of all the departments (completed in 2014). This could be explained by the fact that the quality assurance framework had already been introduced in previous laws (in 2005 and 2007) presumably leading to the maturation of the process.

Less than a year since the enactment of the 2011 Law, the new Minister of Education Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos⁴², under intense pressure from

⁴² In 2012 a new coalition government was formed among the parties of ND (leading party), PASOK and Democratic Left (DIMAR).

university professors, introduced changes to some provisions of the 2011 Law. These partial but crucial supplements and amendments essentially reduced certain responsibilities and powers given to the University Council by the 2011 Law. The changes were incorporated and enacted via the Laws 4076/2012 and 4115/2013. These included among others:

- The rector authorities would remain in their position until the end of their official term. The 2011 law provided for them to relinquish their post by 31 August 2012.
- The rector authorities would assume the responsibility to hold elections for the appointment of the University Councils. Under the 2011 Law this responsibility belonged to an appointed committee composed of academics, vice-rectors and former rectors.
- Despite the 2011 Law proclamation of the faculty/ school as the main academic unit, university departments became again the basic unit of the university.
- Deans of HEIs and TEI Directors would be elected by the members of the faculty staff through a list drawn up by the University Councils. Under the 2011 Law, the University Councils were directly appointing the deans and directors of TEI.
- The Senate is responsible for academic matters, while financial and administration issues remain under the responsibility of the University Council. Under the 4009/2011 Law the University Councils were also responsible for academic issues.

At the same time, the substantial austerity cuts to HE funds had a negative impact on the materialisation of the various changes introduced in HE at the time. Since the introduction of the first rescue programme, it has been difficult to combine structural reforms with the austerity measures necessary for fiscal consolidation, as the successful implementation of reforms relies heavily on the allocation of the appropriate budgetary instruments and political support (Bougioukos, 2013). Despite the existence of supporters who argue that both

actions could complement each other, the mix of the 2011 HE reforms with austerity proved to be highly detrimental.

In sum, the political opportunism and risk-aversion of the Greek political system, specifically of the two major political parties of PASOK and New Democracy, has significantly delayed not only the 2011 reforms but also the proper application of existing laws (Tsiligiris, 2012a; 2012b). At the same time, the prolonged austerity and economic recession along with its socio-political upheaval, triggered great turmoil and confusion in the Greek public, which further complicated the familiarisation with and adjustment to the changes in HEIs. The alternation of many different governments during the financial crisis also complicated the situation, as the changes proposed by one government were often overturned by the next one.

Even though Law 4009/2011 was the first bill since the restoration of Greek democracy (in 1974) to be passed by the two largest political parties, i.e. the parties of PASOK and ND (Tsiligiris, 2012a), these reforms and their key measures were widely debated, with widespread objections being expressed before and after their enactment. The main opposition came from the unions of rectors but there was also strong reaction by the left opposition parties (namely the Communist Party and SYRIZA) as well as from the university and teaching trade unions. Moreover, most of the student unions (mainly the left ones) had also vigorously protested against the law (by organising occupations and massive sit-ins at Universities' buildings) as the changes introduced with the 2011 Law would weaken their political activity within universities (Traianou, 2013; Zmas, 2015). On the other hand, according to Tsiligiris (2012a; 2012b) and Sotiropoulos (2012), these reforms have been in general positively rated in public opinion and especially by the majority of students, who have been dissatisfied with the political party factionalism that had pervaded the student and academic bodies, and the very frequent occupations and demonstrations organised by the student unions which often disrupt the smooth running of academic calendars. In any case, the strong reactions and the problematic

adaptability of the 2011 changes in the cultural and legal context of the country seem to be the main factors that contributed to the difficulty of this law implementation.

Chapter 7: Analysis of the data

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the primary themes and secondary topics that were identified based on both the critical review of the literature and the analysis of the data. These conceptual themes constitute the backbone of the analysis, since the data were categorised and interpreted according to them. The next two chapters, will present the study's findings, focusing particularly on the analysis of the research interviews and the selected parliamentary speeches. More specifically, the political debates, speeches and interviews are analysed in-depth under each of the primary themes, by implementing the *deconstruction* and *contextualisation* processes.

As will be shown, this process of analytical 'deconstruction' focuses on the realisation of representational and legitimation strategies, by scrutinising the linguistic, rhetorical and argumentative means that the actors deploy in their discourses using the analytical tools and categories offered by CDA. In addition, the discourses and linguistic means will be further explored with respect to how these are linked to other arguments, texts and discourses. Attention will also be paid to the recontextualisation of textual elements and to the hybridisation of discourses. Further, the 'contextualisation' of the data will be operationalised by looking at how the broader historical/socio-political and institutional contexts and structures shape (or are shaped by) actors' discursive practices.

The analysis will identify the different positions and orientations – and by extension the different imaginaries – that are (re)produced and debated, while also shedding light on the dynamic interplay of actors' discursive practices with structural, cultural and contextual factors and forces. A critical discussion will then follow by exploring the performative potentialities⁴³ of the imaginaries with

⁴³ The performative potentialities of imaginaries refer to their potential socio-political constitutive/constructive effects and impact, i.e. to what extent imaginaries through policy

respect to the making of Higher Education policy in Greece in light of the 2009 financial crisis.

7.2 Identification of primary themes and secondary topics

The first level of analysis consists of a thematic categorisation of the data in order to identify the most prominent themes. Perceived here from a semantic point of view, the concept of *theme* corresponds to the analytical category of '*discourse topic*', which can be textually realised 'as several sentences of [a] discourse [...] by larger segments of [a] discourse or by the discourse as a whole' (van Dijk 1984, p. 56). In this sense, it refers to the most salient or overarching idea that underlies the content of a sequence of textual units; 'it is what a passage is *about*' (van Dijk 1984, p. 56; original emphasis). In line with Krzyżanowski (2008), this study distinguishes between two main types of discourse topics.

The first type, i.e. the *primary discourse themes*⁴⁴, pertains to the main subjects that were put under discussion by the researcher and the interviewee(s), and which ultimately constituted the thematic axes that shaped the interviews. In the same vein, the primary topics of the parliamentary speeches correspond to the main subjects and issues that structured the speeches and framed the parliamentary debates in general. By extension, primary themes are more or less explicitly manifested *in* and *through* the data. The second type, i.e. *secondary discourse topics*, includes topics that were brought into and developed by the participants in their speeches and during their interviews, which are (semantically) embedded in and covered by the primary structuring topics. In other words, secondary topics underlie the overarching, primary discourse topics. One major difference between these two types in this project's data lies in the usage of secondary topics in the actors' discourses as

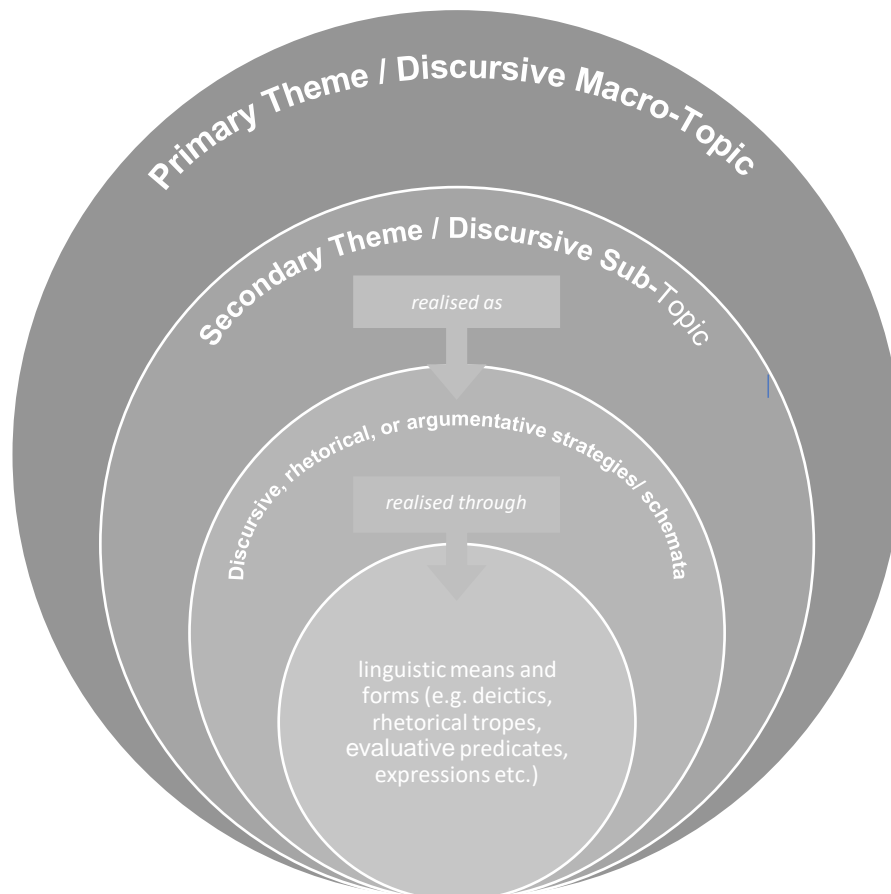
discourses influence policy proposals, policy action and policy outcomes (Sum & Jessop, 2013; see also van Ostaïjen, 2017).

⁴⁴ The terms *theme* and *discourse topic* are used interchangeably in this study.

discursive, rhetorical and/ or argumentative means and patterns. This means that secondary topics are further realised as (either explicit or latent) discursive strategies or argumentative schemata (see Methodology chapter) deployed by the speakers for expressing, supporting and justifying their opinions, views and beliefs vis-à-vis the primary themes and the overall content of the policies (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1

Schematic representation of the link between discursive macro- and sub-topics and their linguistic realisation.



The secondary topics – realised through discursive, rhetorical or argumentative means – hence constitute the main focus of analysis in the subsequent chapters. More specifically, the deconstruction and contextualisation analysis will deal with the linguistic means and forms which these topics are realised through as outlined in the introduction. At the same time, these secondary topics are examined in relation to their intertextuality and interdiscursivity by looking, for example, how these issues that the actors bring up in their discourses are related to (or dealt with) in past and contemporary discourses and texts (e.g. OECD reports or other policy texts).

Finally, the ‘thematic analysis’ can further help to identify the boundaries of the actors’ discourses, in the sense that the secondary topics can be utilised as indicators of the actors’ different socio-political positions or perspectives. Following a critical realist stance, the actors’ discursive choices are viewed in the analysis as not entirely random, but to a great extent ideologically, as long as they construct and present particular representations of reality. Therefore, by looking for instance at *what* topics or arguments specific actors have selected to tap into for interpreting events, (de-) legitimising actions and/or policies and for constructing particular representations of reality, we can determine their standpoints and by extension the imaginaries that frame and inform their construals.

The following sub-sections present the classification of the primary and secondary topics identified in both the parliamentary debates and interviews, while outlining and explicating the process of their identification and analysis.

7.2.1 Primary discourse themes

The main subjects of both the parliamentary discussions and the interviews pertained to the three core changes introduced by the bill, i.e. (a) *the introduction of a new mode of governance*; (b) *the improvement of quality and*

efficiency of studies; and (c) the attempts to internationalise Greek Higher Education Institutions.

The introduction of a new mode of governance (the so-called University Councils) was the topic that dominated most of the discussions in the parliament as well as in the interviews. As for the issue of quality improvement, it frequently coalesced during the discussions with the re-introduction and implementation of a (renewed) quality assurance framework. At the same time, the attempts to internationalise Greek HE were also identified by most of the speakers as part of the overall quality assurance process. For that reason, internationalisation and quality assurance have been grouped together and treated for the purposes of this study as one primary discourse topic. Given the centrality of these two topics in the interviewees' accounts, as well as in the parliamentary debates, we can conclude that overall, two primary themes have been identified and used as the main guide for the analysis and discussion of the actors' discourses (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1

Primary themes of the data.

Primary themes

University Governance and the issue of University Councils

Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education

7.2.2 Secondary discourse topics

Within each of the above key themes, various secondary topics were identified, mostly pertaining to contentious and controversial economic and socio-political issues within the Greek HE policy field. The more or less salient of them dealt with *the role and 'status' of the students; the merging of institutions and departments; the structure of studies; the growing problem of 'brain drain'; the influence of external actors; the previous status quo*; and last but not least, *the reduction of public funding of Higher Education*, admittedly one of the most debatable political issues regarding Greek Higher Education. It should be noted that a large portion of the parliamentary proceedings was also dominated by issues of procedural and/or legal nature⁴⁵. These constituted an integral part of the whole debate process; however, it was decided to not include them in the analysis as they were not particularly revealing nor informative vis-à-vis the discussion around the main policy objectives of the bill.

Some secondary topics were used by the researcher as 'topical frames' for guiding the interviews, while others proved to be quite dominant in the discussions, in terms of their recurrence during the interviews or the importance that many interviewees were attaching to them. Nevertheless, as explicated above, these were still deemed as subsidiary to the macro-topics due to the way they were utilised by the actors, i.e. discursive, rhetorical or argumentative means. A brief illustration of how deconstruction and contextualisation are articulated in the analysis of secondary (and by extension primary) topics is provided below (using two examples) in order to make my rationale clearer.

⁴⁵ The most prominent legal issue was the objection raised by some parties regarding the unconstitutionality of the University Council's role and functions. Although it dominated some of the speeches and was used as the basis of the arguments that some actors used against the bill, the objection was overturned early in the debate and thus was by and large not further discussed in the remaining debates.

The financial crisis' impact on the operation of HEIs was widely deployed by the actors as an argument in favour of the new reforms; the 'crisis' was often deployed here as an opportunity to 'reveal' and 'correct' the problems of the previous system. In other words, the crisis was portrayed as a catalyst for change. On the other hand, other actors – mostly those who rejected the policies – resorted to this topic for explicating the 'poor quality of university studies in Greece'; thus, for them, the crisis has led to further reduction of public funding and this in turn has affected the quality of studies. Furthermore, the analysis of this secondary topic focuses on two overlapping premises: to deconstruct the particular use of this topic by the actors, for example whether it was used as an argument or strategy and for what purpose, as well as its discursive construction (e.g. How did the actors frame or define financial crisis? What linguistic means are they using? What are the economic and socio-political imaginaries that their constructions were based on?). Lastly, we examine the actual, structural impact that the crisis has had on Greek HE and whether this has affected or not the discourses of the speakers/actors.

Another example is the influence of external policy actors on the Greek HE policy-making field. Although a dominant topic in the interviews, it is classified as a secondary topic since it is mainly utilised as a discursive or argumentative means for either legitimising or delegitimising the establishment of the new governance system and of the (re-introduced) quality assurance framework. For this reason, this secondary topic is embedded in and covered by both macro-topics. Similarly, topics such as the status of students and the low ranking of Greek universities are used as warrants for arguing in favor of (or against) the new governance system of universities and for justifying the necessity to implement the new policies, respectively.

The analysis of the two main themes will be carried out in the following two sections looking at how various topics are discursively deployed and treated by the speakers for serving their particular purposes and interests⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that the initial idea was to divide each sub-section according to the different positions adopted. Nevertheless, this was later rejected due to the fact that the debate proved to be more nuanced, reflecting a rather dynamic spectrum where ideas, beliefs and discourses coalesce in a fluid manner.

Chapter 8: Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education

8.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents and discusses findings in regard to the one of the two primary themes, namely the issue of Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education, which was identified from the analysis of the data – mainly from the interviews with the policy actors. Essentially, this theme referred to a great extent on the external policy influence and specifically on the policy proposals, pressures and recommendations provided by inter- and supranational organisations, such as the EU and OECD. Apart from the notions of quality and evaluation, other issues (which are certainly related to quality) were also raised in this theme and discussed in the proceedings as well as by the interviewees. These include: (a) the process of accreditation of academic curricula programmes (and in general the activities and responsibilities of ADIP which were redefined and strengthened by the 2011 Law; (b) the internationalisation of Greek HE, mainly through the creation and establishment of foreign language study programmes (particularly in English) to attract more foreign students; and (c) making sense of the previous HE status quo and comparisons with other countries (focusing on international rankings).

The analysis continues in the next chapter (Chapter 9) with the presentation of the findings in relation to the second dominant topic regarding the university governance and the introduction of university councils.

8.2 Quality assurance and the mission of Higher Education: the notion of quality in policy texts.

Quality Assurance has been a salient policy issue of the 2011 Framework Act. Following previous laws (i.e. Law 2083/1992, Law 3374/2005 and Law 3549/2007), as well as keeping in line with the Bologna objectives and EHEA's

policy actions and recommendations, the 2011 law essentially reintroduced and to some extent redefined the process of Greek Higher Education Institutions' evaluation as well as that of quality assurance. The concept of quality is mentioned early on in the official text of the Law (Article 1) as part of the main mission of HE institutions:

As part of the educational mission of Higher Education institutions of each field:

- a) The Universities pay particular attention to comprehensive and high quality education in accordance with the requirements of science, technology and the arts, as well as of the international scientific practices in conjunction with the respective professional fields.
- b) The TEIs give special emphasis to high quality education, the applications of science, technology and the arts, in their respective professional fields

(Law 4009/2011).

If we compare this passage with previous laws we find that already in Law 3549/2007 (Article 1), there is a clear mention on the improvement and assurance of the quality of services provided by Greek Higher Education Institutions (H.E.I.) as a necessary precondition for successfully fulfilling their educational purpose. The use of the modal verb must (*οφείλουν*) gives a strong deontic flavour intensifying quality assurance as a new policy imperative:

To fulfil their mission, H.E.I. must ensure and improve in every appropriate way the quality of the services they offer and make all their activities public with the utmost transparency.

(Law 3549/2007)

The particular use of the notion of quality along with its attributes and collocations in both 2007 and 2011 Laws constitutes a departure from the relevant passage of the previous Framework Act 1268/1982 (Article 1):

As part of their mission, the universities should contribute to addressing the need for continuing education and advanced training of the people.

(Law 1268/1982)

In addition, in the description of the purpose of education in the Greek Constitution (Hellenic Parliament, 2008) we can see that there is no reference to the theme of quality:

Education constitutes a basic mission for the State and shall aim at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and at their formation as free and responsible citizens.

(Hellenic Parliament, 2008, Article 16, par. 2)

Both in the 1982 Law and in the Constitution there is an attempt to derive Higher Education's purpose and mission legitimacy following the strategy of moral evaluation, by appealing to more or less abstract, evocative and positive concepts and ideals, such as continuing education, advanced training, people, consciousness, freedom, etc. There is also a strong appeal to the national interest in the attempt to legitimise the notion of free public education for all (a strong political warrant).

In contrast, the concepts of quality assurance and quality of education in the 2007 and 2011 laws respectively are based on an instrumental rationalisation of quality control and evaluation. The law presents a series of functions and apparatuses which the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency would be responsible of implementing to guarantee and certify the high quality of HEIs operations (Law 4009/2011, Article 65). Especially for the accreditation of the quality of study programmes specific procedures, criteria and indicators are used which are specified, standardised and disseminated by the Agency in advance following on specific, predetermined, internationally accepted quantitative and qualitative criteria. Some general criteria for accreditation of

programmes of study, as specified in Article 72 of the law, include among others:

- a) the academic character, structure, organisation, and orientation of the programme,
- b) the quality and effectiveness of teaching as well as the suitability of the teaching staff, as evidenced in particular by the assessment of students themselves (through surveys),
- c) the quality of the research work of the academic unit, as well as the quality of support services, such as administrative services, libraries and student welfare services
- d) the demand from the labour market for the qualifications obtained.

The effectiveness and usefulness of evaluation and quality control and the improvement of HEIs' education and research mission are in this way linked in a causal chain (Wodak & Fairclough, 2010). In this sense, quality assurance becomes not just a means for enhancing higher education studies but an indispensable part of Higher Education purpose, the main goal that HEIs should set and ultimately achieve.

The addition of the notion of quality in the discursive lexicon of the mission of Greek Higher Education constitutes a recontextualisation of the particular textual elements (i.e. the word quality and its collocations), as they have been mainly transferred from commercial and advertising discourses to the genre of education policy texts, which was something novel at the time at least in the context of Greece. By doing, for example, a simple search of these phrases in the reference corpus of Modern Greek texts (the so-called Corpus of Greek Texts)⁴⁷ we can see that the Greek phrases 'high quality' and 'high and comprehensive' are mostly found not in education texts, but predominantly in

⁴⁷ The Corpus of Greek Texts (CGT) (<http://www.sek.edu.gr/index.php?en>) is the first electronic reference corpus of Modern Greek which provides a resource for teaching applications and linguistic research in a wide range of both written and spoken Modern Greek genres (Goutsos, 2010).

a variety of genres whose topics refer to trade and services, as well as in marketing texts, hence co-occurring mostly with words such as products and services (see Appendix 4).

Overall, the discourse about quality in the 2011 Law can be linked to a broader imaginary which is highly evident in most of European policies about HE and corresponds to developments in the field that fall under the general rubric of 'new public management' - which derives its origins from neo-liberal practices of converting public services into competitive markets, and public goods such as education, health into marketable commodities and services (Ball, 1998; Lingard & Grek, 2007; Rose, 1999; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010). In its extreme version, this discourse fosters a one-way connection between the economy and education where the former is favoured over the latter. While not adopting such an extreme position, the 2011 Law makes the case for linking funding with quality assurance. One major example is the redefinition of the role of Hellenic Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (ADIP) by giving it the responsibility "not only to operate a quality assurance mechanism for Greek HE but also to make decisions concerning the accreditation of each specific curriculum program of the Greek HE departments that will accomplish a cycle of internal-external evaluation procedure" (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014, p. 67).

Nonetheless, while the quality assurance system and its procedures is a central theme of the new law, it was not heavily debated during the parliamentary debate around the 2011 Law. There were just a few references on the 'quality of studies' which were also not entirely explained or discussed. This is partly due to the prior introduction of this theme in 2005 and 2007 which led to a process of standardisation, with the majority of the academic community embracing the introduction of a quality assurance framework. Moreover, there seems to be a shared and generally accepted belief among the academic community and political groups that the adoption and successful implementation of evaluation, accreditation and quality control will enable the

stakeholders to tackle the many problems of the old system and to become more accountable. As one academic vividly describes:

“If you finally see why they were arguing, they certainly were not arguing about evaluation. The interesting thing is that no one knew what evaluation was. Neither those who were in favour nor those who were against. No one. Which means that both started from different starting points. Essentially, the struggle was inside or outside Europe⁴⁸ and what we see over time is that there is a huge mass of academics who are silent. Those who, [...] understand exactly that [...] the controversy [has to do with being] inside or outside Europe. They understand that. What I will say now is an interpretation of mine: [...] if the Greek university still stands, it is because it has several resources from European programmes. Because they understood I think that this is why they suddenly started to become more active, with the result that the “yes” to evaluation is starting to expand - and how do we see that? From the POSDEP [the trade union of academic staff] elections where only a handful of people usually participated, suddenly more people start to participate and in the second elections after 2005 those who are in favor of evaluation are winning. So the “no” loses the flagship of its attack. So, there you see that while at first there seems to be a balanced battle between “yes” and “no”, when the volume of academics who were silent begins to manifest, it manifests itself en masse in favor of “yes”. And I have a feeling that this happened not because they suddenly liked the evaluation, but because a bell rang that this would most likely have implications with regards to the flow of EC funding - or their participation in [European] programmes.”

(AC 16, Interview)

According to the interviewee, the whole debate around quality assurance and evaluation was transposed into a debate around the Bologna process and the participation of Greece in the EHEA. Only when the academic community

⁴⁸ They mean a choice of being in the EHEA or not.

realised the benefits from the implementation of evaluation with regards to their participation and access to available funds coming from EU programmes, they stopped being indifferent to it.

While there were indeed many academics who were positive about the benefits of the quality assurance mechanism for the Greek context, the majority of them concurred in their interviews that university quality is a multi-layered notion. Nevertheless, the discussion about how quality is connected to and affects the role, philosophy and operation of the university as well as how it can be implemented and used is a very complex debate which however has not yet taken place thoroughly within the field of Greek HE (see also Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014 with regards to the same debate around the 2005 Law and its first attempt to introduce a quality assurance framework in Greece).

So even though quality (and the relevant concept of excellence) is positioned as one of the hallmarks of the Greek education reform as well as one of the main purposes of HE, we see no attempt on behalf of the politicians to define it. Instead “quality” acquires a transcendental and vague meaning in most policy documents and was indeed used quite differently by the various actors in their attempt to legitimise and/or delegitimise the 2011 reforms. While it is claimed by many supporters that quality education should be based on “internationally accepted criteria”, they do not clarify what these criteria are and whether they are appropriate or not, while also ignoring the local socio-political context, especially at the time of the worst financial crisis in the modern Greek history and the lack of resources that this entails.

8.3 Representation and evaluation of the previous system: problems and deficiencies and the need for quality control.

Quality assurance has been presented as one way for fixing the suggested failure of Higher Education in Greece. During the parliamentary debate, the previous status-quo was heavily criticised by many political actors (mainly the

government and the parties of LAOS and New Democracy), who used explicit and highly negative attributes and predications when describing the problems that have afflicted Greek Higher Education. More specifically, the system of Higher Education is viewed by government members and other critics as being burdened by a “crisis of values”, as being “mediocre” with “pathologies” and “drama” all of which need to be surpassed:

“We need to confront **the crisis of values** from which the Greek Higher Education system suffers and also confront **obsolete structures** after 30 years of functioning of a system. [...] Unfortunately today...in many universities **the equation tends to weigh on the downside**. Instead of seeking *excellence*, **introversion** and **lack of dialogue** with the international community reigns, resulting in inability for the structure as a whole to make strategic decisions. [...] One year of dialogue has passed and it was impressive to see the courage with which all parties, all actors, but also the academics themselves discussed the **deficiencies, pathologies, the drama**⁴⁹ of Greek university, as well as *the very positive [aspects]*.”

(Sophia Giannaka, chief advocate of the bill (PASOK party); Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15344)

Along the same lines, Simos Kedikoglou, member of New Democracy (the main opposition party at the time which ultimately voted for and supported the new reforms) paints a similar grim picture:

“All of us who monitor or have been related to the public university these past years, have unfortunately witnessed its decadence and fall into discredit [...]: degrees without value, instructors who won’t show up for class, clientelistic exchanges between students and professors, a never-ending exam period [...], and thousands of young people studying abroad. It takes a simple walk around the campuses and the

⁴⁹ The word drama in modern Greek has also the meaning of tragedy (as does in this extract) rather than simply a performance/ play.

sight of neglect helps us understand that changes must be grand and in-depth.”

(Simos Kedikoglou, New Democracy MP; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15362)

What is interesting in the above examples is the use of highly loaded terms and metaphors for the negative qualification of the previous existing structures ('dysfunctional', 'decadence', 'drama', 'pathologies' etc.). One example is the use of health metaphors, such as “pathologies”, in order to refer to the chronic flaws and problems of universities. Metaphors can be powerful rhetorical and persuasion tools. In this case we can see how a medicalised discourse is recontextualised and used metaphorically to describe educational issues in an attempt to elicit strong emotions that can be associated with the fear of illness and the struggle for health. At the same time, it invokes a problem-solution cognitive pattern that allows for the proposed proposition to be promoted as the only appropriate one. In this case HE is represented as a sick patient that needs urgent care with the new reforms being portrayed as the “remedies” for curing the old, “pathological” status-quo (Gouvias, 2012a; 2012b; Kladis, 2014).

In a more general tone, Adonis Georgiadis (the Special Speaker of LAOS party) heavily criticises the previous status-quo when addressing the Shadow Minister of Education, Aris Spiliotopoulos (New Democracy party):

“But, to be honest and to mention the political basis, dear Aris, of the objection of unconstitutionality that unfortunately the New Democracy voted for, of course the Article 16, paragraph 5 of the Constitution is wrong. We must change it. It's wrong. Who told you that some people have to decide for themselves about the money they take from me? Who told you that? [...] In life, whoever pays, has the control and the recipient is accountable to them. Here the Greek state pays and therefore the Greek state must have the final say. This is the logical position of things. The other [issues] come from the “leftist” side which

were included in the Constitution [...] during the famous generation of Polytechnio for which Mr. Loverdos [member of PASOK government and Minister of Health at the time] apologised the day before yesterday – and they did well. And is New Democracy now defending the catastrophes brought to Greece by the generation of Polytechnio? Is that what you want?”

(Adonis Georgiadis, Special Speaker of LAOS party; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15359)

Georgiadis seems to blame the governments, political parties and policies established during the so-called ‘generation of Polytechnio’ (“The Polytechnic generation”) not only for the problems of Higher Education but also for the general structural issues that have afflicted the socio-political life of Greece (using the highly loaded word catastrophes). The ‘generation of Polytechnio’ is used as a negative metonymy for the Metapolitefsi period, i.e., the period immediately after the fall of the military junta of 1967–74 that includes the restoration of democracy and the change of the Greek regime to a parliamentary-presidential republic. Here Georgiadis takes advantage of the negative sentiment towards the ‘generation of Polytechnio’ which has dominated public discourse especially over the past two decades⁵⁰ and intensifies it through the use of the term leftist (*αριστερίστικα*). This constitutes an implicit negative reference of left-wing parties – especially the parties of SYRIZA and KKE – which are presented in terms of unyielding political orientation. While other, more neutral terms could have been employed, such as *αριστερά* (left-wing), we see a negative ideologonym (Reisigl & Wodak, 2011, p. 52) used instead. The derivational suffix “-ίστικός” in Greek is often used to form adjectives with diminutive meaning - which gives the term a

⁵⁰ The Polytechnic (i.e. the post-junta) generation has been associated with left-wing parties and movements and is usually seen as corrupt and inefficient, and as the generation that destroyed Greece (see Kornettis, 2016). While the view that Greece was destroyed by the post-junta generation seems nowadays to be widespread (although expressed mostly by people on the right) it certainly seems very radical, especially considering that the big damage the military dictatorship had objectively done to the country.

derogatory flavour. In short, Georgiadis adopts the extreme version regarding the link between economy and quality assurance (see above). For him, since the universities are publicly funded, they should be controlled, evaluated and be accountable only to the State – thus not having any sort of autonomy. In the same line with Georgiadis, Giannaka characteristically argues that:

“the university is not a closed, extroverted (sic) community that is not accountable to no one. The Greek university is not the home of a few, but it belongs to the Greek society, to the Greek nation, to the new generations.”

(Sophia Giannaka; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011,
p. 15344)

Sophia Giannaka, member of the government and chief advocate of the bill, connects evaluation of institutions, schools, departments, academic staff and students with the funding that institutions will be provided with:

“Today we all agree with the process of evaluation and we introduce with this bill the evaluation of the professor, the evaluation of the department, the faculty and the university, the evaluation of the student with a new framework that sets terms and conditions for attendance, participation and examinations. Of course, we also link evaluation with funding. The money of the Greek people cannot fall into a bottomless pit.”

(Sophia Giannaka; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011,
p. 15344)

What is implied then is that the funding of the institutions will depend on whether the results of the external and internal evaluations will be positive or not. Quality assurance is thus seen as the main governing technology that will define the funding and by extension the operation of the HEIs. It is also associated with accountability which is used both as a political warrant for justifying both the highly negative representation of the previous political and

Higher Education states of affairs as well as the link between funding and quality control.

To strengthen their legitimisations of the new policies, they point out the low international rankings of Greek HEIs which they use as an evidentiary warrant for justifying the necessity to catch up with international developments and to develop a successful quality assurance framework:

“Is it possible the Greek Parliament to continue to tolerate the fact that as regards Higher Education the best university, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, is ranked below 175th in the global rankings?”

(Sophia Giannaka; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15344)

“In a country with almost 500 university departments, having a maximum of 10 high-level departments does not mean anything. And it is not right that there is a positive public image in the form of reports showing the success of the University, because Greece is not just any country: it was in the top 12 countries that were members of the European Union [...] Greece is a developed economy that has been a member of the OECD for decades; it is not reasonable for Greece to have such a small presence in the lists of globally well-rated universities. While it is a developed country, Greece has not done anything well, in terms of university education. Something is going wrong and as long as laws like this [i.e. the 2011 Law] are not applied - or similar or even better than this - things will remain stagnant as we said at the beginning of the interview.”

(AC 18, Interview)

This negative discursive treatment of the Universities and the Higher Education system in general had already started from the beginning of the public consultation and the dialogue that preceded the vote on Law 4009.

Indeed, the main line of the government's rhetoric centred upon the denunciation of the previous status quo and of the universities in general, criticising them for being unable to compete globally on equal terms and for their absence from the global higher education rankings (Papadiamantaki & Fragoulis, 2016). What the members of the government did was to simply follow the party's agenda during the debates, using expressions which were almost identical with those used by the PM.

There were however some instances where some of the supporters also tried to mitigate this negative representation by generally referring to some positive aspects of universities:

“There is certainly no lack of islands of excellence in Greek universities or shining examples of institutions and teachers in Universities and TEIs”

(Sophia Giannaka; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15344)

Although Giannaka makes a general reference to the positive aspects and elements of the Greek HE (see her excerpt above), the lack of elaboration on the ‘islands of excellence’ and ‘shining examples’ renders the particular assertion insignificant in contrast to the negative representation. In other words, her account indirectly strengthens what the supporters present as the rule, i.e. a problematic, broken and corrupted university system, as the presentation of the positive aspects fails to mitigate the negative portrayal.

A similar mitigation strategy is used by the leader of SYRIZA party, Alexis Tsipras, but for different reasons:

“Greek universities have problems. However, this is not the picture that you along with some news media want to show in order to create a fertile ground for public opinion to promote reform.”

“Of course, there have been phenomena that do not honour the Greek university, phenomena of favouritism, partisanship, but these

phenomena were not a widespread everyday situation. Do we not see similar phenomena in the political life of the country as a whole? Did anybody think of proposing the abolition of parliamentary democracy because there are phenomena of favouritism or venality?”

(Alexis Tsipras, Leader of SYRIZA party; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15731)

Tsipras tries to delegitimise the negative picture that the supporters of the reforms are trying to paint, by arguing that this constitutes a hyperbolic generalisation that does not correspond to reality. Although not referring specifically to quality assurance in his speech, he provides some positive academic examples and results that indicate a different picture as an antithesis to the negative portrayal of the government:

“The National Documentation Centre proves that Greek publications - 80% of which were made with the participation of Greek universities - are constantly on the rise, with our country in 2007 being ranked seventeenth among OECD member countries, surpassing countries such as Japan, Italy, Spain.

In a few words, I would say that the Greek university is much better than what the international position of the country suggests and of course what the financial contribution of the state allows in the operation of the public university.”

(Alexis Tsipras, Leader of SYRIZA party; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15731)

Tsipras tries to provide some evidence in order to support his argument (evidentiary warrant) while also foregrounding the chronic problem of lack of funding as the main issue of Greek Higher Education, alluding that this has prevented Greek Universities from reaching their full potential and for becoming better.

The special speaker of the SYRIZA party, Anastasios Kourakis, argues that there are already available means to deal with the shortcomings of the previous status quo. However, he claims that the proposed bill does not offer any practical solutions for effectively dealing with the problems of Greek HE:

“I would say that we had the means to fix many of the shortcomings of the previous status quo. What is happening now is that [with the new bill] we will have neither a public, nor a free university and above all the university [in its traditional sense] will no longer exist.

It is clear that we vote against the bill. And it is also clear and professed that SYRIZA will continue the fight. This bill cannot be implemented in practice, it does not lead to any upgrade. We will continue the struggle; we will continue [our struggle] within the universities, we will pursue the dialogue with the society in order to create the conditions for the provision of high-level knowledge, free of charge and in accordance with the modern spirit of the time. There is no innovation, nor progress. And I would say that it will go down as a black mark in the history of the Greek university.”

(Anastasios Kourakis, Special Speaker of SYRIZA party; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15362)

In the above quote we observe a similar mitigation strategy as in the speech of Tsipras, albeit expressed for different purposes. On the one hand, there is an implicit acceptance of the evident shortcomings in the Greek Higher Education system which have been acknowledged by most of the policy actors involved in the process, including both the opposition and advocacy coalitions. According to Kourakis, there are already available means to support the necessary legislative efforts and interventions in order to address them. However, he does not believe that the bill in question provides feasible solutions to correct them. On the contrary, he delegitimises the policies on the basis that they promote a neoliberal agenda towards the privatisation of Greek HE. Using various hyperboles, Kourakis argues that the abolition of free, public

higher education in Greece, which according to him is promoted through the proposed bill, will signify the dismantling of the university sector. Instead, following the legitimisation strategy of moral evaluation, he argues that the evolution and modernisation of Greek HE can be achieved through the strengthening of the mass university, which provides free education and equal chances for all in a robust social welfare state and which focuses on the production of high-level knowledge. One interesting point regarding Kourakis' speech is the reference that he makes about the dialogue with the society as a means for ensuring the provision of high-level knowledge. This mention can be viewed as an implicit reference to the notion of social accountability, which was frequently used as rhetorical device for the legitimisation of the 2011 reforms by the supporters. However, based on the co-text it seems that it serves more as an intensification strategy, for emphasising the political dialogue that needs to take place during the policy-making process but also the struggle against the implementation of the proposed reforms.

8.4 External policy actors' influence and internationalisation

The view of Higher Education as a public good and the support of the principle of public funding of universities constitute two of the main positions of the opposition discourse coalition. Nevertheless, actors who have supported the reforms also endorse the public character of University. In fact, actors who support these reforms refer to the public character of HE as another reason for which the 2011 reforms have to be adopted:

“[The Law 4009/2011] was an effort perhaps - maybe not complete – to import from abroad completely ordinary, established ways of organisation and administration of the university, and also an attempt to make the universities more effective precisely because they are public.”

(AC 3, Interview)

European and international policy standards and developments are represented by the pro discourse as an example that Greece needs or has to follow – and further legitimised by the argument of necessity to improve HE system in order to reach the European standards:

“This law has indeed been influenced by external policy proposals but it is not a law which has been written by some foreigners. The law reflects very common and established practices, procedures and structures which exist in all the universities of the world”

(AC 18, Interview)

“It goes without saying that we wanted a reform of the self-evident: to do what others do. That is we wanted to reach the European average. But, it was so difficult to make a step forward and overcome a deeply ingrained rhetoric.”

“I relied on them [i.e. external policy actors] and I think it is very important - when you have been left far behind – to take advice from those who have actually achieved something. And of course to get the best examples.”

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Interview)

“As regards the policies there is no imposition and it couldn’t be any imposition - not from the EU, not from the Declaration of Bologna, which is optional in the sense that it has no legal implications; in a sense it is not mandatory. The same applies to the OECD [...] whether we like their proposals or not, whether we agree with them or not, we select and implement their proposals à la carte. So, we cannot say that there is a “diktat”, let alone an imposition.”

“Now in regard to the ideas that underlie the policies there is unavoidably an influence. And this influence becomes more visible at the political level if you take into account the background of the Ministers who have introduced the reforms. [...] Diamantopoulou, for example,

had been the former European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Therefore, she had the experience and she was also influenced by these organisations. [...] Also, the constant and even selective repetition of certain developments that occur abroad has essentially created what we might call a "truth regime" [...] Moreover, my feeling is that the Greek society and the Greek educational community has resisted much longer, and much more effectively to the incoming discourse than as many other countries have done. And this pertains of course to our traditions and culture and the particular interests of the various stakeholders that participate in the policy-making process. Therefore, yes, there has been an influence at the level of ideas which, however, hasn't shifted the orientation of Higher Education in Greece."

(AC 5, Interview)

In the above extracts the participants refer to the positive HE developments that take place in other countries and the external policy proposals with positive statements. They highlight the fact that these recommendations are optional thus rejecting any argument that describes the adoption of external policy proposals as a form of external imposition. Instead, they view the influence of external education policy actors as an ideational one, providing guidance and suggestions to the formation of the 2011 Law. For them it is crucial to catch up with the developments that take place abroad and to adopt the best examples in order to improve Greek HE studies. This type of justification represents an *instrumental rationalisation* (van Leeuwen, 2007; 2008) of the external policy influences, which further renders the full adoption and implementation of quality assurance procedures as highly useful and necessary. The characterisation of the HE policy practices, procedures and structures that exist abroad as standardised all over the world also serves as a *theoretical rationalisation* (van Leeuwen, 2007; 2008). Simply put, this state of affairs is viewed by the supporters as standard, acceptable and to a certain extent inevitable.

The majority of the interviewees who are critical or oppose the 2011 HE policies also do not see the adoption of external policy proposals as some kind of enforcement:

“Diamantopoulou’s law aimed at adapting the Greek Higher Education to the European standards. It was within this nexus of our accession to a wider organisation – with which I do not agree, but still it is a situation that exists. [...] I do not think that the European Union came to enforce its policies.”

(AC 12, Interview)

While the participant has strongly opposed the 2011 Law especially the changes in HEIs governance and he also does not fully agree with the process of adapting Greek HE to the European standards, he does not consider their adoption as being enforced by external policy actors. At the same time, he more or less accepts the implementation of European policy recommendations, including the evaluation procedures, as an inescapable state of affairs (*“it is a situation that exists”*).

However, other participants who belong to the same camp of those who disagree with the changes view this influence as a pressure exerted by external policy actors to follow the proposals. As one participant, who had participated in the 2016 negotiations with the OECD regarding the implementation of the OECD’s recommendations argues:

“The memorandum we signed last year in August 2015, says that any change in higher education has to be based on the OECD 2011 evaluation report. [...] We went to Paris in January [2016] and started the negotiation process with the OECD. We told them that we cannot follow the 2011 report’s recommendations. It was because of our political priorities but it was also impossible for us to implement this. First, it was based on data collected before the crisis, and second its analysis was very poor. They were surprised.

Long story short: After a relatively difficult, but constructive review we ended up with a good deal in January. So the OECD understood that the 2011 report will not work. But the problem was not them: it was the “the three institutions” [i.e. the Troika]. So the OECD told us that they won’t have any problem with our proposals provided that the institutions will also accept them. So we asked the institutions. As you can realise, we have a mountain to climb... The institutions are stubborn... We are under full supervision [...] They are worse than we – as Leftists - were 30 years ago!”

(AC 2, Interview)

Lastly, there were also actors who adopted a more extreme opposition discourse in relation to the establishment of quality assurance and accreditation processes and the external (policy) influence. The most illustrative example of this type of discourse was manifested in the speeches of KKE party members during the parliamentary debates. According to the special speaker of the Communist party the re-introduction of a quality assurance framework and upgrade of ADIP in the 2011 bill has been dictated by business requirements:

“The Government, in order to control better whether the three-year degrees are in line with the requirements of the market, i.e. the businesses, is upgrading ADIP, which is re-called to "Quality Assurance and Certification Authority in Higher Education". This is a mechanism through which experts who will certify the study programmes. [...] One of the criteria for the accreditation of degrees will be the demand in the labour market for the acquired qualifications, with the consequence that entire scientific subjects will be rejected or altered, because they will not be competitive, while through market evaluation and accreditation, it will further intensify the competition between departments and universities.”

“State funding will be given based on the institution's competitiveness. The institutions will prepare every four years a "business plan" for their

operation and development. Public funding will be given partly based on quantitative indicators, such as the number of students, and partly based on the competitiveness indicators set by the Ministry, as well as the goals set by the institutions themselves. That is, the second part will be either a bonus or a punishment, depending on how efficient the operation of the institutions is under the conditions imposed by the market.”

(Ioannis Ziogas, Special Speaker of KKE party; Greek Parliament
Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15355)

In his speech Ziogas provides a negative discursive evaluation of the accreditation process and its impact on the operation and management of study programmes. For him accreditation contributes to the marketisation and commercialisation of Greek HE, since it increases the dependence of Greek HE to the business and labour market demands. In particular, he raises the issue of vocationalisation of the Greek higher education system which is further intensified through the 2011 reforms. According to Ziogas, the overall accreditation process in conjunction with the reduction of study time (from 4-year degrees to 3-year degrees) will intensify the uneven competition between different study programmes. Since the accreditation of scientific subjects will be based on their overall responsiveness to the market requirements, particular scientific fields may be rejected or favored against others.

Such procedures however may downplay the importance of those disciplines (such as humanities and social sciences study programmes) that are difficult to value in pragmatic terms. In the Greek context, this can be reflected in the devaluation of humanities and social sciences, whose education curriculum objectives are not aligned with market demands. This has led to the chronic low employment rates of humanities and social sciences graduates, further weakening students’ interest in these studies (Zmas, 2007). Ziogas more or less refers to this issue by emphasising the risk of eliminating study

programmes which may not be certified on the basis that are less attractive or less competitive.

Nevertheless, this issue has been also associated with the various shortcomings of the Greek HE status quo. The expansion of university sector during the 1980s and 1990s was based mostly on serving political and academic interests as well as clientelist relations with local businesses, thus neglecting or even rejecting any association between university studies and the labour market (Zmas, 2007). As a result, Greek university was to a large extent isolated from the surrounding socioeconomic developments, leading to an oversupply of university graduates in comparison to the actual demands of the labour market (ibid.).

Although, many actors who oppose the 2011 reforms seem to acknowledge these shortcomings, the KKE party position adopts a more radical discourse. They strongly criticise the adoption of external (mainly European) policy discourses and proposals (viewing them as a form of external imposition) which support and promote the improvement of competitiveness through the close connection between university studies and economy and the "vocationalisation" of higher education systems in Europe through the promotion of accreditation policies, directly linked to the employability of graduates. In his speech, Ziogas explicitly delegitimises the quality assurance and accreditation process by characterising it as a punitive control mechanism for HEIs that could serve the overall government objective of further reducing state funding of HE.

Overall, Ziogas points out the de-academisation of Greek HE that is attempted through the 2011 reforms, by implying a shift of university teaching and research from the Humboldtian University ideal of academic organisation – i.e. the provision of free HE studies and its operation as place of critical thinking ensured through state control – towards a competitive quasi-market closely linked to economic interests and the overall logic of "academic capitalism" that

renders faculty producers and conveyors of intellectual academic capital (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Ball, 1998).

Although both the extreme and mitigated versions of the above discourse are evident in the parliamentary debate as well as in some interviews, it does not reflect the position of the majority of interviewees (mainly academics and some rectors) who argue more or less in favor of evaluation procedures. Most participants seemed to agree that Greek HE should be fundamentally reformed by adopting and successfully implementing a quality and accountability framework that will enable the stakeholders to tackle the many failings and shortcomings of the previous status-quo. The accreditation of degree programmes was also viewed as a necessary practice in this process. As one academic described the situation in his interview:

“Little by little, [the] mindset [of Greek academics] has changed. And not only did the internal evaluations proceed - judging again by our department - to a satisfactory degree, but the benefits of the external evaluation were also recognised. That is, the suggestions proposed, for example, by the external evaluation report in our department expressed perceptions that were more or less accepted by most of us but not explicitly manifested. Therefore, I would say that regardless of whether there was not a clear support for ADIP and for the evaluation procedures in the public discourse, in fact there was a very specific shift [within the Greek academic circles] after realising that evaluation is not a bad thing; rather it can only bring benefits.”

(AC 6, Interview)

The following extract also reflects a more moderate discourse regarding the implementation of evaluation procedures and their contribution to the improvement of university studies quality:

“There are just two extremes here now. Some deify evaluation, while others demonise it [...] Both are extreme. [...] I believe that it is right to have an evaluation. I was the chancellor who fought for the first external

full evaluation to be done at our university and it was done. I was aware that I was taking some risks, but I believe you should know who you are. Because if you don't know who you are and you just rate yourself, then I could tell you that I'm tall, I have blue eyes, I'm handsome [...] Right? I can say it. But am I really like that?"

(AC 10, Interview)

The actor here implies that there can be a moderate approach as regards the adoption of a quality assurance framework. Referring specifically to the external evaluation of HEIs he legitimises the whole process by pointing out that internal evaluation procedures are inherently non-credible, as there is always the risk of being biased by producing positive reports about the operations of their own institution. Contrary to various endogenous challenges that he faced with respect to his decision (mainly implying the reactions from trade unions and academics within his university who were opposed to the implementation of evaluation processes), he supported external evaluation as a process that can provide an accurate picture of the operation of the institutions as there will be no internal pressures for positive self-evaluation.

8.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the findings revealed a distinction between the discourses and arguments expressed by the participants regarding the quality assurance procedures. Supporters of the reform believed that quality assurance along with the systematic accreditation of academic programmes can increase and promote collaboration, mobility, and transparency. Most of them also claimed that the re-introduction of the quality assurance framework aims at the improvement of the system as it (re)introduces and reinforces the process of internal and external evaluation of departments and institutions in general, while at the same time it streamlines the accreditation process of study programmes. They further legitimised quality assurance programmes on the basis that they will increase the public accountability of HEIs – in terms of

transparently reporting their activities and results but also as a way to streamline and control the allocation of funding. Moreover, by promoting a perceived crisis of Greek HE - through the frequent negative representations of Greek universities - they discursively fostered the necessity to change the status quo through the implementation of the 2011 HE policies and more specifically of the quality assurance framework. While not supporting a punitive character of evaluation control mechanisms they did argue in favor of the improvement and development of quality in Greek HE departments irrespective of whether that means the closure of particular departments or not.

In sum, the bleak portrayals and narratives about the previous system serve the government's general purpose: i.e. to ensure the support of the New Democracy and LAOS parties and also to persuade the public of their policy measures' effectiveness in solving the chronic problems of HE. Concurrently, it adds further to its legitimation by putting emphasis on the moral duty and urgent necessity to change the previous system by introducing the entrepreneurial university as a solution (legitimation strategy of moral evaluation). The all-pervasiveness of state control was further criticised by the supporters of the reforms as one of the main shortcomings of the previous status quo. Instead, they emphasised the need to enhance social accountability and transparency of universities by streamlining and controlling the allocation of funding according to the results of quality assurance and performance measurement procedures. The discursive representation and evaluation of the previous status quo was formulated in such a way so as to legitimise the introduction of new public management processes in HE that render evaluation a core instrument of public accountability and rational management (Henkel, 1998, pp. 285-297). This is further attached to the concept of the "evaluative state" (Neave, 1998) which the 2011 reforms evidently promote through the re-introduction of the qualitative assurance framework and the additional responsibilities assigned to ADIP (see section 6.2.5). Within this vision "the evaluative state" functions as an inspector, exercising control at a distance, while assigning the internal and external

evaluation of HEIs to intermediary bureaucratic bodies which nevertheless operate at the service of “the market” and “the consumer” (Neave, 1998, p. 281). In the case of Greek HE the intermediary bodies consist of the Quality Assurance Units (MODIP) established in each institution (responsible for the internal evaluation procedures) and the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (ADIP) which coordinates and supervises both the internal and external evaluation of HEIs. At the same time, within the context of the emerging “new management”, the performance of accountability would be measured upon the achievement of pre-determined criteria that correspond to particular indicators and standards. This process ensures measurable results of “quality” performance that can be subsequently used as the basis of accountability and, in some cases, resource allocations (Henkel, 1998, p. 291). Overall, the discursive emphasis on supporters’ accounts regarding the establishment of quality assurance procedures (based on measurable indicators and criteria) as a means to tackle the shortcoming of the previous status quo indicates the selection and ongoing process of retention of European policy discourses and their underlying imaginaries (associated with new public management and the notion of “evaluative state”) in Greek HE.

The negative construals and generalisations, however, used by the supporters of the reforms seemed to be sometimes hyperbolic and to some extent inflammatory, adding up to the already intense confrontation. Moreover, some of their arguments seemed to be quite problematic and fallacious, as for the most part they did not provide any robust evidence or prior adequate evaluation of the existing structures, tools, teaching practices and outcomes. Instead, the law supporters’ construals seemed to rely on general aphorisms, metaphors and emotive language about what they think is the problem with Greek public education.

The evident shortcomings and problems of the Greek University system were pointed out by both those who support and those who oppose the reforms. Nevertheless, the opposition discourse appears to be more mitigated on this

matter. More specifically, those who opposed the reforms acknowledge the various shortcomings of the previous status quo, but also accentuate the many academic achievements of Greek academics in the light of the severe impact caused by the financial crisis on the general operation of HEIs. The discursive construction of the previous status quo and representation of the evident shortcomings is purposively utilised by the opposition as an argumentative means for delegitimising the content of 2011 reforms as well as their feasibility. According to the opposition, the proposed reforms do not offer practical solutions to these shortcomings; on the contrary they exacerbate them.

Conversely, actors who opposed the law interpreted quality assurance and accreditation procedures as an external policy pressure and intervention (mainly imposed by European policy proposals). For them quality control and evaluation constitute inherent processes of HEIs and thus there is no need for external evaluations. Added to this was the ideological criticism that quality assurance and by extension the European policies that imposed it could not be anything other than of a neoliberal nature and consequently were seen as an attempt to attack the public character of Greek universities through the vocationalisation and commercialisation of learning which by extension can lead to the privatisation of education. As mentioned above, many of them argued that the increased responsibilities of ADIP could also facilitate the political agenda of the government in terms of turning quality assurance procedures into a disciplinary mechanism.

Evidently, the opposition discourse is rooted to an ideal vision of university education that has been influenced by the Humboldtian principles. Within this vision, the state can contribute to the academic autonomy of universities by ensuring that the provision and production of knowledge takes place without the interventions of sectoral interests (Humboldt, 1810). The emphasis that opposition discourse places on the free provision of higher education reveals their main argumentation strategy against the negative evaluation of the previous status quo. According to actors who have argued against the evaluation and accreditation procedures, this policy paradigm leads to the de-

academisation of Greek HE as it signifies a one-way connection between the economy and education where the former is favoured over the latter. This development threatens the public and free character of Greek HE by incorporating private interests within HE studies while also using evaluation results as a means for justifying the underfunding of tertiary institutions by the Greek state (Zmas, 2015). For them, any policy attempts in Greek HE should center on preserving and increasing state funding especially during the financial crisis conjuncture. This provides the basis of their proposed solutions for addressing the shortcomings of Greek HE and safeguarding the academic autonomy of universities as well as the traditional university values of knowledge, social enlightenment and political emancipation.

However, the majority of participants seems to express high acceptance for the evaluations that take place. Many actors expressed a positive view about the need to establish a quality assurance system – although for distinct reasons. Supporters seem to focus more on the association between quality assurance and accountability which can be further translated to transparency. Opponents seem to focus more on the improvement of teaching and learning processes, the development of critical thinking and strengthening of autonomous research through the proper implementation of quality assurance procedures (specifically of external evaluations). Moreover, many members of the opposition camp take a moderate stance regarding the external policy actors influence viewing them as ‘unavoidable’. In this sense, they recognise the existent situation without viewing external policy proposals as a form of imposition of policies in the Greek HE field - although they do not necessarily support or agree with them. In any case, the analysis of opponents’ discourses reveal an interesting shift: while in previous decades the same actors were among those who were strongly opposing the introduction of evaluation procedures in Greek HE, nowadays they seem to hold a positive opinion about evaluation procedures, while also considering them important for improving Greek HE studies.

Chapter 9: University Governance and the issue of University Councils

9.1 Introduction

Contrary to the vague and evasive concept of quality, one of the topics that dominated the parliamentary debates (and most certainly the interviews) was the more concrete and specific issue of the establishment of the so-called University Council (*Συμβούλιο Ιδρύματος*). According to the majority of the interviewees the introduction of this new governing and administrative board was one of the major reforms introduced by the Law 4009/2011; however, it was also one of the most contentious aspects of the law.

The key responsibilities of the Council consist of strategic planning; the general supervision and audit of the institution's operation; the establishment and overall approval of policies— including the allocation of human resources and funding within the institution; as well as the selection and proposal of Rector candidates (up to three) after an international call for expression of interest. With effect of the Law 4009/2011 (Article 8, par. 2a) the Council would consist of 15 members in large HEIs (i.e. institutions in which the number of professors is more than fifty) and 11 members in small HEIs (where the number of professors is fifty or less)⁵¹. From the 15 members, 9 would be internal members (or 7 members of the 11-member Councils respectively), with 8 members (or 6 members respectively) consisting of full-time, first rank members of the teaching research staff (DEP) serving the institution concerned (namely tenured full and associate professors) and one representative of the student community of the institution. The remaining 6 (or 4 members respectively) would be external, namely academics coming from

⁵¹ It is worthy to note here that the initial proposal of the Greek Ministry of Education stipulated a different structure for University Councils than the one that was eventually approved and voted. Specifically, the 15-member configuration would have consisted of 7 internal members, 7 external and 1 student representative and respectively the 11-member configuration would have included 4 internal members, 4 external and 1 student representative (Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, 2011c).

other HEIs abroad or representatives of professional associations, local businesses and/or big companies⁵². The internal board academics would be elected by the whole academic community of the institution. In turn, the external members and the President of the Council would be elected by the internal members of the Council.

Prior to the enactment of the 2011 Law, the election of the University leadership was heavily relied on the student vote as this was seen as important for the 'direct democratic' character of the election (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008, p. 114).⁵³ More specifically, the Rector was elected by the total of the (i) teaching and research staff members of the University, (ii) undergraduate and postgraduate students and (iii) other internal stakeholders, such as administrative staff representatives, teaching assistants, scientific personnel (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008)⁵⁴. This changed in 2011 as the process for electing Rectors was heavily determined by the Council: the whole board would be responsible of proposing Rector candidates (3 in the case of 15-member Councils and 2 in the case of 11-member Councils) and for calling an election in which only the academic staff would have the right to vote.

Overall, the new regulations for the revised structure of the University Council drastically weakened students' participation in the institutional decision making of the universities, as they were excluded from participation in the election

⁵² According to the provisions of the Law 4009/2011 (Article 8, par. 5a), suitably qualified candidates for being elected as external members would be those who have been widely recognised in science, humanities or arts, distinguished in social, economic, political or cultural life at national or international level, and has knowledge and experience from a position of responsibility. Persons who had any for profit financial transaction with the institution concerned in the last five years, as well as active university professors working in the country or the retired professors of the HEI concerned are prevented from being elected as external members.

⁵³ This was a long-standing request of the student body, reacting against the top-down influence of tenured professors on students - with the latter being exploited in many cases. The need for democratising Universities' governance processes was also intensified following the authoritarian suppression of university students by the military dictatorship.

⁵⁴ The percentage of votes that each candidate received was calculated by adding the total of the preferences of the three categories after these were multiplied by an indicator of significance which is 0,50 for the teaching and research staff, 0,40 for students and 0,10 for internal stakeholders, such as administrative staff representatives, teaching assistants, scientific personnel.

process of decision-making bodies (Rector, Dean, Head of the Department). Their role was sidelined since the student representatives who were allowed to participate in meetings of the decision-making bodies would not have any significant duties, thus practically becoming mere observers (Kladis, 2012). Interestingly, this change deviates from certain fundamental principles and values of the Bologna Process⁵⁵ and from the dominant tendency of the then government to internationalise and follow developments in EHEA.

The characterisation *full partners* used in the text implies an active role and participation of both students and academic staff in the decision-making process of HEIs. Contrary to the above declaration, the 2011 law clearly reduces the role of students. Considering that the main purpose of the 2011 law was exactly to implement EHEA principles in the Greek HE, this constitutes a key deviation. The Greek context, however, may help to explain this surprising contradiction. The strong affiliations with political parties gave rise to the establishment of clientelist relationships and networks – a dominant feature of the Greek society and economy over the past decades (Mouzelis & Pagoulatos, 2002) – also in higher education and undermined the initial democratic intention of the 1982 reform as it failed to sustain the interest and participation of the wider student body (Papadiamantaki et al., 2016). The infiltration of youth branches of political parties in the election processes within Greek HEIs as well as the waning student engagement and high abstention rates⁵⁶ in student elections over the years led to the actual empowerment of particularistic student organisations while weakening actual democratic legitimacy (Papadiamantaki et al., 2016).

Some Greek academics have thus argued in favour of this change by pointing out the problems of corruption and over-politicisation that students'

⁵⁵ As the Yerevan Communiqué (2015, p. 2) states: "[Ministers] will support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions."

⁵⁶ According to news reports, in the 2010 Rector elections at the University of Athens only 5% of students participated and voted (Mastoras, 2010).

participation has caused within universities (see Tsiligiris, 2012a; Sotiropoulos, 2012). Others, however, have critically noted that this development signifies a transition from a democratic and participatory university to a market-oriented higher education (Balias et al., 2016; Gouvias, 2012a; Kladis, 2014). In both the speeches and interviews, the non-participation of students becomes a major topic of discussion and has been extensively used either to legitimise or delegitimise the relevant reforms.

9.2 The role and “status” of students and academics within management of HEIs

In their attempt to legitimise the particular type of governance, the sponsors of the law embarked in an attempt to discursively detach students from their established role as active participants in the governance of the Universities. In general, students seem to become much more passive agents in the view of the government and other supporters of the reforms, in a very stark contrast to the active role they had in the university governance structure prior to these reforms.

The main imaginary underpinning the discourses of the supporters correlates here with a view that construes students merely as passive recipients of training and knowledge, who *have to be “governed”* by the administrators/managers without having any active role in the voting process of the governing bodies whatsoever. The first quote comes from Makis Vouridis, MP of LAOS, who states referring to students’ participation:

“We have an ideological consistency and thus we say the opposite [from New Democracy]: No, those who **are governed** do not participate in the governance. This is the consistent position. There is a **distinction** between **those who are governed** and **those who govern** and this particular bill doesn’t draw this distinction.”

(Makis Voridis, LAOS; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15366)

Voridis embarks into a political and ideological confrontation not just with the left-wing parties (which were vehemently opposing the reform) but also with New Democracy's contradictory discourse (on the one hand they were supporting the law, but on the other hand they were raising issues of unconstitutionality with regards to the synthesis of University Councils⁵⁷). Here, the representation of the students is conveyed by means of the juxtaposition between those who are situated in the higher ranks of the universities' management and those who are in an inferior position, which further implies a dominant-subordinate power relation of governance. Apparently, for Voridis, students are (or should be) placed in the lowest rank, i.e. those who 'are governed'. According to van Leeuwen (2008), the attribution of an active or passive role to social actors can be viewed as political manipulation which is designed to create or reproduce relations of domination and hierarchy. In this extract we can see how students are attributed a passive role through their non-explicit reference but also through the passive mode of the verb 'govern'. Moreover, at the pragmatic level, the strong assertive illocutionary force of Voridis' speech act ("No, those who are governed do not participate in the administration/management") signals both the radical policy perspective of the LAOS party regarding the students' active role and participation in the administration of Universities and also the dogmatism and conservative thinking with which he and his party try to deal with this issue.

Sofia Giannaka, government's rapporteur, supports the same idea by elucidating which groups are the governed ones:

"An especially important element is the [election of the] Rector. Today we have a unique phenomenon - it only happens in Greece - where the Rector is voted by those who he/she is called to govern, that is, professors,

⁵⁷ This was probably a political tactic to please their voters by exercising their duty as the majority opposition to criticise the government. Their plan, however, was from the beginning of the debate to vote in favor of the bill.

administrators and students. In other words, he is called to govern the **governed** ones, [i.e. those] who elect him. This is a key pathology and needs to be changed. From now on, the Rector will be elected by the Council following an international invitation and the details will be seen in the discussion on the articles.”

(Sofia Giannaka, chief advocate of the bill (PASOK party); Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15344)

In her speech, Giannaka employs the term *governed* (*διοικούμενους*) to refer not only to the students but also to the academic and administrative staff. Similarly, with Voridis, she attributes passive roles to these groups in terms of their participation in the institutional decision making of universities. According to her, it is very unusual (*unique phenomenon*) to see the “governed groups” of a Higher Education Institution have a say in the election of the person who will govern them. She intensifies the negative picture that she paints through the use of the loaded term *pathology*, which had previously used as a metaphor for the problems that Higher Education system experiences (see previous section).

What Voridis and Giannaka seem to imply in their speeches, is the prevalence of strong clientelist relationships between the Rectors and the academic community (teaching staff and students). In their view, this type of governance structure creates an environment where those who govern would support the interests of the governed in exchange of their vote. Interestingly, Giannaka considers the following example that she gives in her speech as a sensible alternative to the previous status-quo:

“Why shouldn't a shipowner be a member of the Board of the University of Piraeus, which is a naval university?”

(Sofia Giannaka; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15344)

Given that according to Giannaka, corruption and clientelism dominate the Greek HE field such an argument loses its validity and weight. Who would guarantee that the shipowners will not involve themselves in the same clientelist interactions with the academic staff in order to win their votes?

In a similar vein - but arguably in a more mitigated and diplomatic way than Voridis and Giannaka - Anna Diamantopoulou argues that:

"Students are extremely important and the most populous component of the University. **But students cannot govern or co-govern.** This model of co-governance has failed. And it has not only failed because it worked the way it did and because the original intentions, which were good and correct thirty years ago, were distorted along the way, but also because **we really need to define what the role of the teacher is and what the role is the learner is; what are the priorities of the student.** Does the student participate? Of course, they participate. A student participates in the Council. The senate also includes three undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students. The selection of students, the election of students is done in a quite different way. There is no logic of factions. There is a single list, through which students are elected."

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Minister of Education; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15729).

"We do not believe that students can and should have a say in this way in the University administration [i.e. by voting and participating in the meetings of decision-making bodies]. They [will] participate [according to the 4009/2011 law] in the Council, they [will be] there [...] they [will] follow the events, they [will] inform the other students, they [will] participate in the Senate, they [will] participate by 40% in the programmes and councils of student welfare. But I think things [should be] pretty clear regarding their role. I think we need, indeed, **to describe more accurately what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a learner**".

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Minister of Education; Greek Parliament
Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15796).

Diamantopoulou uses the modal active '*cannot govern or co-govern*' instead of passive voice. Even though she employs a negative modal verb of obligation (i.e. students are not allowed to govern or co-govern), it is worth pointing out that students are discursively activated in her speech, i.e. represented as active agents in an activity (vanLeeuwen, 2008, p. 33). Moreover, she attempts to mitigate her proposed exclusion of students from governance by using more or less positive qualifications ('*extremely important and the most populous component of the University*') or by mentioning the process of *co-governance* instead of explicitly referring to students' participation. By this technique, students are deemphasised with co-governance serving as a *totum pro parte* synecdoche (*a whole standing for a part*): students are inferred in this case by mentioning a process that they are part of (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). She further tones down her statement by using the modal phrase '*we do not believe*' (δεν θεωρούμε). While in the first quote there was a high value of obligation, claiming objective certainty, in the second quote the degree of certainty is reduced as she expresses an explicit subjective orientation when she is talking about the inability of students '*to have a say in the University administration*'. Lastly, she seeks to convince her audience about how the new law does not (entirely) exclude students, but actually fosters students' participation in the decision-making bodies – although we could argue that this type of engagement proposed by the 2011 law is less of active participation and more of passive observation. It is obvious that Diamantopoulou attempts to strike a milder tone as she seeks a wide consensus not just from the MPs but from the public as well. Nevertheless, she remains critical of student's participation, given her claim that "*the model of co-governance has failed*".

Anna Diamantopoulou remains consistent in her view as she repeats and reinforces her argument (intensification strategy) during her interview - arguing openly against the democratic university and fostering a clearly managerialist

and entrepreneurial view of higher education by creating a causal connection between economy, quality and the university:

“The rationale was that Higher Education and the reforms in education do not have to do only with students or academics but they mostly pertain to the economy and to the country's development. [...] The desideratum is not the democratic university. It is the open university, it is the excellent university, it is the innovative university; it is the internationalisation of higher education institutions.”

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Interview)

Whether mitigated or not, the idea expressed by the above discourses is clearly attached to the New Public Management culture and more specifically the *new managerialist* organisation and governance that was attempted to be introduced by this law (Braun, 1999). This type of governance drastically reduces student participation in the decision-making processes of the institution in favour of strengthening their role as learners and by extension as consumers by rendering them the power to evaluate course/programme and assess the faculty's academic ability (Braun, 1991; Papadiamantaki, Fragoulis & Soroliou, 2016).

As one academic argued in their interview:

“The discourse of the academic community focused too much on the issue of University Councils in Greece; [basically it] questioned the role of Councils. This was mainly because the administration of the University is changing towards the direction of New Public Management: we have external bodies that make decisions for the University that are not members of the academic community and due to that logic, yes, the academic community reacted against this direction, i.e. [by supporting] the abolition of the Councils. [This was] mainly [justified] on the basis that external members make decisions on issues that pertain to the academic community, on issues about the nature of the studies; because this political change of university governance makes it more entrepreneurial, it is linked

to the needs of the market and is changing towards the direction mentioned before. It is the new managerialism, the phenomenon of the new managerialism”.

(AC 13, Interview)

All in all, we could argue that the discursive passivation of students by the supporters can be seen as a strategy to legitimise the change of university governance. This is mainly achieved through *theoretical rationalisation* (van Leeuwen, 2007; 2008): the legitimisation is founded on the “truth” that students cannot or are not able to participate and thus governance would be more effective through the operation of University Councils. At the same time, it constitutes the goal that the 2011 reform seeks to achieve, i.e. to actually reduce students’ power through the establishment of the University Councils and to transform them from full decision-making partners to just learners.

Within the spectrum of the discourse employed by the reform supporters, professors and students seem to be demonised alike. More particularly, the strong opposition of the internal community against the government’s attempts to introduce big organisational and institutional changes in Greek HEIs has often been viewed by most of the reform supporters as rooted in the vested interests of students as well as in the deep-seated relationships of clientelism and nepotism, that permeate almost all academic levels and practices within the universities (see Kedikoglou’s account in the previous chapter). However, this belief also existed in the discourses of those who had opposed the reforms and also of those who in a sense had a more nuanced approach towards the law (agreeing with some parts while opposing others). The first quote below belongs to a dedicated supporter of the law and former member of a Greek University Council (AC 5) while the second belongs to an academic who holds a more neutral stance:

“When the whole issue of evaluation first came in through the Giannakou reform, there was strong opposition by the trade unions controlled by SYRIZA and by other extra-parliamentary groups and in general by what I

call the "deep university". They did not want anyone to interfere nor did they want a "third eye" within universities⁵⁸. Because in the Greek university no one controls anyone. Let's take the faculty. I [the professor] may not hold my lectures. If the news reaches the president of the department he could talk to me, but he/she cannot do anything to me. Someone will say, but are there no disciplinary measures? Yes, there are, [but] they do not work. And, very often when disciplinary measures are taken for whatever reasons, the academics who staff the disciplinary committee resign because they do not want to get involved. For example, recently, namely last year [i.e. in 2015], various people attacked the president of the department of Physics of the University of Athens, with physical violence, that is, they beat him and an official inquiry took place. Well, the teachers who were in the inquiry committee resigned - they did not want to [get involved] because they were afraid of, let's say, what will happen to them. And, alas, who will dare impose disciplinary sanctions on students or teachers!"

(AC 5, Interview)

Researcher: Was this an issue - in a sense – of an unsuccessful policy transfer?

Interviewee: No, no. It was not even implemented. [...] We also had all the known problems. [...] The rectors, the previous ones, or not, who lost the forms of power they had - and we all know how the rectors were elected... Then there was the issue with students, i.e. whether the students will vote or not and how the Rector will be elected. [...] That is, each of the individual provisions reveals that there is a previous regime which is deep-rooted and resists any changes in the classical sense, that is, being "against" a position, and an ideological...

⁵⁸ In Greek: "Δεν ήθελαν κανέναν να ανακατεύεται ούτε να υπάρχει ένα «τρίτο μάτι» μέσα στα πανεπιστήμια". This is a Greek expression which suggests that they did not want any external surveillance or interference.

Researcher: Is this what others refers to as the "deep university";

Interviewee: Yes, the "deep university". Which is ideological, it is also scientific, it is real, it is political. This is a huge issue.

(AC 11, Interview)

Both actors explicitly describe a corrupt network of people (alluding to administrative bodies, academics and students) with vested interests that is deep-rooted and operates undisturbed within the Greek Universities. The first actor used the term “deep university”, an allusion based on the so-called “deep state”, to metaphorically refer to this network, by alluding the high influence that these groups of people can privately exert on the ways in which Universities operate. While the second interviewee did not use the term proactively, he agreed with it when prompted by the researcher and further explicated it by mentioning the many aspects through which is manifested. Participants who used the term “deep university”, viewed this type of networks as “parasites” that have been sponging on the (according to them) obsolete and weakened democratic structure of Greek HEIs. According to the same participants, this is mostly done by groups/ actors with influence within the Universities who exploit their power and the many muddling and obscure administrative processes that take place to serve and promote their interests – while sabotaging others – e.g. during the voting and approval of decisions about the allocation of funds or about other managerial or academic issues.

Clearly, for the first interviewee, the ideological and political aspects relate to what they perceive as the dominance of left-wing parties and ideology within Universities (*‘trade unions controlled by SYRIZA’*). As for the scientific aspect, this arguably refers to practices of patronage that take place within the ranks of faculty and pertains to either research matters or issues such as the one described by the first interviewee (lack of implementation of disciplinary measures). The vivid narration and emotive language used in the first quote to describe incidents that indeed have taken place in some Universities (but not in the majority of them) signifies a bleak picture of the Greek Universities

caused by the practices of the “deep University”. While, not explicitly mentioning that this applies to all academics or to the whole student body, they still do not specify whether such corrupt and violent practices are limited to only some groups of academics and students or not. Certainly, left-wing parties and student groups within the Universities - and in general the opposers of the reforms - are more or less implicitly targeted by both interviewees (*controlled by SYRIZA; the rectors*). It seems, however, that both quotes express a generalised negative picture that serves as the basis of the legitimisation of the new changes in the University governance.

However, none of this discourse is novel. In fact, some construals consist of clichés and stereotypes which have been part and parcel of a derogatory and discrediting narrative describing academics and students, which has been used for a long time by politicians and the media. One rather extreme example is the negative representation of academics and students by the special speaker of the radical right-wing party of LAOS, Adonis Georgiadis. In his attempt to oppose the objections raised by the parties of SYRIZA, New Democracy and KKE about the constitutionality of the bill he deploys the following anti-intellectual argument:

“It's the same Scientific Committee that today raises questions of unconstitutionality - that some people have made front pages in the newspapers - which is accidentally composed only of **academics**. I do not know if this rings a bell for you regarding the powers of **guilds** in Greece, but a board coincidentally consisted only of **academics** fully adopts all the arguments of the **academic guild** as if it were the only **union** in the country, **just to intervene in the political process and protect its vested interests, as would any other union do in the country**; so, that's its prestige.”

(Adonis Georgiadis, LAOS MP; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15358).

Using irony and the rhetorical schema of anaphora Mr. Georgiadis attacks the ethos and credibility of the academic community, by invoking some popular negative beliefs regarding Greek trade unions and by extension comparing the academic community with them: in other words, professors are biased, and they care only about safekeeping their own interests. In this way, he endeavours to discredit the whole academic community as being unreliable, so as to delegitimise the issues raised in the report parliament's scientific committee report.

In addition, he makes the following comment about a student associated with a left-wing youth federation:

"I was invited by Mr. Chatzinikolaou [a famous Greek news anchor] to discuss this issue [that SYRIZA lies behind the protests of hooded militants]. He had also invited a student from EAAK⁵⁹. You know, in EAAK you come across **some hairy, dirty guys, with cowlicks and tattoos** [...]

Have you seen how **they** look like? **If you throw water at them, they will suffer from intoxication.**"

(Adonis Georgiadis, LAOS MP; Greek Parliament Record of Proceedings, 2011, p. 15358).

The student is negatively presented by Georgiadis in terms of his physical appearance. Georgiadis explicitly (as well as implicitly through the strong metaphorical meaning of the last conditional phrase) depicts the student as "dirty", while also using the prepositional phrase "with cowlicks and tattoos" which functions here as another stereotypical negative characterisation of the student - given the negative associations (especially in the Greek cultural context) that these accessories evoke, relating with delinquency. As the subsequent use of the third-person plural pronoun ("they") further indicates, his pejorative and insulting qualification is not limited to the specific student (or

⁵⁹ EAAK (United Independent Left Movement; in Greek: *Ενιαία Ανεξάρτητη Αριστερή Κίνηση*) is a sum of student organisations which operates within the universities. Some of the groups in this federation are politically affiliated with the SYRIZA party.

group of students), but functions as a disparaging generalisation for the majority of the left-wing student organisations which are active in the Universities.

In a similar vein, those of the interviewees who support the establishment of the University Councils focused on the problems that the high representation of students and the involvement of political parties had created. Some of them, using much calmer and balanced language, referred to the previous system as 'malfunctioning' and as needing reform, because it was proving disadvantageous for the public character and organisation of the university itself. As one Professor at the University of Athens, stated:

There wouldn't be so much interest in changing the governing bodies, if we had not realised that the way the university was operating until 2011 is a way that harms the public university itself.

(AC 18, Interview)

9.3 Councils as a means for de-politicisation and decentralisation.

According to the discourse favouring the new reform, the establishment of the Council contributes to minimising the active involvement of the youth branches of political parties in the election procedures and by extension in the internal governance and administration of HE institutions. It also limits the extensive powers of the rectors and other governing bodies (e.g. the Senate). This is supposed to improve transparency, social accountability and effectiveness and rationalise Universities by disentangling them from phenomena of bureaucratic inertia, opaqueness and over-politicisation (Tsiligiris, 2012a). As one academic stated:

“Essentially one of the things that the Diamantopoulou Law attempted to do was to limit and change the intervention of parties in the administration of universities through the participation and backing of the student

political organisations in the election of rectors and of any other authority
- administrative and academic authorities - of the University.

[...]

It was obvious that the introduction of a new institution in the organisational level of universities would reveal the friction points or the inflection points of powers. The good thing about the councils is that they have created a climate of control of the Rectors' omnipotence who in turn owed their omnipotence and their election virtually to all these procedures related to their election."

(AC 6, Interview)

In the same vein, one professor argued in their interview:

"Even in matters where it [i.e. the Council] has few powers it holds weight and it must hold some weight in order for the Senate, a very heavy and sluggish body, to have more limited responsibilities, since it will give some of them to another body, i.e. the Council."

(AC 18, Interview)

Furthermore, the Councils were viewed as an attempt to decentralise higher education, i.e. to decouple it from direct state control, hence reinforcing the autonomy and self-governance of Universities:

"So the Council was established - which somehow replaces the Minister, because, as you know, prior to the establishment of the Council, all budgets' issues, financial reports, amendments to budgets and many other issues were going through the Minister. Now these issues are controlled by the Council. Thus a greater decentralisation was achieved and greater autonomy was given to the universities.

[...]

Now the Council appoints the Rector, the Council appoints the deans, etc. it selects the candidates. The Council therefore has given more

autonomy to the universities - and decentralisation, greater decentralisation.”

(AC 3, Interview)

This is also an argument made by the Former Minister of Education, Anna Diamantopoulou:

“The goal of the University Council, which as we all know is elected from the academic community itself, is this: to maintain the autonomy of the University and to regulate the funding terms.”

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Interview)

The aim of the 2011 Law was to call for the deselection of existing rectors and the selection of new rectors by November 2011. However, the majority of universities cancelled the elections of new board members thereby pre-empting this attempt at restructuring the organisational model of Universities. In August 2012, the new coalition government (made up by the socialist party of PASOK and the conservative right-wing party of New Democracy) passed a further law (Law 4076/2012) aimed at “helping” the implementation of the 2011 law. It was not until November 2012, therefore, that almost all academics had complied with the law by voting for new board members (using e-voting⁶⁰). By the end of 2013 almost all universities had councils (comprising board members and presidents) and new Rectors elected.

Nevertheless, the 2012 law changed and restricted some of the competencies and powers of the Council (e.g. its right to appoint the Deans as well as its control over the allocation of the funding). Apparently, this was mainly due to the strong reaction of a large part of the academic community - which was expressed through relevant resolutions from various University Senates as

⁶⁰ Electronic voting in HEIs were introduced by the 2011 Law and was applied for the first time in the elections for the Councils in 2012. E-voting processes were employed in order to increase elections’ legitimacy through a better turnout but also to ensure that elections will not be interrupted since there had been various instances in the past where the elections of ballots were being stolen (Lakasas, 2010).

well as through unanimous decisions of the Synod of Rectors. These reactions led to some changes, both during the passing of the law as well as afterwards (see the discussion in section 6.3 about the amendments that Law 4076/12 made in the 2011 Law). The main points of law 4009/11, however, remained in force until 2017, where a new reform in the field of higher education was voted and implemented, the presentation of which goes beyond the objectives of this thesis.

According to Ms Diamantopoulou:

“They [i.e. the next governments] changed the University Council in order to get closer to what the internal status-quo in the Universities wanted; that is, to reduce its [the Council’s] powers.

[...]

The changes they made, however, dismantled the law; i.e. by changing the role of the Councils, there was a confusion about what the Council does and what the Rector does. That is - how to say it - they “loosened the screws” which didn’t help the implementation.

[...]

But the problems immediately started when they tore it apart and inserted ambiguity into this whole issue so as everybody to interpret it as she wanted to. [...] And then the conflicts began. So, the first changes immediately created what I said before: “they loosened the ties”. That’s it!”

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Interview)

However, according to one academic (AC 6), it was the 2011 Law and the introduction of the Councils that “*created a multitude of frictions, either justified or exaggerated*” since it “*reversed the commonly known balances*” and “*challenged the omnipotence of Rectors*”. Thereby “*the first revision of the law was made in order to smooth these frictions*”.

Apart from the restrictions applied to the administrative role of the Councils in the 2012 amendments, the pro-discourse also attributes their partial implementation and unfruitful operation to the opposition left-wing parties of the time which had fiercely resisted (along with some academics and Rectors) the Councils' operation. One of those parties (the left-wing party of SYRIZA) subsequently came into power as part of a coalition government and at the time of the interview (i.e. in 2016) had announced its plans to abolish the Councils proposing a new bill about HE - which became law in 2017. As AC 6 indicates:

“The second revision which has been gradually going on [...] introduces provisions which contradict key elements of the 2011 law and essentially reflects the new perception that the current government [i.e. the SYRIZA-ANEL government] has about how HE must operate. It attempts to provide solutions or fulfil the promises that it gave when in opposition regarding the restriction of the powers of the Councils etc. Therefore, there are going to be revisions and we will actually return more or less to the previous status quo – abolishment of the Councils, the empowerment of students and administrative groups etc. We are going to have a regression - I would say - towards the previous status quo.

[...]

I think that the Councils have now been weakened in practice. And so we are not in the position to adequately assess their service so far.”

(AC 6, Interview)

On the other hand, the role and operation of Councils are largely criticised by the opposition-discourse as a neoliberal attack on the democratic character and governance of universities. The difference between the views of the two coalitions regarding the democratic character of university and its importance is striking, as supporters promote an economic, corporatist view of university, while heavily criticising the democratic character of HEIs as

obsolete, ineffective and unsuccessful due to phenomena of corruption that exist within universities (see Diamantopoulou above).

As AC 8, one of the strongest opponents of the 2011 Law, argues in their interview:

“The Diamantopoulou Law was built upon the doctrine: ‘Democracy harms Education’. [...] It was a law that didn’t trust the university, didn’t trust the people of the university; it essentially set the University under supervision; it reduced democracy, diminished academic freedom and generally believed that the University is an economic entity which will operate better only if it is audited better, only if the procedures become stricter. So it didn’t believe in the creative powers of the University and especially in the creative forces of the University people: students, researchers and academic staff. This was its largest heresy and our biggest point of disagreement with the law Diamantopoulou.”

(AC 8, Interview)

In his interview AC 8 makes another interesting remark:

“The Councils were the Trojan Horse through which the universities have been captured by neoliberal structures. And it is worth noting that nowadays [...] there is not any elected Rector who represents a different political domain than those of the two major political forces at the time, namely ND and PASOK. It is characteristic that all Rectors nowadays are coming from those two parties.”

(AC 8, Interview)

So, according to the interviewee, all the Rectors elected after the introduction of the Councils were affiliated with either one of the two major parties at the time. This implies a deep involvement of political and governmental interests in the process of establishing the Councils, which clearly undermines the stated aim of de-politicisation of universities. In this sense, autonomy is thus

practically abolished and not actually strengthened or even preserved. As AC 2 puts it:

“She [i.e. Anna Diamantopoulou] introduced Councils basically in order to be able to control the Rectors’ elections. Because the Council was proposing three candidates. [...] It is like the President of Democracy would say that only two or three parties will run for the elections and not the rest. But all this occurred just to exclude a group of people, especially people coming from the Left, because it was them who had been systematically ruled out - Dean and Rector candidates. Nevertheless, this happened because she had the impression - or they had the impression – that the Left poses a significant risk which, however, does not exist anymore. It’s done.”

(AC 2, Interview)

All in all, the new governing structure in Greek HE has been presented by the opposition discourse as an autocratic top-down structure which has replaced the previous more democratic structure. According to AC 2 this is also one of the reasons among others that this model didn’t work:

“I’ll tell you why it didn’t work. You know what? [...] All the reforms that were passed were reforms that respected [the University] history or reforms that people needed and claimed from below, as it happened in 1982. In 1982 [...] a well-crafted request emerged, which was discussed within the society etc. So to declare from a top position that you will put in some new order, this is a very American system and unfamiliar to the European tradition. Because essentially that’s what they said. We will establish the Council [...], i.e. the Board of Trustees, a totally foreign thing. [...] As the current President of the Parliament’s Education Affairs Commission, I asked all Council Presidents to send me what they have done over the years. [...] And you will see that all have answered that they did nothing. It was in part the Rectors that didn’t let them, it was in part the governments, it was in part the vagueness of what the Councils

really were, it was in part the legislation... In any case what we can see is that after four years they haven't done anything.

[...]

It didn't work. The only thing that did "work" was the exclusion of leftist candidates."

(AC 2, Interview)

The adoption of a model perceived to be from abroad has been another major point of friction between the two discourse coalitions. According to the opposition discourse this model was uncritically transferred and adopted from abroad, and more specifically from US private Universities:

"And, of course, it transferred uncritically the provisions and regulations from abroad, mainly from the other side of the Atlantic, and more specifically from the private universities of America. Diamantopoulou's model is a model which is identical to that of private US universities. A country that has a completely different educational system, a completely different approach, which has very good state universities, which has made public investments in the universities and has allowed a particular role to some private institutions⁶¹. Therefore, without keeping up with the development of the educational system in America the Diamantopoulou law nipped off the way private universities operate in America and transferred it to Greece, bypassing the European standards. There are, for example, the German and the French models in Europe which constitute the clear European model; and this was completely bypassed in order to transfer uncritically and apply a management model unfamiliar to our academic traditions - to the European academic traditions."

(AC 8, Interview)

⁶¹ The interviewee probably refers to the operation of private colleges.

On the other hand, European and international policy standards and developments are represented by the pro-discourse as an example that Greece needs or has to follow – and further legitimised by the argument of necessity to improve our system in order to reach the European standards:

“It goes without saying that we wanted a reform of the self-evident: to do what others do. That is, we wanted to reach the European average. But, it was so difficult to make a step forward and overcome a deeply ingrained rhetoric.”

“I relied on them [i.e. external policy actors] and I think it is very important - when you have been left far behind – to take advice from those who have actually achieved something. And, of course, to get the best examples.”

(Anna Diamantopoulou, Interview)

The above reference to the model of private universities by the opponent of this law also invokes another salient counterargument which is widely employed by the actors who have opposed the reforms. This pertains to the view of Councils as a strategic plan of implicitly introducing privatisation in Greek HE. As AC 12 argues:

“The law 4009/2011 rocked the metaphorical boat. In my view, the goal was to allow for the establishment of private universities. Nevertheless, because Article 16 of the Constitution⁶² could not be abolished, [...] the 4009/2011 law tried to bring in private universities by establishing the so-called University Council, which consisted of internal members (e.g. University professors), external members from outside the University, and the chairperson had necessarily to be an external member. So, the Council had the right to appoint the rectors as well as repeal them, which meant that the Council could insist upon

⁶² Article 16 of the Greek Constitution (Hellenic Parliament, 2008) stipulates that education is free on all levels at any state educational institution and constitutes a basic state responsibility, thus prohibiting the operation of private HEIs (see section 4.2.1).

whatever it wanted. And if the Rectors or the Deans disagreed with the Council then it could repeal them [...] I still believe that the public university is the one that can serve the Greek the best.”

(AC 12, Interview)

The view of Higher Education as a public good and the public funding of universities constitutes one of the main positions of the opposition discourse coalition. Nevertheless, actors who have supported the reforms also endorse the public character of University. In fact, they use this argument in order to justify and promote the aims of the 2011 reforms:

“[The Law 4009/2011] was an effort perhaps - maybe not complete – to import from abroad completely ordinary, established ways of organisation and administration of the university, and also an attempt to make the universities more effective precisely because they are public.”

(AC 18, Interview)

9.4 Conclusion

Research participants expressed various perspectives and views that originated from different political and ideological orientations. The views around the proposed changes in governance ranged from predominantly supportive discourses about the reforms, to predominantly opposing perspectives with moderate views spreading out between the two extremes. As such, they can be visualised by means of an axis with two extremes (pro vs contra) with more moderate voices appearing in the middle, best conceived as collages of arguments that identify both positive and negative aspects within the policy changes.

Building on the negative representation and evaluation of the previous status quo, discourses that support the new governance and structure of HEIs, highlight the “curing effects” of the changes, as these will heal the

“weaknesses” and “pathogenies” that the “deep university” within Greek HEIs has created. The “deep university”, as they call it, was an interesting characterisation that many participants used to describe the vested interests amongst the academics and student communities as well as the phenomena of corruption that appear within universities. According to some participants, this is mostly done by groups/ actors with influence within the Universities who exploit their power and the many muddling and obscure administrative processes that exist to serve and promote their interests – while sabotaging others – e.g. during the voting and approval of decisions about the allocation of funds or about other managerial or academic issues. Overall, they build their legitimisation of the new governance model by referring to its utility against the adverse situation that exists in Greek HE. As such they construct a severe picture of the Greek HE system, employing disapproving portrayals of students as well as negatively qualifying the relationships within the academic community.

While most of them are not against the democratic character and goals of universities they still argue that the democratic decision-making and election processes in Greek HEIs constitute an obsolete system which has not paid any dividends. It has also failed to attract attention of the majority of the student community, which during the last couple of decades seems to abstain from the decision-making and election processes and is not particularly interested in establishing a collective representative body. The reconstruction and reorganisation HEIs governance and internal structure was further presented by the government as an opportunity to move towards a more competitive University.

Against the governmental discourse a counter-discourse was formed. This included the concerns and objections of the academic and student communities, as well as of those of the opposing political parties. Rectors and academics strongly reacted to the changes, first independently with articles in the press and also collectively through the resolutions of the Synod of Rectors (Papadiamantaki, 2017). The political actors in the debates as well as the

interviewees who expressed opposing discourses about the governance changes defended the democratic principles and organisation of the university, pointing out the different values that such a system instills in the education and academic culture of HEIs. At the same time, they highlighted the oligarchic nature of the new model, indicating the power transfer from collective bodies to single-person bodies or small groups. As a response to the supporters' claim that the democratic model had not worked, they pointed to non-proper implementation, to the intrusion of political parties within the decision-making and election processes as well as to previous policy attempts to abolish it which have resulted to the weakening of the system (Balias et al., 2016; Kladis, 2014). Most of them also supported the full autonomy of universities, as they view government involvement as hindering the operation and proper delivery of academic courses and research.

Lastly, the majority of the interviewees seemed to agree on the failure of the University Council model. Some interviewees claimed that the main reason for the non-implementation of the governance change was the strong objection against University Councils, which led to their subversion by the subsequent law amendments introduced in the following years (see section 6.3). Others emphasised the inherent deficiencies of the University Council model and its impracticality within the context of Greek Higher Education. Specifically, most of them argued that the conditions for the creation of purely "autonomous" universities in Greece could not be met as the education institutional framework is governed by a series of contradictions that do not allow universities to operate autonomously and nor on competitive terms.

Overall, between the variety of discourses expressed regarding the reorganisation of University governance we can observe a clear disparity between the policy adoption and opposition discourses. The imaginary adopted by the supporters (which is further aligned with the EU's higher education policy objectives) is made up of perceptions linked to the prevalence of a neoliberal technocratic paradigm that fosters the logic of new public management in the governance of universities. The push to include business

representatives within the university decision making procedures reflects the objectives of the 2011 reforms towards the marketisation and commercialisation of HE. For supporters, the establishment of the new university governance model is evaluated positively and used as the main argument for achieving the decoupling of education from state direct state control. The goal is to de-centralise Higher Education by minimising state control (including the dependence of HE operation on state funding) and reinforcing the autonomy of Universities. Universities are encouraged to become extroverted and engage in a creative competition, with the aim to improve their quality and be able to seek and raise funds externally.

On the other hand, the opposition discourse perceives the establishment of university councils as an implicit way of abolishing the autonomy of Universities and introducing privatisation. For them, the reform of university governance is in reality a massive opportunity for private business to reap the benefits of university research for their own profits. This leads to the deterioration not only of the public character of higher education but also to its traditional intellectual and academic values. The imaginary of the opposition discourse is based on the preservation of the democratic character and governance which in their view is being dismantled through the introduction of the 2011 reforms. The democratic type of governance ensures not only the autonomy of universities but also safeguards the production of research and the expression of ideas within HEIs without the interventions of business and political interests.

The designated goals of the 2011 Law were proved to be elusive, since there was no true provision for minimising the state control over universities' operation. The decisions over the structure of curricula, the student admission processes - especially at the undergraduate level - but also the shaping of university fees were still controlled by the Ministry of Education (Papadiamantaki, 2017). While the 2011 Law may have strengthened the self-governance of Greek HEIs it certainly did not promote nor increased their autonomy as the state-university relationship did not change accordingly.

Chapter 10: Discussion of findings

10.1 Introduction

This discussion chapter aims to relate the findings of this study to the existing literature, but also shows the ways that it moves beyond it. The critical interpretation of the discourses, policy ideas and underlying imaginaries (as these were identified and analysed in chapters 8 and 9) will be compared and contrasted to other research studies that focus on the Greek and the wider European Higher Education Area especially during the financial and political crisis that hit Greece in the beginning of the 2010s. First, I will discuss the debate around the changes in the governance model with the introduction of University Councils in the Greek Higher Education system. Subsequently, the process of Europeanisation and internationalisation will be discussed, focusing on the actors' discourses regarding the reintroduction of the quality assurance framework in the Greek HE studies. In addition, the discussion furthers the debate on the key issues around the policy changes that occurred. Finally, this chapter provides novel understandings on Greek HE during the crisis years, specifically of how crisis discourses interact with the discursive production of policy in higher education. The chapter concludes with the main limitations of the study.

10.2 The new model of governance and structure of Higher Education Institutions

This case study employed a critical discourse analytical approach and identified specific patterns within the discourses expressed by the different actors. The findings highlight that there is a great divergence in discourse between those who supported the law and those who opposed it.

The supporters legitimised the 2011 changes by negatively characterising the previous status quo (as corrupt and ineffective) and by foregrounding the necessity to change the democratic (but ineffective for them) governance of

HEIs into the proposed entrepreneurial form, which included the establishment of Councils in HEIs.

In line with Olsen's (2007) typology of the visions of university organisation and governance, the imaginary behind the arguments in favor of the policy changes seeks to achieve the transformation of universities into independent entrepreneurial organisations that will be equipped to operate in local or global competitive markets. Within this type of institutional organisation and governance, full autonomy is the ultimate goal with the involvement of state and political authorities being limited to providing incentives and regulations. In addition, the governing boards of the University and its appointed leaders (who include both internal and external representation) should act as market entrepreneurs who seek for donors and clients (Olsen, 2007). The role of the University Council was indeed presented as such by many participants, including both supporters and critics. The latter highlighted how such practices favour economic interests over educational goals, whereas the former does not necessarily consider them having a negative impact on the educational aims of the university. Supporters of the law often saw the collegial and democratic organisation of Greek HEIs as a problematic structure that hampers good performance and timely decisions; they argued that it needs to be replaced by a strong managerial structure, further echoing the ideotype of the 'entrepreneurial University'. According to this model, researchers should aim at securing intellectual property rights and patents on their research outputs (hence viewed as products), thus altering their primary role to entrepreneurs-innovators (Olsen, 2007).

In contrast, those opposing the new HE law viewed the introduction of HEIs Councils as an attack to the democratic character of HE governance, while also delegitimising it as an ineffective form of governance. At the same time, they characterised the overall reforms as another attempt to privatise Greek HE and to impose a neoliberal agenda that would decrease even more the state investment on education.

More precisely, based on Olsen's typology (2007), the underlying vision of opponents to the new reforms follows that of an internal representative democratic system that gives the opportunity and right to all internal interest groups (employees and students) to participate and be represented in the governing boards and councils of the HEI. They view elections, bargaining, voting and coalition-building as core processes of decision-making that aim at accommodating the interests of the participating groups. It is claimed that this democratic institutional organisation, when successfully implemented, improves the scholarly and research competence of the University but, importantly, also reflects and reinforces democracy in society (Olsen, 2007). The need and public demand for the democratisation of University - which mainly concerned mass access opportunities to higher education but also the democratisation of the internal governance structure of HEIs - has to be understood in the context of the country's transition from military dictatorship to democracy and the antiquated formal hierarchy that was in place in Greek Universities in the 1960s and 1970s, in which professors (as holders of Chairs) had concentrated all powers. The 1982 Framework Act established co-decision processes by reducing the authority of professors and redistributing the power to younger faculty, administrative and technical staff and to students. The lawmakers' justification for this was that all groups contribute to the performance and operation of HEIs and thus they should also participate in the decision-making processes (Kladis, 2014).

Moving one step forward, Law 3549/2007 for the first time entitled all students to directly participate in the elections of the Rector Council, whereas under the previous legal framework students were involved in most decision-making processes only through their representatives. The aim was to minimise any potential cases of corruption and clientelism between student organisations, the faculty and decision-making bodies (such as Rectors and Deans) by disentangling members of student organisations (which were affiliated with political parties) from being involved in the decision-making bodies (Sotiropoulos, 2012). Overall, the type of democratic University promotes

external autonomy by highlighting the internal co-determination and bargaining of its interest groups. The main opposition against the University Council, as introduced in the 2011 Law, was based on the fact that these kinds of democratic processes were being abolished as decision-making would become more centralised around a few governing actors.

As most of the interviewees noted, the majority of the governing bodies (Rectors, Deans) as well as many members of the academic community in Greece (teaching faculty, researchers, and students) did not want the new governance model to be implemented, either due to their ideological and political opposition against the establishment of the entrepreneurial university type or due to personal interests. Nevertheless, the analysis of the findings indicates a gap between policy direction and policy implementation. This corroborates what Papadiamantaki (2017) has also found in her discussion and analysis of the 2011 Law debate. In line with her remarks, this study identifies a strong contradiction between the plans and arguments of government at the time about the creation of entrepreneurial University and its actual implementation, as their vision of fully autonomous and competitive Universities is based on a set of principles that differ from the entrenched conceptualisation of the state-University relationship that permeates Greek HE policy (see Papadiamantaki, 2017).

However, this study has shown that the government was neither ignorant nor unable to comprehend the particular set of principles that govern the entrepreneurial University model and the many complications that its establishment would create - considering the entrenched state-University relationship that permeates the Greek HE policy field (see Papadiamantaki, 2017). As with previous governments, the Ministry sought to establish a *hybrid model* of entrepreneurial University, that would allow the Ministry to maintain on the one hand state influence on decisions and policies around the operation of Greek HEIs and on the other hand to accommodate the needs and interests of those who supported fundamental changes to the existing governance model. In the case of Greece this hybrid model still reflects a centralised mode

of governance (e.g. deciding every year the number of admissions in the departments), which however allows HEIs to be autonomous in particular areas that pertain to internal managerial and financial matters (such as seeking and raising funding from external sources).

As those who took a position in between the two opposing discourses indicated, there was an agreement among the interviewees that the University Council model eventually failed - albeit different groups of actors offered distinct reasons and causes why this happened. Some noted the academic community's strong objection against University Councils as the main cause of their subsequent dismantling, while others focused on the inherent deficiencies of the model in the form it was presented in the Greek HE context.

Regardless of the underlying causes of the failure of the new governance model, it is important to note that the government remained eager to promote and move forward with the establishment of this new type of governance even though they were well aware of the existing institutional framework (as they frequently criticised its deficiencies and “pathogenies”), and the incompatibility between new entrepreneurial University structures and the Greek political and social culture (since the autonomy of universities was not actually strengthened nor the state control was minimised).

10.3 Quality assurance and efficiency: a shared (supra-)national imaginary

In regard to the issue of quality assurance, supporters further legitimised the strengthening of quality control as a means for improving HE system, and for making HEIs more accountable – and certainly more effective. On the contrary, some of those who opposed the reforms viewed the reinforcement of quality assurance as an imposition of external policies by the EU and other international organisations (such as the OECD) or as a punitive control mechanism for HEIs that could serve the further reduction of funding. This imaginary corresponds to the views and positions expressed against the first

introduction of quality assurance in 2005 (Kavasakalis, 2012). Nevertheless, many actors who opposed the law were more lenient (even though they identified the neoliberal character of the changes and they were vehemently against the introduction of the new governance model). While their entry-point may have been different from that of the supporters, they still did not turn down the development of quality assurance and accreditation procedures. Lastly, the majority of interviewees seemed to agree that Greek HE should be fundamentally reformed by adopting and successfully implementing a quality and accountability framework that will enable the stakeholders to tackle the many failings and shortcomings of the previous status-quo. The accreditation of degree programmes was also viewed as a necessary practice in this process. Moreover, internationalisation strategies were positively viewed by most interviewees, however many questioned their feasibility especially within the financial crisis context.

Interestingly enough, the notion of quality was not very much debated in the parliamentary sessions – whereas only a few participants engaged in a more theoretical discussion around the concept of quality assurance (in contrast to the discussion around the introduction of University Councils). This finding is also evident on previous research that was conducted by Kavasakalis (2012) on the different beliefs and accounts expressed in the policy and public debate around the establishment of quality assurance procedures in Greek HE in 2005. Specifically, while their construal of quality was based on particular underlying perspectives (or imaginaries) no salient theoretical discussion took place prior and during to the enactment of the law. This further weakens the already traditionally low trust between the Ministry and the HEIs as it creates concerns about the real purpose of the state in terms of whether quality control will be used as a punitive mechanism or as a tool for truly helping to improve the HE sector. The further reduction of state funding due to the financial crisis reinforced these concerns among those who opposed the 2011 Law. Many of them delegitimised the increased role of quality management in the decisions around the funding of HEIs, as they believed that quality would be used as the

pretext for further closures of departments that became necessary in the context of severe funding cuts.

The inflammatory discourses expressed mainly by the government at the time as well as by the mass media against the operation of HEIs – that frequently present an adverse picture of crisis and decline of Greek HE – has also fed this lack of trust towards the Ministry by the public and the academic community (Balias et al., 2016). This adverse characterisation of the previous status quo was used by many of the supporters of the law. In fact, by negatively representing academic and student communities they attempted to justify the need for improving and assuring quality through the implementation of the particular procedures. Frequent references to unfavourable comparisons with other systems and the poor rankings of Greek Universities internationally – in an attempt to legitimise through rationalisation - were also employed.

The evaluation and improvement of quality in any process is an altogether complex issue for Greek society as there seems to be a Greek peculiarity compared with other European societies. Recent cases of policy reforms that aimed to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation of performance, have led to tensions and conflicts, as we have, for example, seen in the introduction of teachers' evaluation (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014). This is understandable to some extent, as the university is a complex organisation that ranks the concept of autonomy high among its core values and policy beliefs. In the period of nearly 30 years after the enactment of Law 1268/1982 several efforts have been made within the Greek university to establish evaluation systems either at the level of faculty members or at the level of Department and/or the entire institution with the most important ones taking place in 2005 and 2007. The reaction however was very strong with many protests (mainly by left-wing parties and student bodies) being held at the time: there was a strong political polarisation that led to many tensions (Kavasakalis & Stamelos, 2014).

However, the important insight that this study offers is that the beliefs of Greek policy actors involved in the establishment and implementation of Quality

Assurance during and after the enactment of the 2011 Law presents a continuous shift especially among the academic circles. Actors with opposing views against the introduction of University Councils within the governance of Greek HEIs are now more lenient (if not positive) about the implementation of evaluation processes indicating a shift on their opinions over time. While quality assurance was a controversial policy initiative in Greece especially in the previous decade (i.e. during the 2000s), in the case of the 2011 Law, we witness a recontextualisation of discourses that support the implementation of quality assurance, which has further led to their standardisation and naturalisation.

10.4 The contribution of this study: Co-articulation of discourse, the role of crisis, and Greek HE

The findings of this study centre around two areas: first, they indicate the significant role that policy discourses – as these are articulated between different policy players – play in the construction, understanding and reception of contentious policies. Second, they emphasise the co-articulation between discourses and extra-semiotic processes.

It should be reiterated that the entry-point and the main focus of this research has been the analysis of discourses. In other words, this research acknowledges the performativity of discourses, i.e., their power to construct and give life to social phenomena and practices - and in our case to particular policy issues. Nevertheless, it also contributes to relevant research on education policy-making and policy construction, by exploring the dialectic relationship between discourse performativity and the influence that extra-semiotic processes can have on the discourses and their underlying imaginaries around particular policy issues. Indeed, one of the strengths of this study is the use of CPE and CDA for approaching the topic at hand as well as the collection of both textual data and semi-structured interviews, which provided a rich set of data for analysis. The more or less open structure of the

interviews allowed the participants to reveal and discuss openly topics that might not have been discussed otherwise. The study took specific steps to ensure and secure the quality and reliability of the study, by systematically employing the tools offered by CDA and by providing direct quotes from the original transcripts.

The study also takes a more critical stance when exploring the various discourses. In other words, the discourses are not just simply described but also assessed, in terms of producing and conveying critical knowledge that will enable those involved in the policy-making process to be more deliberate with respect to the “ideologies”, “values” and “norms” that underlie them and are usually considered taken for granted (normative critique), while also explain them, by demystifying and testing out the reality of the structures, mechanisms or forces through which they derive (explanatory critique) (see Fairclough 2013; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Such a critical analysis gives us a more rigid and rounded account of the various views that have been articulated in Greece regarding the respective changes in HE.

As such, this research advances our knowledge on the ways discourses influence, shape and construct particular policy issues, by exploring the policy debate around the 2011 reforms on Greek HE. It also presents how the analysis of the debate can reveal particular ideological positions and imaginaries, thus providing us with a clearer view of how particular supportive justifications or critiques against the 2011 HE policies were discursively constructed and presented by identifying differences or patterns. Last but not least, it evidently presents how the context of financial crisis can shape the debate around the 2011 HE reforms but also how the crisis can be discursively instrumentalised for legitimising or delegitimising these reforms. Overall, the major strength of the current study is the new understandings and novel insights that has added to the existing literature regarding one of the most instrumental Framework Acts that had been introduced in Greek HE, through the use of a critical discursive methodological and analytical approach.

Further, the study discusses how the financial crisis that hit Greece influenced and informed the political and public debate concerning the enduring problems of the Greek HE sector, as well as the character and implementation of the 2011 HE reforms. As mentioned above, these reforms were not directly connected with the crisis. However, the ideological struggle between those who welcomed the changes in HE and those who were very critical against them, created the impression that these reforms are somehow linked to the austerity measures and their severe consequences (Zmas, 2015).

Yet, while the Greek HE has been experiencing long-standing issues and problems (lack of funding, corruption, clientelism, overcentralisation of governance, brain drain) which were not new when the financial crisis hit Greece, it was the discourse around the economic crisis and austerity that established a more systematic crisis discourse around HE. Overall, this study argues that the political legitimisation of the reforms was based on a twofold interpretation and instrumentalisation of the crisis, i.e. viewed as a moment of “threat” and “opportunity” (Sum & Jessop, 2010; 2013). In particular, many supporters construed the notion of financial crisis as an opportunity to finally implement the reforms, whereas those against viewed crisis mostly as a major threat. In this sense, crises can encourage and also provide significant choices and opportunities to policy actors and citizens to adopt wide-ranging structural reforms (from sectoral reforms to large-scale changes in economic models) but they could also be catastrophic in the case of discouraging policy actors to take action, thus leading to failed political strategies and decisions (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Panizza, 2013).

In regard to the 2011 HE reform, the financial crisis largely influenced the relevant debate which was mainly based on two polarised political and ideological camps: those who were in favor of these reforms (legitimation of the reforms), namely the then government of the social-democratic PASOK party along with the liberal-conservative party of ND and the right-wing populist party of LAOS, and those who opposed them (de-legitimation of the reforms), i.e. the left-wing opposition parties, rectors of universities and students unions.

Given the cultural and historical particularities as well as the structural constraints and problems incited by the crisis, the (sometimes diametrically) different ideas, imaginaries, goals and/or interests that underpin policy actors' discourses were not very surprising; on the contrary, they were to a large extent assumed and expected. Especially, in times of austerity policy-making seems to become more adversarial, while implementation breaks down because parties find little reason to cooperate (Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2015). As one key policy actor claimed during our interview, in Greek politics there is a constant attempt by politicians to distinguish themselves from their colleagues in other parties even when their ideas are not substantially different ("They have to differentiate themselves from the others").

What this thesis reveals, however, is that the composition of the discourse coalitions has now changed. Over the last 40 years the debates around Greek HE policies were mainly expressed through the ideological division left vs right. While this is still evident in the 2011 Law debate, we observe common views and arguments expressed between parties which had been traditionally ideologically different (namely the cooperation between PASOK, New Democracy and the right-wing/nationalist LAOS party in the passing of the 2011 Law). Moreover, in contrast to the discourse on the University Councils, we do not observe a clearcut polarisation between the two camps. The binary distinction of the different discourses does not seem to accurately reflect the entire public and academic debate around these policies, since there is a number of actors that straddle across the two 'camps'. These so-called 'moderate voices' argue against particular issues of the reforms and their potential negative consequences, but on the other hand, do accept them as the necessary changes that have to be made in order to tackle the chronic problems of Greek HE. Such moderate voices appeared as they expressed the support of some parts of the law while opposing others.

Lastly, the majority of the academic community and political groups seem to share some general accepted imaginaries and opinions regarding the reform of Greek HE, which have inevitably become naturalised and more or less

sedimented – at least in regard to the ideational and discursive dimension of the policy process – as they have been adopted in their arguments and discourses. These generally accepted perspectives in a way correspond to some form of traditional ‘discourse’, in the sense of being linked to commonly held beliefs and are acceptable to the audience. First and foremost, there is the common ascertainment that Greek HE should be fundamentally reformed by adopting and successfully implementing a quality and accountability framework that will enable the stakeholders to tackle the many failings and shortcomings of the previous status-quo but also the new challenges caused by the crisis (such as the further decrease of funding). Another example was the belief which was repeated by many participants that left-wing parties and trade unions affiliated with them are responsible for the disorganisation and poor performance of Greek Universities, while academics are frequently viewed as corrupt and indolent public servants. Certainly, the resonance and acceptability of these varies to a great extent amongst the many different actors involved in the field.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned division remains the dominant trend. Even commonly accepted imaginaries thus tend to be promoted by different coalitions in such a way that legitimise and serve their own particular view by highlighting the general partisan differences (even if there are small) in a rather hyperbolic manner. This has influenced the way policy problems have been defined as well as what solutions are being offered by the policy actors, creating more conflict and increasing ambiguity in regard to core issues such as the purpose of HE, its governance, academic freedom etc. Consequently, different, new imaginaries have also emerged (i.e. the economic imaginaries that focus on the impact of the financial crisis and austerity measures) which however seem to diverge from the traditional ideological boundaries of and differences between the political parties in Greece.

As such, the study evidenced and analysed a substantial change in Greek HE governance and policy discourse: before the introduction of the 2011 Act the mainstream ideas in HE were leaning towards the left spectrum, as the cultural

historical tradition of Greek HE was influenced more by a socialist imaginary and the idea of the democratic university. Post-2011, the study traced the hegemonic ascendance of a neoliberal imaginary which seems to resonate more or less with the views of both sides (those who support and those who oppose the reforms) (see Sarakinioti & Philippou, 2020). While this change can be partly attributed to the historical and cultural context, both the external policy actors' influence (through the comparisons via league tables with other countries and the spreading of best practises) along with the pivotal historical moment of financial crisis and its long-lasting impact on Greece have largely contributed to this wide shift towards the adoption of novel construals and understandings about the purpose, role and character of Greek HE.

10.5 Limitations

During the research process various limitations were identified. One limitation of the study pertains to the interview design and process. For the researcher to gain in-depth information regarding the views of the participants, the data relied on data that were gathered five years after the enactment of the 2011 Law. Participants' views thus may have changed or distorted by additional contextual factors that had taken place in the meanwhile. From another perspective time could have helped them provide more fully-fledged and enlightening accounts. The second limitation of the study relates to the semi-structured interviews. As the interview schedule was preconceived based on the knowledge gathered by the review of the relevant literature, the researcher may unintentionally have given priority to some topics over others. Other biases related to the ideological stance of the researcher may have also influenced the process of interviewing. To balance this limitation the structure of the semi-structured interviews was to some degree more flexible from the pre-designed interview questions. This is evident by the long duration of many interviews (with many of them being two to three hours long), which however

created other problems (such as providing irrelevant information; not always being able to control the material a participant chose to offer).

Another limitation relates to the richness of data gathered. This has created many problems in terms of not being able to incorporate all the information in the current study – indeed this would have required more than one thesis. This additional information is planned to be published in future journal articles or research.

Finally, the possible effects that researcher's pre-understandings and fore-conceptions may have had to the research process have also been identified as a potential downside in the way the research was conducted. As discussed in the section 3.8, I was already aware of my pre-understandings before commencing my research and I explicitly recorded and reflected on them. However, one can never be truly aware of one's pre-understandings and fore-conceptions nor can fully understand the influence these may have had on the study.

Inevitably another limitation concerns the time limit but also the long duration of this research. After the introduction of the 2011 Law many other laws were introduced that essentially cancelled the 2011 policy changes, in particular after the 2015 elections. I was inevitably influenced by the discussions around these new laws; nevertheless, it would have been impossible to deviate from the timetable set up (due to time and space restrictions) nor I could have comprehensively discussed the new policy developments.

Lastly, it should be reiterated that only one aspect of the policy practice is examined, namely, the political and public discourses articulated regarding the 2011 HE reforms. The evaluation of these reforms' effectiveness, as well as their actual implementation, are not among the research intentions of the present study – although the latter is treated as contextual information about the material processes of these reforms. A more developed analysis that would take into consideration all the aforementioned facets would have exceeded the time and space limitations of this research project.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Conclusion

The inspiration of the current study was the researcher's personal experience with regard to the radical changes introduced in Greek HE by the 4009/2011 Law and specifically the strong debate and competing discourses that were expressed around this law. The interplay amongst the cultural context, the turbulent history of HE policy implementation in Greece, the external policy influence and the impact of the financial crisis unveiled a very interesting area for investigation. The objectives of this study were therefore:

- To explore how the political and public debate regarding the HE reforms by the 4009/2011 Law in Greece has been developed in the light of the financial crisis.
- To explore how the debate has impacted on the construction and dissemination of the HE policies by the 4009/2011 Law.
- To examine the co-articulation of the debate with the structural and contextual features that surround them.

The research is rooted in a critical realist theoretical approach that acknowledges the co-articulation and interaction between policy, discourses and contextual/ structural factors (such as the financial crisis in Greece at the time of the Law's enactment, external policy actors' influence as well as institutional and cultural factors within the Greek HE system). A qualitative approach was thus adopted as the most appropriate one for answering the research questions. This involved the analysis of parliamentary policy debates and speeches of political actors and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with actors that have been involved in the policy-making process of the 2011 reforms (i.e. rectors, academics, journalists, trade union members and politicians).

The methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methods were specifically used to conduct a critical analysis of the dialectical relation between the

discourses and the social practices, processes and institutions that frame them. In particular, the study used the specific framework of Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CPDAF) which draws on various linguistic and discourse tools (and approaches).

The analysis of the data revealed two overarching themes around which the conflicting discourses were mainly revolved: (a) University Governance and the issue of University Councils and (b) Quality Assurance and Internationalisation of Greek Higher Education. Overall, the thesis has identified a division between the ideas, imaginaries, goals and/or interests that underpin policy actors' discourses - which was discursively built upon a political and ideological polarisation. Two discursive coalitions thus emerged: those who support the 2011 reforms and those who oppose them.

New knowledge discovered by this study, however, revealed the existence of moderate voices, with many participants also expressing similar opinions and imaginaries - especially with regard to the implementation of quality assurance and accreditation processes. The external policy actors' (such as the EU and OECD) influence that had been taken place over the last 40 years seems to have been also crucial to building the common ground found in the discourses analysed in this project. The comparisons with other countries along with soft governance practices incited by the Europeanisation of Higher Education policies have led to the adoption and acceptance of policy proposals in Greece that in previous years were the subject of heated debates. These commonly accepted views and beliefs have inevitably become naturalised and more or less sedimented, at least in regard to the ideational and discursive dimension of the policy process, leading to some form of traditional 'knowledge'.

Given that the central concepts of the Bologna process (such as 'recognisability' and 'certification' of study programmes, 'transparency' and 'quality assurance') had been already institutionally established (through the creation of ADIP and the evaluations of HEIs) and the results of evaluations were positively assessed, these issues were mostly viewed as 'politically'

neutral during the introduction of 2011 reforms as well as in future policy attempts. On the contrary, the introduction of University councils and its relevant semiotic ensembles (i.e. argumentation around the issues of 'competitiveness', 'entrepreneurship', 'privatisation', 'business interests'), met strong resistance by political and academic actors involved in the HE policy-making process as their delegitimisation was based on parameters such as the reduction of funding, the strengthening of privatisation and entrepreneurship, the deterioration of the academic and public character of the University, and the promotion of surveillance and control technologies that reproduce the power of techno-administrative structures.

As Greece had been hugely impacted over the last decade by the socio-economic and political crisis that resulted from the Greek sovereign debt crisis, the general changes in HE posed several additional challenges. The new governance of HEIs and the re-introduction of quality assurance introduced by the 2011 law brought to the surface deep-rooted structural problems but also contradictions. Developments such as the vocationalisation of studies and their direct link with the needs of the labour market were in contradiction with the high rates of unemployment (caused by austerity) and the weak labour market. The pressure of Greek higher education to catch up with European HE policy developments and push for further wider reforms created additional complications, especially during the financial crisis context as its social and political consequences, made it difficult to implement many of the new policies. The debate around the 2011 Law reflects this perplexed situation that was fused with social disappointment and strong reaction. All that remains to be seen is whether the change that has already been taking place, i.e. the hegemonic ascendance and application of the neoliberal imaginary within the Greek HE policy sphere, will be consolidated.

11.1 Recommendations for future research

While this study produces a significant amount of information for the constructive effects of discursive practices in the formation of HE policies, it also provides substantial findings, demonstrating implication for policy change. Further policy attempts should also take into account the discursive aspects of policy making, by paying particular attention not only to the differences but also to the more nuanced voices that can disclose various points of convergence.

Future research can further focus on the implementation aspect and possibly link that to the discursive analysis of the 2011 changes that was attempted in this study. This can result in more constructive and productive policy brokering as well as to a wider consensus around future reform and policy implementation. Additional comparisons could also be carried out with subsequent reforms that were introduced during the writing of this thesis, in order to see the extent to which discursive changes have been consolidated or not.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Initial list of topics and questions identified prior to the fieldwork

- What is the current situation in the Greek Higher Education field?
- 1. The role and purpose of Greek University according to the 2011 Framework Act
 - What do you think is the purpose, mission and societal role of the Greek University according to the 2011 Framework Act?
 - What are the core values in which the mission of Greek Higher Education should be rooted? Do you believe that the new Framework Act safeguards and ensures these core values?
- 2. The Framework Act 4009/2011 and the political and public debate that constitutes/ surrounds it.
 - What are the main priorities for you in relation to the Greek HE debate?
 - What do you think are the main controversies of the debate?
- 3. Quality assurance of Higher Education studies
 - Did the new reforms bring any changes in the quality assurance procedures - as these were introduced in the previous policies (i.e. in 2005 and 2007)?
 - What is your opinion about the evaluation processes of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA)?
- 4. Management and governance of Higher Education Institutes: the introduction of Councils
 - Do you believe that the new governance system strengthens the autonomy of HEIs?
 - Are the new Rector/ President Election procedures more democratic than the previous system?
- 5. The representation of students
 - How do you believe the new reforms treat students?

- What is your opinion about ‘eternal students’?
- What is your opinion about weakening their political activity within universities?

6. The redefinition of ‘academic asylum’ – Academic freedom

- Do you believe that the 2011 reforms’ redefinition of the controversial and sensitive topic of ‘academic asylum’ is sufficient?
- To what extent has the ideological clash between the two camps informed (and/or exacerbated) the discussion about the ‘academic asylum’? And by extension to what extent has the heated debate about this subject “materially affected” the situation?

7. The context of crisis

- What do you think were the main consequences of the crisis for Greek HE?
- In what terms has crisis influenced the policy-making as well as the implementation of the relevant reforms?

8. The role of external actors and their influence on the construction of the relevant reforms

- Do you think/ get the impression that the provisions of the new Framework Act have been influenced by external policy actors (e.g. EU, OECD etc.)
- The EU guidelines as well as the HE systems of other European countries are usually represented by the governmental discourse as the example that Greece should follow in order to improve the quality of studies in tertiary education. What is your opinion on that?

9. The concept of internationalisation

- Do the provisions proposed by the Framework Act 4009/2011 contribute to this process - as the Minister of Education had argued in her speeches? If yes, what innovation has this Framework Act added?
- What do you expect from a more internationalised University?

Appendix 2: Consent form

A. Consent Form in Greek

Δήλωση συγκατάθεσης για την συμμετοχή σας στην έρευνα

	Παρακαλώ συμπληρώστε το αντίστοιχο κουτάκι σημειώνοντας Χ Ναι Όχι	
Δίνω τη συγκατάθεσή μου να αναφέρεται το όνομά μου στην έρευνα	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Δίνω την συγκατάθεσή μου να γίνει ηχογράφηση της συνέντευξης.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Παρακαλώ συμπληρώστε το κουτάκι σημειώνοντας Χ	
Έχω μελετήσει τις παραπάνω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την έρευνα «Οι πολιτικές στην Ανώτατη Εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα κατά τη διάρκεια της κρίσης (2011-2015): μια κριτική ανάλυση των ιδεολογικο-πολιτικών λόγων και επιχειρημάτων που τις πλαισιώνουν».	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Είχα την ευκαιρία να κάνω όποιες ερωτήσεις θέλησα σχετικές με την συγκεκριμένη μελέτη και έλαβα ικανοποιητικές απαντήσεις από τον κύριο ερευνητή.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Κατανοώ πως η συμμετοχή μου στην έρευνα είναι εθελοντική και πως μπορώ να άρω τη συμμετοχή μου ανά πάσα στιγμή το θελήσω	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Κατανοώ ότι αποσπάσματα από τις απαντήσεις μου στην έρευνα μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθούν σε μελλοντικές δημοσιεύσεις. (εάν έχω ζητήσει να μην αναφέρεται το όνομά μου στην έρευνα, τα αποσπάσματα θα είναι ανώνυμα και θα είναι αδύνατο να αναγνωριστώ σε όλο το φάσμα της διατριβής είτε σε δημοσιεύσεις που θα προκύψουν από αυτήν)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Με πλήρη γνώση όλων των παραπάνω, συναινώ εκούσια να συμμετάσχω στην έρευνα.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Δήλωση του Ερευνητή της Έρευνας

- Έχω διαβάσει με ακρίβεια τις πληροφορίες του «Εντύπου Συγκατάθεσης» στην συμμετέχουσα/ στον συμμετέχοντα και, στο μέγιστο των δυνατοτήτων μου, μπορώ να βεβαιώσω ότι η συμμετέχουσα/ ο συμμετέχων τις έχει κατανοήσει επαρκώς.
- Βεβαιώνω ότι δόθηκε η ευκαιρία στην συμμετέχουσα/ στον συμμετέχοντα να υποβάλλει ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τη μελέτη που διεξάγω και ότι όλα τα ερωτήματα που έθεσε έχουν απαντηθεί σωστά στο μέγιστο των δυνατοτήτων μου.
- Επιβεβαιώνω ότι ο συμμετέχων δεν έχει εξαναγκαστεί να δώσει τη συγκατάθεσή του και ότι η συγκατάθεση έχει δοθεί ελεύθερα και εθελοντικά.
- Επιβεβαιώνω ότι ένα υπογεγραμμένο αντίτυπο του εντύπου συγκατάθεσης έχει δοθεί στον συμμετέχοντα.

Όνομα ερευνητή

Ημερομηνία

Υπογραφή

B. Consent Form in English

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

	Please initial either the 'Yes' or the 'No' box	
	Yes	No
I agree to be named in the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Please initial the box	
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the above study and that the researcher replied adequately to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I understand that quotes from my responses may be used in future publications. <i>(if I haven't agreed to be named the quotes will be anonymised and I will not be identified or identifiable in the main thesis nor in any future publications that will result from the research)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Being fully informed of all the above, I voluntary consent to take part in the above research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Statement of the researcher

- I confirm that I have provided an Information Sheet and explained, to the best of my ability, the nature and effect of the procedures to the participant
- I confirm, to the best of my ability, that the participant has fully understood the Information Sheet.
- I confirm that the participant has had the opportunity to ask questions about my study and that I have, to the best of my ability, adequately replied to them.
- I confirm that the participant did not feel pressured or forced to give consent and that his/her consent has been given freely and voluntarily.
- I confirm that the participant has received a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form.

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

C. Information Sheet in Greek

Έντυπο Συγκατάθεσης για την/τον:

Όνομα κύριου ερευνητή: **Νικόλαος Κανελλόπουλος**

Αυτό το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης είναι για όσες/όσους καλούνται να συμμετάσχουν στην έρευνα με τίτλο «Οι πολιτικές Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα κατά τη διάρκεια της κρίσης (2011-2015): μια κριτική ανάλυση των ιδεολογικο-πολιτικών λόγων και επιχειρημάτων που τις πλαισιώνουν» που διεξάγει ο υποψήφιος διδάκτωρ Νικόλαος Κανελλόπουλος στο πλαίσιο της εκπόνησης της διδακτορικής διατριβής του στη Σχολή Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών, του Πανεπιστημίου του Εδιμβούργου.

Το έντυπο που κρατάτε στα χέρια σας αποτελείται από τρία μέρη:

- Στο πρώτο μέρος γίνεται αδρομερής περιγραφή του θέματος, του σκοπού και της μεθοδολογίας της παρούσας έρευνας.
- Το δεύτερο μέρος περιέχει πληροφορίες σχετικά με τη διαδικασία διεξαγωγής των συνεντεύξεων.
- Το τρίτο μέρος είναι εκείνο στο οποίο δηλώνετε την συγκατάθεσή σας για συμμετοχή στην έρευνα (σε περίπτωση που αποφασίσετε ότι επιθυμείτε να συμμετάσχετε).

Μέρος Πρώτο:

Περίληψη της έρευνας

Την τελευταία εξαετία η Ελλάδα πορεύεται και ενυπάρχει σε μια βαθιά δημοσιονομική ύφεση. Μέσα σε αυτό το δυσμενές οικονομικό περιβάλλον προτάθηκαν και ψηφίστηκαν μια σειρά από μεταρρυθμίσεις για την Ανώτατη Εκπαίδευση (κυρίως ο Νόμος 4009/2011: «Δομή, λειτουργία, διασφάλιση της ποιότητας των σπουδών και διεθνοποίηση των ανωτάτων εκπαιδευτικών ιδρυμάτων»), οι οποίες εν γένει αποσκοπούσαν στην καταπολέμηση (και, ει δυνατόν, εξάλειψη) των εγγενών και χρόνιων προβλημάτων και ελλείψεων. Στην πραγματικότητα πάντως διά των συγκεκριμένων μεταρρυθμιστικών προσπαθειών προωθούνταν η εφαρμογή των οδηγιών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και της «διακήρυξης της Bologna» σχετικά με τη διεθνοποίηση και τη διασφάλιση της ποιότητας της Τριτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης.

Οι πολλαπλές τροποποιήσεις του Νόμου 4009/2011 αλλά κυρίως η σφοδρή αντίδραση της πλειοψηφίας της ακαδημαϊκής κοινότητας για διατάξεις του δεν έχουν επιτρέψει την πλήρη εφαρμογή του. Παραλλήλως, η συγκυριακή οικονομική κρίση, κατά τη διάρκεια της οποίας προτάθηκαν και ψηφίστηκαν οι εν λόγω πολιτικές, συνέβαλε σε ακραίες πολιτικές αντιπαραθέσεις και κοινωνική πόλωση.

Στην παρούσα διδακτορική διατριβή υιοθετείται η άποψη ότι οι πολιτικοί/ δημόσιοι «λόγοι» (discourses), οι ρητορικές και τα επιχειρήματα που εκφέρονται από τους εμπλεκόμενους φορείς, αποτελούν βασικές παραμέτρους επιρροής κατά τη διαδικασία σχεδιασμού, παραγωγής και διάδοσης καθώς και εφαρμογής των εν λόγω μεταρρυθμίσεων - επηρεάζοντας σε μεγάλο βαθμό τον τρόπο με τον οποίο καθορίζονται τα προβλήματα καθώς και οι προτεινόμενες λύσεις.

Σκοπός της διδακτορικής διατριβής είναι η κριτική διερεύνηση του ρόλου και της λειτουργίας των «λόγων» σημαίνοντων προσώπων και δημοσίων φορέων (λ.χ. των εκάστοτε κυβερνήσεων, των αντιπολιτευόμενων κομμάτων, των πανεπιστημιακών διδασκάλων, φοιτητών κλπ.) στον – εντός του περιγράμματος της τρέχουσας οικονομικής κρίσεως – σχεδιασμό, κατασκευή και διάδοση των μεταρρυθμίσεων στην Τριτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση. Η ανιχνευησομένη περίοδος εκτείνεται από το 2011 μέχρι το 2015.

Η έρευνα είναι κατά βάση ποιοτική και συνίσταται στην ανάλυση κειμενικών πηγών - μέσω των προσφερόμενων από το πεδίο της Κριτικής Ανάλυσης Λόγου εργαλείων - καθώς και στη διεξαγωγή ημι-δομημένων συνεντεύξεων με σχετιζόμενους φορείς και δρώντες-κλειδιά.

Η ανάλυση θα επικεντρωθεί αφενός στην αποκωδικοποίηση του ιδεολογικού υπόβαθρου των πρακτικών «λόγου» των διάφορων εμπλεκόμενων φορέων κι αφετέρου στην κριτική ανάλυση της διαλεκτικής συνάφειάς τους με το ιστορικό, πολιτιστικό και κοινωνικο-πολιτικό περιβάλλον (λ.χ. η οικονομική κρίση, η ασκηθείσα επιρροή από εξωτερικούς φορείς πολιτικής κτλ.) στο οποίο οι εν λόγω πρακτικές εντάσσονται.

Μέρος Δεύτερο:

Πληροφορίες για τη διαδικασία διεξαγωγής των συνεντεύξεων

Εισαγωγή:

Ονομάζομαι Νικόλαος Κανελλόπουλος και είμαι υποψήφιος διδάκτωρ του Πανεπιστημίου του Εδιμβούργου. Εκπονώ τη διδακτορική διατριβή στη Σχολή Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών και το θέμα της είναι: «Οι πολιτικές στην Ανώτατη Εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα κατά τη διάρκεια της κρίσης (2011-2015): μια κριτική ανάλυση των ιδεολογικο-πολιτικών λόγων και επιχειρημάτων που τις πλαισιώνουν».

Ακολουθούν μια σειρά από πληροφορίες για τη διαδικασία διεξαγωγή των συνεντεύξεων. Θα ήθελα να σας καλέσω να τις μελετήσετε προσεκτικά και να αποφασίσετε εάν θέλετε να συμμετάσχετε σε αυτήν. Εάν έχετε οποιαδήποτε απορία, παρακαλώ μην διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου [Κινητό: +306973520579, +447516180205 | Email: n.kanellopoulos@ed.ac.uk].

Διεξαγωγή Συνεντεύξεων:

Εάν αποδεχτείτε να συμμετάσχετε στην έρευνα θα λάβετε μέρος σε μια συνέντευξη με τον κύριο ερευνητή. Η συνέντευξη θα λάβει χώρα όποτε και όπου κρίνετε εσείς ότι είναι καλύτερα και πιο βολικά. Εάν δεν θέλετε να απαντήσετε σε κάποια από τις ερωτήσεις κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης θα προχωρήσουμε στην αμέσως επόμενη. Στην συνέντευξη θα είναι παρόν μόνον ο ερευνητής και εσείς. Η συνέντευξη θα ηχογραφηθεί και στη συνέχεια θα απομαγνητοφωνηθεί. Η απομαγνητοφώνηση θα ολοκληρωθεί σε διάστημα δύο εβδομάδων από την ολοκλήρωση της συνέντευξης.

Διάρκεια:

Η συνέντευξη αναμένεται να διαρκέσει περίπου μία ώρα.

Θέματα συζήτησης:

Οι συμμετέχοντες καλούνται να συζητήσουν με τον ερευνητή για: τις εμπειρίες τους σχετικά με την εφαρμογή των μεταρρυθμίσεων· τις απόψεις σχετικά με το περιεχόμενο των μεταρρυθμίσεων· τις πεποιθήσεις τους σχετικά με τον χαρακτήρα των πολύμορφων ανταγωνιστικών λόγων που έχουν αναπτυχθεί· τις απόψεις τους σχετικά με την ασκηθείσα επιρροή από εξωτερικούς φορείς πολιτικής· τις απόψεις τους σχετικά με την επίδραση της κρίσης στον σχηματισμό και εφαρμογή των εν λόγω πολιτικών καθώς και των πρακτικών λόγου που τις συγκροτούν.

Συνεισφορά των συμμετεχόντων στην έρευνα:

Η συνεισφορά σας σε αυτήν την έρευνα θα είναι πολύτιμη καθώς η εμπειρία σας σε αυτόν τον τομέα θα προσφέρει πολύτιμες πληροφορίες για τη διερεύνηση των διαδικασιών σχεδιασμού και διάδοσης των μεταρρυθμίσεων, συμβάλλοντας έτσι στην κριτική ανάλυση της διαλεκτικής συνάφειας των πολιτικών/ δημόσιων «λόγων» και επιχειρημάτων με το ιστορικό, πολιτιστικό και κοινωνικο-πολιτικό περικείμενο (λ.χ. η οικονομική κρίση, η επιρροή των εξωτερικών φορέων πολιτικής κτλ.) στο οποίο εντάσσονται.

Εθελοντική Συμμετοχή - Δικαίωμα άρνησης ή ανάκλησης συμμετοχής:

Η συμμετοχή σας στην παρούσα έρευνα είναι εντελώς εθελοντική. Με άλλα λόγια είναι δική σας επιλογή εάν θέλετε να συμμετάσχετε ή όχι στην παρούσα έρευνα. Επίσης, πρέπει να γνωρίζετε ότι εάν αποφασίσετε να συμμετάσχετε μπορείτε να άρετε την συμμετοχή σας ανά πάσα στιγμή το θελήσετε (κατά τη διάρκεια ή και μετά το τέλος της συνέντευξης).

Εμπιστευτικότητα και Ανωνυμία:

Θα τηρηθεί πιστά η επιστημονική δεοντολογία και οι πληροφορίες που θα δώσετε θα είναι απόλυτα εμπιστευτικές, και κανένας άλλος εκτός του κύριου ερευνητή δεν θα έχει πρόσβαση σε αυτές.

Το ηλεκτρονικό αρχείο της ηχογράφησης θα αποθηκευτεί (προστατευμένο με κωδικό) στον προσωπικό ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή του ερευνητή καθώς και σε έναν εξωτερικό σκληρό δίσκο (ο οποίος θα φυλάγεται σε ντουλάπι ασφαλείας στο γραφείο του ερευνητή) μέχρι την ολοκλήρωση και δημοσίευση της διδακτορικής διατριβής. Μετά την απομαγνητοφώνηση το ηλεκτρονικό αρχείο του κειμένου της απομαγνητοφώνησης θα αποθηκευτεί κι αυτό (προστατευμένο με κωδικό) στον προσωπικό ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή του ερευνητή καθώς και στον εξωτερικό σκληρό δίσκο ενώ η έντυπη μορφή του θα φυλαχθεί σε ντουλάπι ασφαλείας στο γραφείο του ερευνητή. Και οι δύο μορφές των απομαγνητοφωνήσεων θα καταστραφούν τρία χρόνια μετά την ολοκλήρωση και δημοσίευση της διδακτορικής διατριβής.

Επιπροσθέτως, η ανωνυμία σας θα διαφυλαχθεί και κανένα φυσικό πρόσωπο, ίδρυμα ή φορέας δεν θα αναφερθεί ονομαστικά ή θα είναι δυνατό να αναγνωρισθεί σε όλο το φάσμα της διατριβής είτε σε δημοσιεύσεις που θα προκύψουν από αυτήν – εκτός κι αν επιθυμείτε ή δεν έχετε πρόβλημα να αναφέρεται το όνομά σας στην έρευνα.

Ενδεχόμενοι κίνδυνοι:

Δεν προβλέπονται ενδεχόμενοι κίνδυνοι. Ασφαλώς, η συμμετέχουσα/ ο συμμετέχων μπορεί να αρνηθεί να απαντήσει σε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση. Επίσης, μπορεί να διακόψει τη συνέντευξη οποιαδήποτε στιγμή το θελήσει.

Οφέλη:

Δεν θα υπάρξουν προσωπικά οφέλη από την συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή την έρευνα.

Κίνητρα για συμμετοχή:

Δεν προβλέπονται οικονομικά ή άλλα κίνητρα για την συμμετοχή σας στην έρευνα.

Διάχυση αποτελεσμάτων έρευνας:

Μόλις ολοκληρωθεί η έρευνα, τα αποτελέσματα θα αναλυθούν και θα συζητηθούν στη διδακτορική διατριβή του ερευνητή. Επίσης, η ανάλυσή τους ενδέχεται να χρησιμοποιηθεί σε δημοσιεύσεις που θα γίνουν σε διεθνή συνέδρια και επιστημονικά περιοδικά. Επαναλαμβάνουμε πως εφόσον το ζητήσετε η ανωνυμία σας θα διαφυλαχθεί σε όλο το φάσμα της διατριβής καθώς και σε δημοσιεύσεις που θα προκύψουν από αυτήν. Έτσι, εάν κάποιο απόσπασμα από τις απαντήσεις σας χρησιμοποιηθεί στο κείμενο δημοσίευσης αυτό θα γίνει ανώνυμα – εκτός βέβαια κι αν επιθυμείτε ή δεν έχετε πρόβλημα να αναφέρεται το όνομά σας.

Στοιχεία Επικοινωνίας:

Εάν έχετε οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση μπορείτε να μου την απευθύνετε τώρα ή αργότερα. Εάν μετά την συνέντευξη θελήσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου τα πλήρη στοιχεία επικοινωνίας μου είναι:

D. Information Sheet in English

Participant Information Sheet

***Higher Education policies during the crisis:
A critical analysis of the political and ideological debate and of the
structural factors that frame the recent Higher Education reforms in Greece
(2010 - 2015)***

Introduction

My name is Nikolaos Kanellopoulos and I am a PhD candidate at the School of Social and Political Science, Social Policy at the University of Edinburgh. The purpose of my thesis is to critically analyse the role and function of the political and public discourses in the policy-making process of the recent Higher Education reforms that have been enacted during the financial crisis in Greece (mainly the Framework Act 4009/2010 and its subsequent amendments).

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish, before you decide whether you would like to take part. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher or contact him at n.kanellopoulos@ed.ac.uk.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide you would like to take part, the researcher will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your experience regarding the implementation of the recent Higher Education reforms in Greece; your opinion about the recent policies' debate; your view and interpretation of the key-themes of the reforms, the external policy actors' influence and the impact of crisis on them. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because your wide experience in this field will provide valuable information for the exploration of the 2011 reforms' policy-making and implementation processes – hence contributing to the critical examination of the political and public discourses and arguments as well as to the analysis of the historical, cultural and socio-political context that frames them (i.e. the economic crisis, the external policy influence etc.).

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. If you decide to participate, you have still the right to withdraw from the study at any stage (during or after the end of the interview).

Will my data be identifiable?

The **information you provide will be strictly confidential**. The data collected for this study will be stored securely and only the main researcher conducting this study will have access to this data:

- The audio recordings and digital versions of the transcripts will be stored on the researcher's personal computer as well as on an external hard drive (which will be kept securely in a locked cabinet) and encrypted with password (which will be known only by the researcher).
- The written versions of the interviews will be stored by the researcher in a safe location.
- The audio recordings and transcripts will be deleted three years after the end of the study.
- If you haven't agreed to be named the transcript of your interview will be made anonymous by removing any identifying information including your name. Anonymised direct quotations from your interview may be used in the reports or publications from the study, so your name will not be attached to them.

All your personal data will be confidential and will be kept separately from your interview responses. Your anonymity will be preserved, and no individual, institution or entity will be named or identified in the thesis or in any future publications that will result from the study – **unless you are willing or do not have any problem to be named in the study.**

Are there any risks?

There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study. However, if you experience any distress following participation you have the right to refuse to answer questions and/or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

Although you may find participating interesting, there are no direct benefits in taking part.

Are there any financial or other incentives for taking part?

Unfortunately, there are no financial or other incentives for participating in this study.

What will happen to the results?

The results will be summarised and reported in the main thesis and may be submitted for publication in academic or professional journals. We would like to repeat that if you do not agree to be named the quotes will be anonymised and you will not be identified or identifiable in the main thesis nor in any future publications that will result from the research – unless you have given your consent to be named.

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?

If there is anything that is not clear or you want to seek further information about the study, please contact the main researcher:

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 3: Full list of texts collected

The following table presents the main textual data collected for the purposes of the research, their nature and function with respect to the overall policy process and the language in which they are written. The titles highlighted in bold constitute the primary data of the research which are thoroughly analysed through the CDA methods:

Table A.1

Categorisation of the main policy texts collected for the study.

Laws primarily explored in the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- L. 4009/2011: 'Structure, Operation, Quality Assurance of Higher Studies and Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions'. <p>(in Greek)</p>
Proceedings of the parliamentary legislative procedure (2011 Framework Act)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Proceedings of the debates on the 2011 bill in Parliament's plenary sessions (23/08/2011, 24/08/2011, 30/08/2011)- Proceedings of the sessions of the Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs (04/08/2011, 27/07/2011, 27/07/2011, 26/07/2011). <p>(in Greek)</p>

Consultation process and feedback to education policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governmental statements/speeches: Prime Minister and the Minister of Education speeches given on 26/9/2010 during the Meeting on the Future of Higher Education in Greece Delphi. This meeting signified the beginning of the public consultation on the draft bill. - The Resolutions of the Greek Rectors' Synods regarding the 2011 Framework Act (i.e. the 64th, 65th, 66th and 67th) - The Resolutions from the 10th (2011) and 11th (2013) meetings of the Professional and Trade Union Association of the University Academic Staff (POSDEP). - Online Public Consultation Conclusive Report. - Green Paper: 'National plan for higher education — self-government, accountability, quality, extroversion' (presented by the Minister of Education at the Greek University Rectors' Conference in 2010 and published online for public consultation). - Official Explanatory memorandum of the 4009/2011 bill. <p>(in Greek)</p>
Policy reports by OECD on Greek Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education at a glance (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). - Reviews of National Policies for Education: Greece (1982, 1997). - Education Policy Advice for Greece (2011). - Education Policy in Greece A Preliminary assessment (2017) <p>(in English)</p>
European Union policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bologna Declaration (1999) - Berlin Communiqué (2003) - The Bergen Communiqué (2005) - Yerevan Communiqué (2015) - National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation in Greece (2009, 2012, 2015) <p>(in English)</p>

Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) annual reports (2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015). <p>(in Greek)</p>
Past and future laws and education policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law 1268/1982: 'On the structure and operation of Higher Education Institutions'. - Law 2083/1992: 'Modernization of Higher Education Institutions'. - Law 2916/2001: 'Structure of higher education and regulation of issues pertaining to the technological sector thereof'. - Law 3374/2005: 'Quality assurance in higher education, transfer and accumulation system of credits-diploma supplement'. - Law 3404/2005: 'Regulation of issues of Higher Education University and Technological Sectors and other provisions'. - Law 3549/2007: 'The Reform of the Institutional Framework for the Structure and the Operation of Higher Education Institutions'. - Law 3696/2008: 'Establishment and operation of colleges and other provisions'. - Law 4076/2012: 'Regulating Issues of Higher Education Institutions and other provisions'. - Law 4115/2013: 'Organisation and operation of the Institute for Youth and Lifelong Learning and of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance and other provisions'. - Law 4186/2013: 'Restructuring of Secondary Education and other provisions'. <p>(in Greek)</p>

Appendix 4: Search of the phrase “high quality” on the Corpus of Greek Texts (CGT) – translated in English

#Περιεχόμενο		
1.	σημασία στην προμήθεια της Κύπρου με σιτηρά	υψηλής ποιότητας
2.	ην ισότιμη πρόσβαση του πολίτη σε υπηρεσίες	υψηλής ποιότητας
3.	ετάξι / Tencel, μείγματα από Cool Wool, απαλά Velour και	υψηλής ποιότητας
4.	των θέσεων εργασίας και η παροχή υπηρεσιών	υψηλής ποιότητας
5.	υμπίεσης μουσικών αρχείων που θα προσφέρει	υψηλής ποιότητας
6.	δυνατότητα εκτύπωσης έγχρωμων φωτογραφιών	υψηλής ποιότητας
7.	λων των δυνατοτήτων μπορούμε να επιτύχουμε	υψηλής ποιότητας
8.	έργειας και μάλιστα της παραγωγής βάμβακος	υψηλής ποιότητας
9.	για να μπορούν να παράγουν με χαμηλό κόστος	υψηλής ποιότητας
		, απαλλαγμένα από ουσίες οι οποίες είναι επ και ανάδειξη του υπουργείου σε επιτελικό φ λινό σε Crash οπτική συνθέτουν την εικόνα σε ανταγωνιστικές τιμές, αποτελούν απόδοση ήχου ανάλογο του MP3 αλλά χωρίς καν απευθείας από την κάρτα μνήμης μιας ψηφιακ υπηρεσίες προς τον πολίτη με λιγότερη δαπά . «Είναι βέβαιο ότι το εκκοκκιστήριο θα συ αγροτικά προϊόντα για όλο το λαό». Καλεί με
#Context		
	importance in the supply to Cyprus of cereals of	high quality
	equal access for the citizen to services of	high quality
	TEXT / Tencel, blends of Cool Wool, Gently Velour and	high quality
	of jobs and services of	high quality
	compressed music files it will deliver	high quality
	print color photos of	high quality
	of all possibilities we can achieve	high quality
	and even cotton production	high quality
	to be able to produce at a low cost	high quality
		, free from substances which are contaminated and the appointment of the ministry to a staff member linen in Crash optics compose the image at competitive prices, are the sound similar to that of MP3 but without even directly from a digital memory card services to the citizen with less spending . "It is certain that the ginning plant will be agricultural products for the whole population ". He calls me