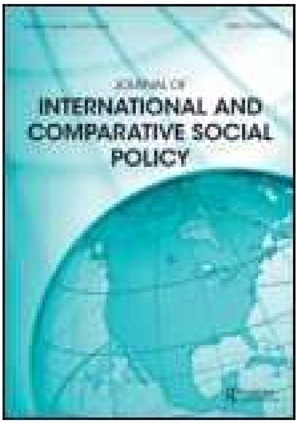

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Theodoros Papadopoulos[a] & Antonios Roumpakis[b]

[a] Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath, Claverton Dowrn, The Avenue, 3East, Bath BA2 7AY, UK

[b] Social Policy and Social Work, University of York, Helsington, York YO10 5DD, UK

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Familistic welfare capitalism in crisis: social reproduction and anti-social policy in Greece

Theodoros Papadopoulos[a] and Antonios Roumpakis[b*]

[a]*Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath, Claverton Dowrn, The Avenue, 3East, Bath BA2 7AY, UK;* [b]*Social Policy and Social Work, University of York, Helsington, York YO10 5DD, UK*

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Familistic welfare capitalism is a model of national political economy prevalent in many regions in the world (Southern Europe, Latin America, and Asia), where the family plays a double role as the key provider of welfare and a key agent in the model's socio-economic and political reproduction. The article offers a new approach to the study this model by adopting an expanded concept of social reproduction to capture its historical evolution, using Greece as a case study. Our empirical analysis of austerity measures on employment and pensions demonstrates, how, in the Greek case, a crisis of social reproduction of the traditional form of familistic welfare capitalism was already underway prior to the well-known sovereign-debt crisis. And further we show how the adoption of austerity measures and pro-market reforms is deepening this crisis by severely undermining the key pillars of familial welfare security while rapidly transforming the model into a political economy of generalised insecurity.

Keywords: familistic welfare capitalism; anti-social policy; recommodification; social reproduction; Southern Europe; Greece

1. Introduction to the Greek crisis

Familistic welfare capitalism[1] is a type of national political economy where the family plays a double role both as the main provider of welfare to its members and as a key agent in the reproduction of its politico-economic institutional arrangements. Traditionally, in a familistic welfare capitalist regime, families were embedded into a segmented, unequal and exclusionary welfare system; a political system characterised by clientilism and patronage (usually based on thin alliances of social and occupational groups); a dual labour market with a large number of self-employed and informal workers; and a state-depended national capitalist economy with key sectors controlled by oligopolies, the owners of which were well connected to domestic political elites. In this context, the Greek version of *familistic* welfare capitalism bore many resemblances not only to other South-European countries (Ferrera, 2010; Moreno, 2006; Naldini, 2003) but also to other semi-peripheral countries in Latin America and South-East Asia (Haggard & Kaufman, 2008). Our empirical analysis demonstrates, how, in the Greek case, a crisis of social reproduction of this traditional form of familistic welfare capitalism was already underway prior to the well-known sovereign-debt crisis. And further, we argue that the adoption of austerity measures and pro-market

*Corresponding author. Email: antonios.roumpakis@york.ac.uk

reforms is deepening this crisis by severely undermining the key pillars of familial welfare security, while rapidly transforming the regime into a political economy of generalised insecurity.

The article comprises three parts. The first part examines the place of familistic welfare capitalism in relation to known welfare regime typologies – and especially how the concept of "social reproduction" can be understood within the context of familistic regimes – as well as other literature relevant to the Greek case. The second part focuses on recent trends towards re-commodification by examining the austerity measures on employment and pensions, adopted by the Greek government until the end of November 2012. The third part analyses empirical data on the more recent state of Greek households in terms of their financial and other material resources. The article concludes with an overall analysis on how the dual role of family is in crisis and how, with it, the logic of reproduction of familistic welfare capitalism in Greece.

2. Familistic welfare capitalism in South Europe

Traditionally, comparative social policy studies have attempted to explain similarities and differences across countries, both in relation to welfare policy characteristics and in relation to the politico-economic and gender dynamics affecting the development of the modern welfare state. In the most famous one (Esping-Andersen, 1990), the terms "welfare *system*" and "welfare state *regime*" were combined to construct ideal-types of worlds of welfare capitalism. The latter referred to particular types of welfare systems – universal, conservative and residual – embedded in their respective welfare regimes –Social Democratic, Corporatist, and Liberal. In light of this theoretical contribution, there have been several critiques regarding the construction of the relevant indicators (Allan & Scruggs, 2004; Fawcett & Papadopoulos, 1997), the issue of gender and welfare regimes (Lewis, 1997), but mainly on the rankings and groupings of different welfare systems (Arts & Gelissen, 2002; Bonoli, 1997; Castles, 1993; Korpi & Palme, 2003). The critique that we opt to focus on relates to the identification of a distinct welfare regime for South-European welfare systems and in particular the case of Greece.

2.1 *South European welfare states and the typologies of welfare regimes*

We identify, at least, two traditional approaches for understanding Southern European welfare systems. The first approach maintained that South-European welfare systems resemble more the ideal-type of a conservative welfare system, where they can be understood as either "in their infancy" (Katrougalos, 1996, p.40) or as representing a "discount edition of the continental model" (Abrhamson, 1999). Broadly speaking, these approaches had argued that despite South-European welfare states "lagging behind" (Castles, 1993) their systems will eventually catch-up with their more advanced "siblings", namely the other conservative welfare systems (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Gough, 1996; Katrougalos & Lazarides, 2003). This approach echoed the argument that there was a linear evolution of welfare state institutions based on economic development (see Wilensky, 1975), assuming thus that these welfare capitalisms share similar socio-economic structures.

The second approach went beyond systemic characteristics and addressed the distinctiveness of welfare regimes in South Europe. This approach (Andreotti et al., 2001; Ferrera, 1996) argued for a distinct fourth "South European welfare world" that includes Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece and identifies various politico-institutional and socio-economic factors that determined the development of the "South European welfare world" and key commonalities in terms of welfare system characteristics. Without expanding further on these commonalities, we believe that this approach remains insightful but, seen in a historical perspective, is rather static in its analysis, as it does not account for the dynamics of this distinct welfare world. In a nutshell, it provided more of a "snapshot" rather than a "film" perspective of this welfare capitalist world.

Indeed, we argue that both approaches remain limited in their understanding of the broader dynamics of familistic welfare capitalism. For example, the relationship between welfare regimes and production regimes (Hall & Soskise, 2001; Jessop, 2002) or the link with employment regimes (Karamessini, 2008) was underplayed in these traditional accounts. In, addition, such accounts cannot serve adequately as frames for analysis of more recent development given the type and extent of policy reforms and changes that Southern Europe welfare systems were subjected to the last decade or more. Attempts to account for such changes tend to emphasise continuities or the "recalibration" of welfare systems (Ferrera, 2010) but do not appear to address the implications of policy reforms and other socio-economic changes (like the rise of private debt) at the regime level.

Further, the issue of the dynamic politico-economic relations *between* different "welfare worlds" is still neglected by such accounts. Beyond ideal-types, historically specific worlds of welfare capitalism are in continuous politico-economic interaction which each other while, often, asymmetric relationships of power and dependence develop between them which affect directly their developmental trajectories. This is especially the case when national political economies are differentially reshaped by processes of politico-economic integration like the European Union (EU) and, particularly for Southern European political economies, by processes such as the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). For a more comprehensive framework we need to introduce more dynamic concepts in our analytical perspective which will assist us to comprehend the character of change.

2.2 *Social reproduction and "South European" welfare capitalism*

Historically the South-European states lagged behind other continental countries in industrial development, with notable exceptions a number of regions in Italy (e.g. Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Piemonte) and Spain (e.g. Basque country, Catalonia). Mingione (2001) notes that the significant growth of North Italian industries and their investment in capital-intensive production stands out as the exception to a low-wage, low-productivity, and low-investment in skills and technologies economic strategy that was normalised in South Europe. Consequently, from very early on the adopted model of economic competitiveness was politically translated in a continuous attempt, on behalf of both employers and the state, to minimise their responsibility for social reproduction (Papadopoulos, 2006). These characteristics were not just expressions of endogenous problems of "rudimentary development" but outcomes of the ways in which Southern European national political economies were integrated in the European and global economies. That is, as semi-peripheral economies (Marinakou, 1997) that relied on "external growth strategies" while remaining, domestically, socially unequal (Fotopoulos, 1986),with long spells of authoritarianism and social divisions (see also Andreotti et al., 2001). The end-result was the institutionalision of segmented and residual social programmes and welfare policies (Petmesidou & Mossialos, 2006) characterised by a "low degree of penetration of the state" (Ferrera, 1996, p. 17).

Essentially, in Southern Europe, the state "locked" into the family unit the responsibility for the provision of care and social protection, thus, minimising the employers' and the state's political and economic costs for societal reproduction. In their analysis of social costs of business enterprises in South European capitalism, Rangone and Solari (2012, p. 5) argue, that these economies are "prone to the creation of various types of social costs" as employers aim to minimise their production costs by employing strategies of direct (e.g. tax and contribution evasion) or indirect (e.g. intensification of precarious forms of employment) "'cost-shifting' at the expense of workers [, families], the environment and community at large" (Swaney & Evers, 1989, p.10; see also Kapp, 1950; Polanyi, 2001). The persistence of a low-wage labour market was historically not accompanied with adequate welfare support, rendering thus the traditional role of the family essential not only as a welfare provider but also as a key factor for the reproduction of flexible and informal employment patterns (Mingione, 1995). Indeed, family's traditional role in protecting its members was maintained and consolidated in a welfare mix where the family was assigned the role of acting as the primary "social shock absorber" (Karamessini, 2007, p. 2).

Here, we borrow from the feminist political scholarship the concept of "social reproduction in capitalism". This is an *expanded* concept of social reproduction that is not confined to the idea of "care economy" but includes wider questions of power and production relations that safeguard capital accumulation and its conditions of existence. These conditions are not only safeguarded through the state but an equally important site for the reproduction of capital: the family. As Bakker and Silvey (2008, p. 3) argue,

> the family and the state become important sites where the needs of social reproduction are linked to the need of accumulation and where the state intervenes to *offset* or *offload* the high costs of social reproduction *onto* or *away* from the family at different moments in different locales. (own emphasis)

Against this conceptual background, we argue that in Southern European political economies is was not primarily the residual or rudimentary development of the welfare state that necessitated the reliance on the role of the family as a welfare provider but crucially the specificities of this particular political economy that embedded in its logic, the role that the traditionally family played within these societies both as a welfare provider and as an economic agent. As Moreno (2006, p. 75) argued

> South European welfare [was] characterized in a differential manner by the central role played by the family and its interpenetration in all areas of welfare production and distribution, particularly as regards income and services. The mode of interaction by the family with the state and public bodies, on one hand, and the institutions of the civil society, on the other, compels the functioning of the Mediterranean welfare in a distinctive manner. A strong household micro-solidarity has enabled high levels of citizens' well-being. This is also reflected in lower levels of absolute child poverty. […] *The self-reliance of families has traditionally been taken for granted by governments in matters of social care and material support*. (own emphasis)

As we demonstrate, at least in the case of Greece, the adoption of austerity measures and reforms not only continues but deepens this traditional minimal "risk-taking" and *offloading* of the high costs of social reproduction onto the family on behalf of both employers and the state places families under more pressure to protect their members from what emerges as severe socio-economic risks and exposure to market forces.

2.3 *Familistic welfare capitalism: the case of Greece*

In the familistic welfare model, family traditionally acted as a "*decommodification*"[2] agent during the *life-course* of its members, especially when the latter were out of the labour market or lacked the necessary resources to maintain their living standard.

We need to emphasise that in the familistic welfare capitalism of Southern Europe the role of the family is not confined to the nuclear family members of the household but rather refers to an extensive network of kin that "provides a mechanism for aggregating and redistributing resources among its members" (Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas, & Padovani, 2004, p. 116; see also Andreotti et al., 2001; Moreno, 2006). Therefore, in order to understand the social reproduction of this particular type of welfare capitalism, it is necessary to focus on the strategies that the families employed in order to consolidate and mobilise the necessary resources.

Our argument in this article preserves the family's central role as the main provider of care and protection[3] but adds one important dimension in the role of family as a key institution for the reproduction of the familistic political economy, using Greece as the empirical example. These roles were traditionally interlinked with the capacity of the family to consolidate and mobilise resources as

- an owner of property (especially private but also commercial real-estate)
- a unit which pools resources (goods and services) outside the money-nexus
- an employer (usually via family business)
- as an investor in human capital, real economy and financial markets
- a member of the clientelistic political system
- a claimant of social security rights (through members able to secure such rights through their participation in the formal labour market and especially though public sector employment).

Traditionally, the family drew resources as an owner of wealth and was also the locus of redistribution. The resources that it received could be monetary (e.g. rents, hires, subsidies), consumer products (e.g. food) and services (exchange of unpaid work between family members). Housing along with other property (e.g. agricultural land) allowed families not only to pool resources that would be distributed among family members but also more importantly to accumulate assets that would be transferred to younger generations (e.g. see "patrimonio" on Allen et al., 2004). On an everyday basis, the family house, apart from its material and symbolic significance, was also the place where the family redistributed and exchanged services of care and support to its members, for example, older people, children and non-married members (see Kohli & Albertini, 2008; Poggio, 2008).

Focusing on Greece more specifically, the overwhelming part of the Greek economy was traditionally dominated by small and family-owned and family-run enterprises (Institute of Small Enterprises [ISE], 2011). Here, the family often functioned as an employer to its members, either on a permanent or on an occasional basis, providing them with a primary or a secondary job. However, many of these were informal jobs, where social insurance contributions were avoided and, therefore, members were not able to establish rights through the social insurance system.

Furthermore, traditionally, family in Greece constituted an important part of a political system characterised by clientelism and patronage. It operated within networks of party-political and public-sector institutions in order to secure favourable treatment for its members and pursued strategies for appropriating public resources and assets for its purposes (Petmesidou, 1991). Finally, via its members who enjoyed tenured employment (e.g. public sector), the family ensured not only a guaranteed stream of income, but also access to pension rights, health services and a number of family-related benefits like, for example, medical cover of children or orphans and widows' allowance (though the latter are only available to public sector employees).

2.3.1 *The two periods of Greek familism*

Drawing from our empirical evidence, we distinguish between two periods for the post-war reproduction of the familistic welfare model in Greece. During the first phase (roughly until early 1990s), Greek families gradually accumulated and consolidated resources by a combination of practices related to the roles mentioned earlier. Apart from hard work, prudent economic management and dense relationships of reciprocity between members of the extended family (that involved non-monetised exchanges of goods and services) a key aspect of the "portfolio" of practices was the exploitation of clientelistic political relations. These depended on the capacity of each family to negotiate and develop its clientelistic networks – individually but also as part of socio-professional groupings – in order to benefit from the redistribution of public resources. The latter was happening according to "favourable and discriminatory" policies enacted -as an outcome of the patron – client political relationship, under both authoritarian and democratic rule. Hence, the substantial differences between socio-professional groups in respect of their treatment by the Greek state. Indeed the substantial increases in public borrowing since 1981 can be seen in this light; that is as serving, at least partly, the purposes of extensive clientilism under democratic rule.

State tolerance towards semi-legal or illegal practices should also be seen under the same light (Petmesidou, 1996). Typical examples are the state's preferential treatment of particular sectors of the economic elite, in terms of tax rates and regulations (e.g. shipowners, major building constructors, industrialists, bankers etc.), the institutionalisation of privileges of powerful socio-professional groups (e.g. medical doctors, lawyers, civil engineers) as well as the relative "tolerance" of state authorities in respect of practices like housing constructions without planning permission, illegal appropriation of disputed public lands for private or commercial purposes, perpetuation of a shadow labour market, activities in underground economy and tax evasion (especially at very high incomes).

These practices were not exemptions or idiosyncratic problems of the Greek political economy but norms that were in accordance with the reproduction of the Greek familistic political economy and its corresponding welfare regime. The amalgamation of these practices allowed the Greek families, especially a large part of the middle classes (Petmesidou, 1991), to increase their resources and concentrate wealth that allowed the provision of support to its members, realised as income, products or capital towards, for example, the purchase of first residence, set-up costs for businesses, etc.

The economic strategies traditionally adopted during this period were, generally speaking, of "low risk". Economically prudent and financially "conservative", families placed strong emphasis on accumulation of assets and real estate as resources for security and, in case of building commercial property, as a source of stable income through rents. They were also intensive investments in the so-called "human capital", especially in the education of young family members, to further social mobility. Avoidance of exposure to debt and access to goods or services outside the formal economy or the money nexus allowed a relative secure, good quality of life under low exposure to "market discipline".

This period of "maximisation of family resources" entered a transient stage during the beginning of the so-called "modernisation era" in the mid 1990s. The then Greek government's decision to set the target of joining the European Monetary Union as the ultimate national priority was accompanied by relatively stricter rules of fiscal discipline. Economic and social policies were "locked" in a policy frame where the market imperative became ideologically dominant while a number of policy attempts were made to bring public borrowing under control to cut government deficit, reduce inflation and labour costs. Calls for "more market and less state" accompanied the "crisis of statism" in Greece during the 1990s (Papadopoulos, 1997).

On the other hand, the "modernisation" alternative aspired to transform families from *stakeholders* of the traditional family-contained low risk collectivism to *shareholders* in emerging markets pursuing high risk strategies while relying on credit-funded consumerism. The traditional strategies of low risk "maximisation of resources" began to be replaced by strategies of high economic risk that utilised market means for investment and consumption. The main political parties, the state and the banks heavily promoted these strategies. An illustrating example of the high risk strategies was manifested with the "rush" of many Greek families to invest a substantial volume of their wealth and savings in the Athens stock market during 1999–2003. In some cases, often encouraged by government officials, Greek households took loans to invest in the stock market. However, beginning in 2001, the stock-market bubble burst, and with it the aspiration for a "quick road" to wealth accumulation. The collapse of the stock exchange market constituted a structural blow to the capacity of Greek households to secure and accumulate resources and to protect their members via the market. In addition, the effects of the public socio-economic policy of "meagre social spending" initiated in the late 1990s constrained – though not completely – the capacity of families to consolidate economic resources via "social security rights" acquired in the formal economy and labour market.

During the first period of the reproduction of the familistic welfare model, the role of the family was compatible with the institutions of the Greek political economy and, at least until the early 1990s, Greek families were able to (and expected to) absorb any shortcomings of the Greek welfare system. This was by no means only a Greek characteristic. As Gonzalez (2002) argued for the Spanish case, the family in Southern Europe continued to be the main "shock-absorber" to any emerging social risks at the beginning of the new century, especially under conditions of increasing globalisation and the effort to join the EMU. As Gonzalez (2002, p. 173) noted, the role of the family during that period was to be strengthened: "now with a more flexible labour market in which the number of non-stable jobs is increasing and non-qualified workers occupy the lowest levels in private companies, the family strengthens its inclusive role".

The reforms and socio-economic changes that intensified the re-commodification trends in and out of the labour market during that period (Papadopoulos, 2005) placed even more constrains to families and their inclusive role for South European welfare states. The major threat to the traditional mode of social reproduction was private debt and employment insecurity and, in this respect, this mode was already in a crisis trajectory, at least a few years prior to the explosion of the sovereign debt crisis and its associated political crisis at the end of the 2009 (Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2009). Interestingly, the characteristics of the austerity measures adopted after the crisis did not depart from the direction of the welfare and employment reforms prior to the crisis. Rather they enhanced the trend of the state and employers to retreat from their social responsibilities and allow them to shift the costs of social reproduction towards families, with the latter bearing the responsibility to protect their members from exposure to social risks and the market. We argue that, at least in the case of Greece, this process of "recommodification" results in deepening the pressure for further "familialisation" of risks and the costs for social reproduction.

3. Austerity measures: recommodification and further "familialisation" of risks

The second part of this article analyses the shift and trends towards labour re-commodification in key areas of Greek social policy prior and during the crisis. Here we use the term "re-commodification" analytically, to capture the increased *intensity* of commodification in two areas of social policy at the epicentre of successive austerity plans: pensions and employment policy (for other critical assessments of austerity measures see Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2012; Petmesidou, 2013). Since the eruption of the crisis there have been four waves of social policy reform, the first as part of the first tranche of "bailout" loan on May 2010, the second during the adoption of the "medium-term fiscal strategy" on July 2011, the third as part of the second "bailout" loan and the fulfilment of the Greek Private Sector Initiative on February 2012 while the fourth, and so far last, was part of one more "bailout" loan on November 2012.

3.1 *Pension reforms: siphoning resources and trust*

Pension policy reforms promoting recommodification can be captured analytically by any increases in the statutory retirement age, changes in the calculation formulas of pension benefits that reduce replacement rates, extension of the necessary qualifying period for entitlement and imposition of `penalties' for early retirement constitute clear trends towards recommodification (Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2009; Roumpakis, 2009). Already by 2008, the Greek centre-right government strengthened the links between contributions and pension income, increased the statutory retirement ages and altered the calculation of pension benefits and included, among other measures, a 6% pension reduction penalty for each year of earlier retirement. However, the policy impetus towards further cutbacks accelerated following the eruption of the Greek sovereign debt crisis in 2009. For a full pension, the retirement age for both men and women increased from 63 (in 2008) to 67 by November 2012, with early retirement set at the age of 62, requiring 40 years of full contributions. Pension entitlement was calculated on the basis of the last five years of employment but since 2010 the formula includes all working years (Gazette of Greek Government [GGG], 2010a).

The 2010 pension reform (GGG, 2010b) introduced new calculation formulas and reduced severely the replacement rates for low and middle income earners. The scheme abandons any redistribution among wage-earners and instead creates notional individual accounts. The calculation of the new proportional pension is estimated on accrual rates which range from 0.8% for the first 15 years and up to 1.4% for the final contribution (37–40) years. The replacement rate of the new scheme is significantly lower as after 40 years of contribution, it is set at around 40% of the pensionable salary. The scheme does not control for any radical changes in wages and availability of jobs (see austerity measures on employment below).

The redistributive element of the new calculation formula is based on a plan to introduce a basic pension of €360 by 2018, which will be funded from general tax revenue and privatisations.[4] This entitlement will be linked partly to the changes in GDP and price indexation in 2014. So far there is an uncertainty as to whether the government would be able to finance it as well as who is eligible for this basic pension. One cannot fail to admit that the model envisioned by the current government resembles a residual model (Venieris, 2011).

Maxima on pension incomes were enacted (currently €2400 per month) while a pension amount equal to 2 monthly payments (the so-called 13th and 14th month payments) was replaced by a fixed amount (€800/annum), leading to further reductions. As a precondition of the "sixth support package", the Greek government (October 2011) curtailed

- 40% of the pension entitlement of all retirees younger than 55 years
- 20% of the total pension income that exceeds €1200/month

- 30% of any occupational pension that exceeds €150
- a minimum of 15% on all public sector lump sum payments (retrospectively since 1 January 2010).

In November 2012, and as part of the 3rd Memorandum, the fixed €800 supplement was abolished for all pensioners of the public sector and further cutbacks were introduced to both public and private pension schemes. The measures adopted curtail

- 5% of all pension payments over €1000
- 10% of all pension payments over €1500
- 15% of all pension payments over €2000 and
- up to 83% of public pensions' lump sum payments.

Additionally, the government introduced a "solidarity tax" (LAFKA/ΛΑΦΚΑ) from 3% up to 14% of pension income in excess of €1400, while for pensioners younger than 60, an additional tax of 6% up to 14% will apply (Ministry of Finance [MoF], 2012). Essentially this tax is not an additional measure on government spending but is replacing the government's contribution, thus reducing government total budgetary payments and possibly borrowing needs. Additional charges (2%) have been applied to public sector pensioners in order to fund future lump sum payments.

In terms of financing, the Greek pension system is based on a tripartite agreement with employers, employees and the government. In June 2010, the government announced that it will halt all payments towards pension contributions and the state will no longer finance the existing pension schemes. In 2012, employers' pension contribution was reduced by 10% (13.33% of wages) and it is estimated that further reductions up to 25% will apply by 2015. In February 2012 and in accordance with the 2nd Memorandum, employers' that pay their contributions on time, they will receive a 5% rebate, reducing therefore their total social insurance contribution from 28% to 23% of wages.[5] In November 2012, and as part of the 3rd Memorandum, employers' contributions were further reduced by 1.1%, bringing the total social contributions costs down by almost a quarter from the 2009 levels.

As part of the debt exchange that took place for the fulfilment of the Greek Private Sector Involvement – a euphemism for sovereign-debt restructuring – a significant part of social insurance funds (estimated at €12 bn) were forced to accept a 57% "haircut" in the value of the Greek bonds they owned, and will most likely face solvency issues or even be taken over by the state, the very state that historically obliged them by law to buy its bonds. Similar cuts apply to private insurance schemes, as the Greek private insurance sector owned €4.5 bn of Greek bonds (Markopoulos, 2011) and the 57% haircut will severely undermine the schemes viability unless the firms raise significant capital to match their losses.

The adopted reforms openly question the redistributive and social principles of the pension system and, as we will show below, follow closely the rationale of the planned changes in collective bargaining and employment reforms. After successive pension reforms, the pension system is at best, "frail". The combination of lower contribution rates for the employers, massive unemployment resulting in dramatic reduction in employee contributions and the government's withdrawal from pensions' financing translates into a downward spiral of decline with further cutbacks almost inevitable.

3.2 Employment reforms: internal devaluation of wages and working conditions

This section explores recommodification as the protection *in* and *out* of the labour market, i.e. the terms and conditions of employment, the impact on the level of wages, the changes in unemployment protection and benefits (Papadopoulos, 2005; Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2009). Even before the EU–IMF bailout, the period 1995–2010 was characterised by the expansion of precarious employment in the formal labour market, both in the public and private sectors (Karantinos, 2006; Research Institute of General Greek Trade Union [INE-GSEE], 2008) both in Greece but also among the rest of the Southern European labour markets.[6] As a precondition for the "bail-out" loan the government accepted further moves towards the "flexibilisation" of the labour market and strengthening of the rights of employers to "hire and fire". Essentially, the dramatic nature of these policy reforms, undermine the historically limited gains of the Greek (and Southern Europe) labour movement, which was the security within the workplace for those (predominantly men) in the official labour market. The reforms undermine thus a salient characteristic of the Southern European employment regime, i.e. the discrimination of "insider and protected vs. outsider and insufficiently protected" positions in the labour market, as the former are now susceptible to similar growing insecurities as the latter.

Back in May 2010 and as part of the first bailout loan agreement, the government introduced new legislation that placed new employment contracts in the public sector under severe constraints. According to these measures, five (5) existing public servants had to be retired or fired in order for one (1) new recruitment in the public sector to be allowed. The more recent Memorandum (November 2012) extends this ratio from "5 for 1" to "10 for 1". Already by May 2010, the government halved the fiscal budget of local governments and the so-called wider public sector (public utilities) to hire personnel in 2011, with an additional 10% reduction for each year up to 2015 (Research Institute of General Greek Trade Union (INE-GSEE), 2011). In November 2012, and in order to reduce government expenditure, the government voted for 30,000 public servants, all aged over 60 to be placed on an official "labour reserve", with the number expected to reach 100,000 by the end of 2015. Public servants with the status of "labour reserve" will receive 60% of their salary for 12 months and if they are unable to find a job in the private sector they will receive early (and reduced) pensions.

Further, back in November 2011, the government of PASOK introduced an amendment in collective bargaining and labour law that removed the role of national collective bargaining agreements and prioritised negotiations at the firm level. As of November 2012, the new coalition government cancelled out the role of national collective agreements in setting minimum wages. In violation of any notion of voluntary agreement between parties in a labour market minimum wages in Greece will be from now on enacted by the government. Moreover, the 3rd Memorandum (the last one at the time of writing) decreased the legal warning time for layoffs and compensation costs for employers, while working days are extended and daily leisure time is reduced from 12 to 11 hours per day. Already by 2011, trade unions lost their right to refer to the Conciliation and Arbitration Service following disputes with employers over wage increases and collective agreements. Additionally, employers are not anymore obliged to offer permanent contracts to employees on rolling temporary contracts.

The "flexibilisation" of the labour market has resulted in significant changes in the number of full and part-time contracts signed in 2010 and 2011. As shown in Table 1, new full-time contracts signed in 2009 represented 79% of all contracts for that year, but by 2010 and 2011 they dropped to 66.9% and 60.4%, respectively. In a reverse fashion, new part-time contracts in 2009 represented 16.7% of all contracts for that year and by 2010 and 2011 they reached 26.1% and 30.9%, respectively. Contracts for casual jobs also increased from 4.3% in 2009 to 8.95% in 2011.

This planned “flexibilisation” of the labour market was accompanied by a stagnation or even reduction of real wages. Already in 2008, a substantial percentage of the workforce (22%) received very low salaries with the average wage estimated at 83% of the European average (INE-GSEE, 2008). This situation changed to the worse after the PASOK government began adopting new measures as part of the bailout agreements. Initially, the IMF recommendation for a 15% wage decrease in the public and private sector was accepted in the form of a replacing holiday (e.g. Christmas, Easter, summer) payments with a fixed €500 lump sum payment. At the same time, the minimum wage was reduced by 20% for the under 24-years-old workers, setting a monthly minimum wage of €595 (Megas, 2010). Still, as part of the medium-term fiscal strategy and the pressures for additional structural reforms in 2011, the PASOK government introduced more cuts in wages that resulted in a total of 25% wage cuts in the public sector. The second Memorandum introduced further cutbacks to wages in the private sector, reducing the minimum wage by 22% and for those under 25 by 32%, establishing a minimum of €487 and €421 after contributions, respectively. It is of interest to note here that current wage levels for part-time (4 hour/working day) jobs are at €293 (€250 after contributions). On top of these reductions, all workers employed contribute an extra 2% of their salaries to support the unemployment insurance fund.

The austerity measures adopted as a precondition of the 3rd Memorandum abolished all holiday payments both in public and private sector. Additionally, they homogenised the wage structures for the public sector, with workers in public utilities, military and juridical institutions receiving lower benefits and payments than before. The new austerity measures also abolished the various occupational child support benefits and replaced them with a new homogenised scheme, with each family below the poverty line receiving approximately €40 benefit per month per child.[7]

Conditions for the unemployed also deteriorated in recent years. Unemployment benefits in Greece have remained for decades very low in comparison to European averages with eligibility criteria strictly linked to previous employment record, thus excluding first entrants and young unemployed or those with poor contribution records (Papadopoulos, 2006). While unemployment benefit by 2011 was €461 per month and already well below the poverty line, the 2nd Memorandum further reduced it to €359 with a maximum duration of one year, and with no follow up benefits for the long-term unemployed. In November 2012, a new €200 benefit was introduced for the long-term unemployed, but with a short duration and very strict qualifying conditions, while the young unemployed are excluded from the scheme.[8] These changes occured at a time when unemployment rates were at a record-high level and continues to increase. By the end of 2012, youth unemployment was exceeding 50%, while total unemployment stood

Table 1. Distribution of job contracts signed, 2009–2011.

	Full-time	Part-time	Casual
2009	79%	16.7%	4.3%
2010	66.9%	26.1%	6.9%
2011	60.4%	30.9%	8.95%

Source: SEPE (2012).

at 25.4% from 7.4% in 2008 (Eurostat, 2012), and is expected to reach 30% by the end of 2013 (BBC, 2013). With no other social safety nets in place, the Greek unemployed can only rely on their family for income and support in these very harsh times.[9]

Overall, labour recommodification continued prior to the crisis and accelerated since 2010. These conditions constrain the ability of workers to be protected in and out of the labour market and maintain acceptable living standards, and put their families under more pressure to internalise the cost of social reproduction and provide support to their members. Once again and under exceptionally difficult economic circumstances, families are asked to play their role as "shock absorbers" (Karamessini, 2007, p. 2) in an era when the basic components of the familistic welfare model in Greece are undermined by the intensification of labour recommodification.

4. Undermining the consolidation and mobilisation of family resources before and after the crisis

As mentioned earlier, the "modernisation" era changed radically the framework in which families practised their traditional strategies, and therefore the properties of the familistic model. The liberalisation of financial markets, the low interest-rates as well as the vision for social mobility through "free-market" competition shaped a new framework where traditional strategies of low risk and "patient accumulation" were replaced by strategies of short-term investments and practices of "here and now" consumption. The eruption of the Greek sovereign debt crisis, the adoption of austerity measures and the "sudden stop" of bank lending undermined even further the Greek families' capacity to accumulate and mobilise resources, a capacity that was already weakened by almost a decade of exposure on high economic risks. Perhaps more than even in recent history, the Greek family is asked once again to absorb enormous social risks and "shocks", standing as the sole welfare agent that can provide support and protection to its members in a context where its capacity to consolidate, mobilise and redistribute resources is drastically reduced. Next, we present data on the evolution of private and household debt, to demonstrate these points empirically.

4.1 *The structure of Greek total and private debt in comparative perspective*

Initially we focus our empirical analysis on the composition of Greek total debt and in particular distinguish between public (government) and private (households, banks, non-financial corporations) debt. As demonstrated on Figure 1, when we compare total debt, Greece comes last out of our selected countries. Interestingly, Greece has the highest public debt (132% GDP) as a substantial part of which was the risk-shifting that transferred bank debts (currently at 7% of GDP) into the public budget, and consequently the taxpayer. Still, when we compare *private* debt, including household and business credit exposure alone, Greece comes off relatively well with one of the lowest levels of private debt (127%) in comparison to other countries like UK or Ireland (see also Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2012). However, we show that not only private debt and particularly household borrowing boomed in the previous years, and especially with the adoption of Euro, but in fact it increased at a spectacularly pace, even faster than public debt (Lapavitsas et al., 2010). We now move our empirical analysis to show the increase of households' debt before and after the eruption of the Greek sovereign debt crisis.

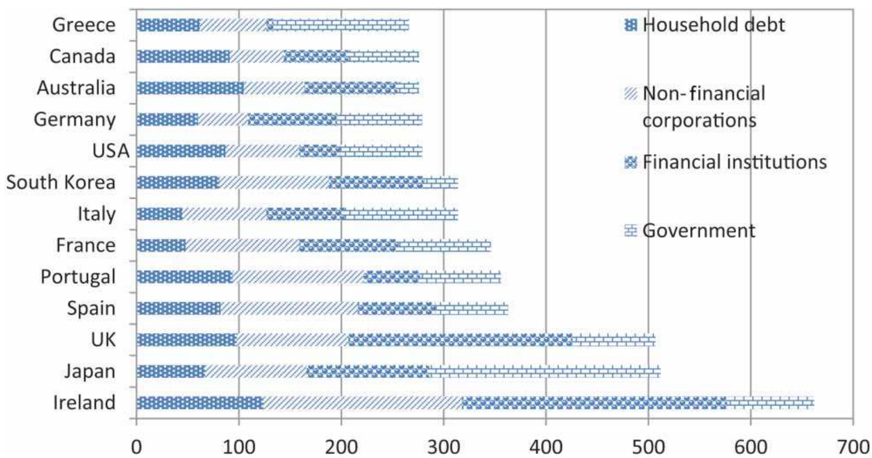

Figure 1. Comparing sovereign and private debt as percentage of GDP for 2011.
Source: Data from McKinsey (2012).

4.2 *The over-indebtedness of Greek households*

By 2006, the Greek households' consumer debt (i.e. consumer loans and cards) of 13.1% of the Greek GNP outperformed the EU average of 3% (Rothermund, 2008). The trends for the disproportionate growth of Greek households' debt are revealed by the figures presented in Table 2 that compares the annual percentage increases of consumer credit per capita between countries of Eurozone during 1994–2006. Since 2000, Greece recorded permanently the highest rates of annual increase of consumer credit per capita among the six countries compared. Only for 2000–2001, the increase reached 42.1%. The mean increase for period 1994–2004 was 36.3% per year, more than double of Italy that was second in the rate of annual increases. Since 1994, the total increase of consumer credit touched upon the astronomic figure of 2.106%.

Figure 2 presents graphically the levels of consumer credit per capita in Greece for the period 1993–2006. It is evident that the "conservative" familial strategy of low exposure to debt (€45 per capita in 1993) has been replaced within 12 years by a persistent increase of borrowing that touched upon €2300 per capita in 2006. Additionally, as Rothermund (2008) identified, by 2006 the percentage of consumption expenses that was covered via loans and credit cards reached 20% of annual expenditure of Greek households. In other words, by

Table 2. Percentage increase of consumer credit per capita in Greece, 1994–2006.

Annual increase 2000–2006	Germany	Belgium	Spain	France	Greece	Italy
2006/2005	−2.2	9.4	17.5	4.6	22.3	17.1
2005/2004	−1.2	4.1	21.8	7.2	21.8	18.6
2004/2003	2.6	2.6	10.4	3.9	37.0	17.2
2003/2002	2.8	1.2	1.6	4.2	27.0	12.7
2002/2001	0.6	1.6	9.0	2.1	23.6	11.5
2001/2000	−0.2	8.2	−5.6	4.8	42.1	10.6
Decade increase 2004–1994 (1994 = 100)	25.5	52.6	112.5	84.4	2105.6	229.5
Mean decade increase 1994–2004	2.3	4.3	7.8	6.3	36.3	12.7

Source: Cofidis (2006, 2007)

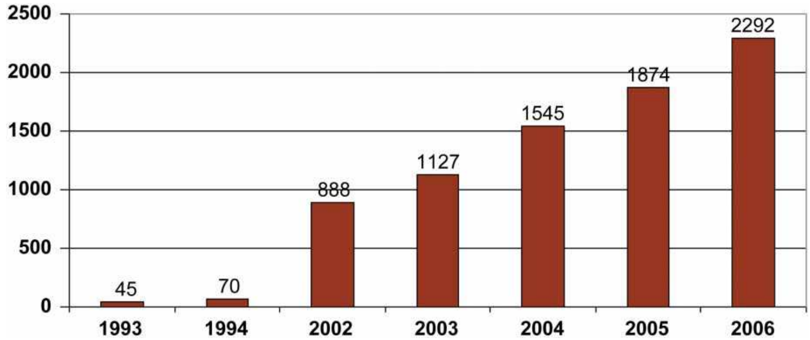

Figure 2. Consumer credit per capita in Euros, 1993–2006.
Sources: Cofidis (2006, 2007).

2006 one out five Euros spent by Greek households was borrowed. These findings exemplify the significant changes in the consuming behaviour of Greek households during 1993–2006, but also their simultaneous weakness to meet their consumer needs via the mobilisation of traditional resources, given that wages stagnated during this period.

We should point here that a key role for the increase of households' indebtedness was the dramatic increase of housing loans that were favoured by the liberalisation of financial markets and the low interest-rates during 2000–2004, as demonstrated in Figure 3. The increase of long-terms loans is mostly attributed to the increase of house purchase loans with the additional loans directed towards non-financial institutions (e.g. businesses). Both short- and long-term loans as well as the overall consumption credit peaked in 2008 and all indicators have been declining since. Essentially, this means that households' and to a large extent small- medium-sized business' ability to access new credit in order to

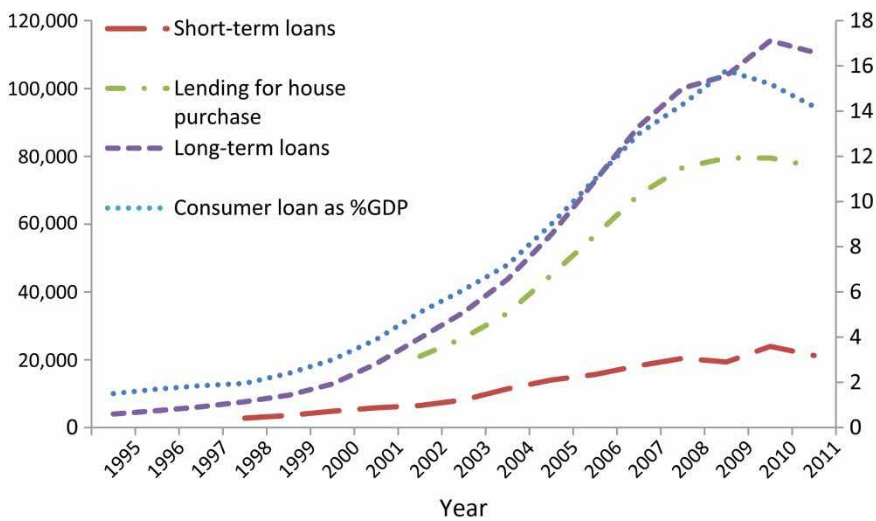

Figure 3. Greek households' liabilities, in millions of national currency and consumer loan as % GDP (1995–2011).
Source: OECDStat (2012); authors' calculations from Brissimis, Garganas, and Hall (2012).
Note: Short-term loans (up to 1 year), long-term loans include lending for house purchase (more than 1 year).

meet their liabilities was severely weakened. While this could also indicate that households could start deleveraging their debts, the introduction of a controversial property tax in 2011 (see later on property tax), the increase of VAT to 23% (up from 19%) and the decrease of the income tax threshold to €5000 (from €12,000) – all parts of the package of the austerity measures – squeezed further households' available financial resources.

Of interest here is to highlight that the distribution of private debt differs among income groups since, for the low-income households, the exposure to indebtedness was and remains low while the increase is higher for middle and higher income groups. More importantly, already by 2008 and before the adoption of wage and welfare benefits cuts, a significant percentage of households' income was directed to the repayment of its debts. Based on a sample of 6000 households, a study of the National Bank of Greece (NBG, 2008, p. 10) found that

> the median of borrowing burden for the total amount of households increased by 50.4% in 2007, from 33.5% in 2005 and 22.8% in 2002, reflecting mainly the development of borrowing burden from housing loans. That is to say, the borrowing obligations of half of the households' sample corresponded almost at half of their annual income in 2007, from the 1/3 and the 1/4 of their income in 2005 and in 2002 respectively.

The same research examined the difficulty experienced by households in meeting their financial needs (NBG, 2008, Table 2). Already by 2008, the overwhelming majority of households admitted that they experienced difficulty in their payments of: housing loans and mortgages (57.3%), other banking loans (68.4%), monthly payments in shops (51.4%), rent charges (66.7%) and utility bills (57.9%). A more recent study (2012) study commissioned by the Consumer Organisation (ΕΚΠΟΙΖΩ) announced that 7 out of 10 households were unable to meet their financial obligations, including outstanding loans and utilities. In order to repay their debts, the majority of the indebted households seek for additional jobs, borrow from family and friends and sell their property (Avgi, 2012).

4.3 *Increase of foreclosures and taxation on real estate and housing*

The over-indebtedness of households during the 10 years prior to the crisis had also a negative knock-on effect upon the most important resource for security of the Greek households; namely, real estate and, especially, housing (Allen et al., 2004; Kohli & Albertini, 2008; Poggio, 2008). The adoption of austerity measures further intensified these pressures. In 2010, the government halted foreclosures for outstanding housing loans below €200,000 for a period of two years, to the great relief of a large number of heavily indebted Greek households. However, the ECB/IMF/EU "troika" pushed very hard for the abolition of this measure and it was finally agreed (2nd Memorandum) that foreclosures will be in force again from 1 January 2013 while at the same time the auctioning period will be shortened from 2 years to 2 months. In response to these measures, the government allowed banks to re-mortgage these properties and prolong the payment period for borrowers. Interestingly, the Association of Greek Banks, announced just for 2011 that the number of outstanding loans (including properties, cars, credit cards) reach 750,000 (Tsipouras, 2012), with "doubtful debt" on housing loans exceeding €15bn in 2012 (Pefanis, 2012).

In September 2011, the government introduced a new property tax (on top of existing ones), to more than 5 million private houses and commercial properties with the aim to achieve an annual revenue of €2bn. The total tax for each household depends on the size of the property as well as the location but, crucially, is not linked to any means-testing or any ability-to-pay test. This tax hits the core of the main pillar of socio-economic security of Greek families, the small private property, and using an unprecedented method of tax collection it is collected via electricity bills.[10]

5. Conclusion: crisis of social reproduction and anti-social policy in Greece

The article explored recent developments in the evolution of the familistic model of welfare capitalism in Southern Europe, using Greece as a case study. Traditionally, in this model, the family played a double role as the main institution for social protection and care of its members and, simultaneously, as a key institution in the reproduction of a (typically semi-peripheral) political economy. In order to understand the historical evolution of familistic welfare capitalism in Greece, we distinguished, at least, two periods in its social reproduction. The first period was characterised by strategies of "maximisation of resources". Families employed strategies of low economic risk that gave strong emphasis on the accumulation of assets and real estate as key resources for their security while avoiding over-exposure to debt and minimising their exposure to the "money nexus". The second period was characterised by strategies of high economic risk which utilised market means for the investment and consumption of these resources, strategies that were heavily promoted by the state and banks. The excessive borrowing of households in order to invest in the stock exchange, in the housing market, or in order to improve their living conditions via, what proved to be, unsustainable levels of consumption fuelled by cheap credit, resulted in increases in private debt. These practices placed the traditional mode of social reproduction already in a crisis trajectory years *before* the eruption of the Greek sovereign crisis. In addition, labour market and social policy reforms promoting recommodification and increasing socio-economic insecurity, already underway, accelerated with the eruption of the sovereign crisis and the adoption of the austerity measures.

In fact, the new element in the picture is that the social risks, hardships and, ultimately, the responsibility of dealing with the impact of the sovereign debt crisis was transferred almost singlehandedly to the working population, pensioners and their families, both in the public and private sector. It is important to note here that despite the lack of adequate welfare and family support, incidents of poverty were dealt within the family unit. Instead – and for the first time – unemployment and its social costs cannot be absorbed by the family unit, resulting in skyrocketing rates of poverty. According to the latest Eurostat statistics, 34.6%(from 31% in 2011) of the total population were at risk of poverty or social exclusion at the end of 2012 with the respective figure for children less than 18 at 35.4%, (from 30.4% in 2011), while the children at risk of monetary poverty of parents with low education climbed to 53.3% (from 50.2% in 2011) (Eurostat, 2013; see also Greek Statistical Bureau (ELSTAT), 2012).

If we adopt the traditional normative view of social policy as a descriptor of policies that place the cohesion of society at their core (see the work of authors like Otto von Zwiedineck-Siidenhorst in Cahnman & Schmitt, 1979, p. 51) – then the sum of the austerity measures adopted by successive Greek governments can be characterised as *anti-social policy*. With a large number of households and family business units indebt, record high unemployment and poverty rates, and successive closure of hundreds of thousands of small businesses, middle classes in Greece are facing a free fall in their incomes and an unprecedented assault in their socio-economic security. At the same time, the economy is shrinking rapidly and by the end of 2013, the total contraction of the Greek GDP will reach at least 25%, since 2008 (European Commission [EC], 2013).

Undermined by more than a decade of indebtedness and now hammered by relentless austerity measures, the key pillars of the traditional familistic mode of social reproduction – secure employment of primary earner, low private debt, small private property – lie in ruins. A political economy of *generalised insecurity* emerges in their place where nearly all social risks are "familialized" but access to resources is severely restricted. Combined with extensive unemployment and underemployment, increases in employment insecurity, the removal of hard-won socio-economic rights, and continuous attacks on incomes and assets, they create a nightmare scenario for social and political stability. It remains to be seen if Greece is an exceptional case or if this will be the path that the rest of the familistic welfare regimes in Southern Europe will follow, with the same catastrophic results for their economies, politics, and social cohesion.

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Notes

1. We adopt the term *familistic* to describe the centrality of family in the totality of the welfare capitalist regime in Southern Europe and not only its welfare and care aspects, which often in the literature are described as *familialistic*.
2. With the term "de-commodification" we refer to "the extent to which individuals and families can maintain a normal and socially acceptable standard of living regardless of their market performance" (Esping-Andersen, 1987, p. 86) in a welfare capitalism regime. Ideas related to decommodification were widely discussed in Polanyi (2001), although he never used this term. Instead it was Offe (1984) who coined this term which was later developed by Esping-Andersen (1987).
3. Fulfilling this role had important implication for the gendered-relation division of labour inside the household that will not be covered in this article. Suffice to say that much of the care work of social reproduction relied traditionally on the domestication of women – "the compulsory altruists" according to Symeonidou (1996) – and their unpaid care work. Importantly, the process of European integration and the (Lisbon) target of promoting female employment did not wither the "moral responsibility" of – the "superwomen" Moreno (2006, p. 76) – to provide unpaid care work in Southern Europe. For a recent discussion on feminism and the necessity to locate it within a political economy perspective, see Fraser (2013).
4. Interestingly, in the latest Memorandum (November 2012) voted by the Greek parliament, all intakes from sales of public assets and utilities will be automatically directed towards the repayment of "bail-out" loan interests.
5. Originally, this 5% rebate would be counterbalanced in the social insurance budget through the closure of social tourism and housing organisations (2.5%) and at the expense of pension budgets (2.5%). At the time of writing of this article (February 2013) there is a discussion between the current coalition government and the troika to further reduce social contribution for employers by 3.9%. The government is also offering employers discounts to meet their outstanding liabilities to insurance funds (undisclosed amount of € billions).
6. For example Ferrera (2010) notes a series of reforms that curtailed the benefits of the "protected insiders" in order fulfil the EMU public spending criteria.
7. At the time of writing this article, the government introduced a new plan that withdraws child-tax exemptions, estimated at an extra cost of €80–300 annually per working parent.
8. To qualify, you have to be more than 12 months out of work, have less than €12000 annual income and be over 45 years. So far there are only 1114 recipients and it lasts 1 year (Kopsini, 2012).
9. As part of a pilot scheme, a new minimum guaranteed income is introduced in two (out of 13) regional units.
10. In order to safeguard compliance, the PASOK government in 2011 proposed to cut off the electricity supply from the property. The measure met the resistance of electricity workers but it was

still implemented. In 2012, the constitutional court deemed this practice as "unconstitutional". At the time of writing, refusal to pay resolves into a considerable fine with the tax authorities.

Notes on contributors

Theodoros Papadopoulos is a lecturer in Social Policy at the Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath. He has written extensively on the development of social and family policy in Greece, the social integration of migrants, the governance of labour market and employment policies in the EU.

Antonios Roumpakis is a lecturer in Comparative Social Policy at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York. He has written on the financial crisis and social policy in Greece, the comparative governance of pension funds, and the governance of labour markets and employment policies in the EU.

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