The Velopoulos-Liakopoulos Phenomenon. A Semiotic View of the Explosion of Greek Conspiracy Theories and Urban Legends in the Economic Crisis

Evangelos Kourdis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Titolo in italiano: Il fenomeno Velopoulos-Liakopoulos: una prospettiva semiotica sull’esplosione di teorie del complotto e leggende metropolitane in Grecia durante la crisi economica.

Abstract: This paper is intended to examine the explosion of conspiracy theories and urban legends in the Greek crisis since 2008 as a development that has been prepared at least since the late 1980s, with the introduction of private TV-channel ownership rights, the reorganization of the populist Right in Greece, as well as with the combination of imported conspiracy theories, mostly from the UK and the US, with elements of Hellenic history, archaeology, mythology and popular stereotypes. I will focus on the discourses created by two particular proponents of these theories and I will try to provide background on the political and economic reasons behind their success and diffusion. I will prove that in Greece the theorists of conspiracies are well-known people and advocate their positions publicly and strongly. They are Hellenocentric issues based on Archeolatry and on a semiotic level we can claim that the past is recalled as a force of resistance to the emerging insecurity.

Key-words: conspiracism, Greece, crisis, archeolatry, hellenecentrism, semiotics

1. Introduction: the position for the superiority of the Greek Civilization.

In late 1980s, the first private television stations were established in Greece allowing people to express their opinions, which would not be expressed otherwise that freely. However, this situation also allowed people with extreme or absurd opinions to express themselves. In this framework, some fans of conservatism in Greece, who identified with the right-wing, extreme-right, even centre-right political parties in Greece, took advantage of the concept of Greek civilization superiority. They appeared in private television aiming at justifying that position, by stressing the risk of the Greek civilization being threatened by many enemies, each for their own reasons. The position about the superiority of the Greek civilization was based on a series of opinions, the most important of which, I believe, are the following:

Contemporary Greeks are the offspring of Ancient Greeks. That position is the answer to Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer’s (1984 [1835]: 39) claims that after the long coexistence of Greeks with other peoples, mainly Slavs (ibid: 45) and Albanians (ibid: 72-73), the genetic authenticity of Greeks has been compromised, based on certain passages of Byzantine historical writers. The advocates of Greek superiority use scientific facts. For instance, according to a world research conducted by the University of Stanford, the University of Pavia, and other universities, the DNA of modern Greeks accounts for 99.5% Caucasian race without a Mongolian trace, although there were 400 years of slavery (see Semino et al. 2004).

The Greek nation is unique because it is linguistically unique. Indeed, the Greek language, which belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, is one of the few languages with historic continuity as linguists confirm that it has been spoken continuously in the same geographical area since ancient times. Christidis (1999: 89-90) typically state that “[…] the wholeness of the Greek language is re-interpreted as a historical uniqueness that proves the superiority of the Greek language against the other European languages, which it fertilized”¹.

Indeed, the influence of the Greek language on the other European, mainly, languages was important. As a self-evident position, very often, the conspiracists in Greece – and not only them – use the two speeches of Professor of Finance and interim non-party

¹ All these translations from Greek into English are our own.
Prime Minister of Greece Xenophon Zolotas at the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in 1957 and 1959 respectively. His English-speaking speeches are considered historic and worth noting because they included mainly terms of Greek origin.

The Greek language was perhaps the first Lingua Franca in the world, it was used to write the Gospel, and for that reason it is considered together with the Hebrew and Latin languages, according to the Catholic Doctrine, one of the sacred languages of Christianity. As Petrounias (1993: 132) mentioned, “the religious currents of the era and especially Christianity used the most common language, Greek, to expand. Without the previous expansion of the Greek language, it would not be possible for Christianity to expand, but then the fact that the new religion used the Greek language, helped the further expansion of the language”. Actually, many Greeks consider that in the Gospel is recorded one more point in favour of the importance of the Greek civilization. In particular, it is mentioned that when Jesus was informed by His students Andrew and Philip that the Greeks have come to listen to Him, He uttered that “the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (Matthew 16, 24-25, Mark 8, 34-35).

The Greek civilization is the basis of western civilization. It is also a self-evident position which is adopted by the intellectual tradition of Europe, a continent and a civilization which owes its name to Greek Mythology. The influence of the Greek civilization is recorded in different times of world history. So, in relation to Roman times it is recorded that “[…] the general impression that people have about Roman and Greek is that Roman culture is basically derived from Greek culture” (McGeough 2004: 297), and even the clear position which is pretty popular in Greece that “the Romans conquered Greece with their army, but the Greeks conquered them with their culture”

But in Byzantine years, Cunningham et al. (2015: 208) state with great precision the influence of the Greek language and the Greek civilization.

As has been previously mentioned, conspiracy theories in Greece have as a common resultant the fact that the superiority of the Greek civilization is threatened mainly by peoples who contributed less to the world civilization, are envy of the special position of Greeks, and/or attempt to vanish them or reduce their contribution to the world civilization adopting some of their creations or their history. Actually, it is people whom the Greeks would consider humiliating to be compared with. In particular, Christidis (1999: 91) records the opinion that “Hellenism and Greekness are at risk by the northern underdeveloped usurpers and the Europeans – foreigners – who do not understand our historic rights, although we – that mythical ‘we’ – were the ones who civilized them”.

The attempt of the Slav-speaking inhabitants of FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) to claim emblems and the history of Macedonians as theirs is part of this framework, although it is known that, first, they are Slavs and Slavs descended to the Greek territory in the 6th century AD, and, second, that they speak a Bulgarian dialect, a fact that led Bulgaria to recognize them as a state but not as a nation, and Lubcho Georgievski, FYROM former prime-minister, to receive a Bulgarian passport

There is a similar attempt by Turkish guides to present Greek and Roman antiquities of Minor Asia as Turkish monuments, a fact that has caused the sarcastic comments of Greek tourists and of tourists of other nationalities.

Herzfeld (2016: 13-14) states that “in the past many Greeks felt indifferent or even loath for any suggestion that compared them with other (and especially non-European) peoples”. Herzfeld (ibid) purports that “this fact alone however proves how strong has been the influence of egocentrism that wanted Greeks molded by the norms of western countries”.

---

2 In fact, not few researchers characterize this interaction as ‘open conspiracy’ between the Roman and the Greek aristocracy (Crawford 2006 [1978]: 194).
3 Sapountzis & Condor (2013: 748), in their research concerning Greek conspiracy theories about the establishment of FYROM, observe that “[i]n the interview context, respondents often used conspiracy narratives to present Greek concerns over the establishment of FYROM as a legitimate reaction to realistic (material) threat, rather than as motivated by ‘mere’ concerns over identity threat”.

---
But why would a people who proclaimed “all in good measure” and considered non-Greeks as savages (even if this related to the Other’s language) want to compare oneself with some civilizations but not with others? Could it be that this conspiracy notion was imported to the Modern Greek culture? To answer this question we should first answer what exactly we mean by ‘conspiracy theories’.

### 2. Theoretical approaches to conspiracy theory and urban legends.

In everyday life, the expression **conspiracy theories** is connected connotatively to something concealed that is the result of superior processes that common people cannot control and access. The term **conspiracy theory** was introduced by Karl Popper (1949: 83), who described it as:

> whatever happens in society—including things which people as a rule dislike, such as war, poverty, shortages—are the results of direct design by some powerful individuals or groups. This view is very widespread . . . and in its modern form, it is the typical result of the secularization of religious superstitions . . . the place of the gods on Homer’s Olympus is now taken by the Learned Elders of Zion, or the monopolists, or the capitalists, or the imperialists.

The above definition indicates that religion, politics, and economy are the three parameters on which a conspiracy theory can be built on. Over the past few years, the first two parameters seem to have been superseded by the last one as the idea that religious wars and political changes have an economic background has been increasingly adopted. However which person, which group, or even which country has the power for something like that? If we consider correct the viewpoint that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the United States remained the only superpower in the world (to justify the nickname “world’s leader” for the U.S. president) it is natural to relate first to the U.S. leadership the conspiracy theories. As Tuckett (2004: 2) states “[m]any major events, for better or for worse, have occurred as the result of people behind the scenes who have held the keys to the actions of the world. Startling discoveries, often stretching far back into history, can affect the very way our Western thought processes and behavior patterns are conducted”.

That is why Byford (2011: 3) states “[t]hroughout the world conspiracy theories have also become a popular means of articulating an opposition to the forces of international capitalism, globalisation, America’s military and political supremacy, and the more general rise of a transnational political order”. For Byford (2011: 4-5):

> conspiracy theories are said to constitute a distinct culture – conspiracism – which encompass a specific system of knowledge, beliefs, values, practices and rituals shared by communities of people around the world […] the conspiracy culture is defined (but also sustained) by the tendency among conspiracy writers to regurgitate, revamp and apply to new circumstances the body of knowledge, the explanatory logic and rhetorical tropes expounded in texts, books, or pamphlets written and published by conspiracy theorists in the past.

Very close to the concept of conspiracy theory is the term **urban legend** or **myth**, which dates back to 1960. Wilton (2004: 2) specifies that “[u]rban legends do not get their name because they necessarily refer to events that supposedly happened in cities. Rather, they are called that because they are tales, usually cautionary, told by people who live in our modern, urbanized society”.

As we will see next, the Greek case contains elements of both cases. We will also find that a source of the Greek theories of conspiracy and/or urban legends is the failure of a continued

---

4 Similarly, the phrase ‘divide and rule’ attributed to UK politics suggested its unofficial participation in political, economic, and religious turmoil in various parts of the planet.

5 For Barthes, myths are the dominant ideologies of our time, a set of values, and truth is no guarantee for them (Barthes 1973 [1957]: 123).
impact by a civilization that flourished in the antiquity, as is commonly believed, continued to
flourish and influence indirectly the world thought in the Roman and Byzantine years, but did
not manage to keep influencing – at least to the same degree – the world and European reality
after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire during the Ottoman dominance.


It is worth-noting that although the private television spread various conspiracy theories in
the Greek public, these theories did not become the scope of broad scientific research in
Greece, perhaps because of their exaggeration, or even of the metaphysical element involved
in their expansion. Zizakou (2014) mentions that Greek conspiracy theories and urban legends
tend to find lies and distortions behind a lot of significant personalities and stories. Antoniou
et al. (2014) found in their recent survey that urban legends and conspiracy theories have
increased in the last years and are attributed to the low social trust of Greeks and the lack of
education. According to their data: a) 75.25% of the people who participated in the survey
believe that the Greek economic crisis was planned by various non-institutional centers; b)
68.66% support the theory that the drug against cancer has been found but not made
available to the public yet; c) 58.74% claim that the attack on the twin towers was the result
of a well-organized plan of the U.S. to impose its foreign policy; d) 27% of the survey
participants also believing that Neil Armstrong’s moon landing in 1969 was staged in a
remote location; e) 60.86% of the survey respondents believe that Costas Simitis has Jewish
origins.

As we observe in the results of the survey by Antoniou et al. (2014), the Greeks seem
to be intrigued by conspiracy theories and urban legends that involve mainly the international
scene, but also those that relate to the Greek reality. The graphs of the survey indicate that
conspiracy thinking is very popular to those with primary, high school, lyceum education, and
in the age group 25-44 years. The combination of youth and lower educational level seems to
favor the expansion of conspiracy theories and urban legends, and I believe that it is a global
fact, not only Greek. What happens, however, when the factor “economic crisis” in Greece is
added?


During different types of crisis, political, economic, social, a wide-spread phenomenon is
observed, an outbreak, in terms of conspiracy theories and urban legends. Especially for
Greece, Mylonas (2011: 83) states that:

\[\text{the financial crisis has multiplied and exacerbated belief in conspiracy theories. […] Increasingly the}
\text{conspiracy theories circulating in Greece have ceased to be plausible, while also multiplying in number.}
\text{Thus, while in the past an event would usually have two interpretations, the official and the conspiratorial,}
\text{nowadays it has three or four, if not more, competing explanations. The financial crisis has evolved into a}
\text{real economic crisis, expressing itself in job loss and diminished purchasing power for the average Greek.}
\text{This has led the population to new levels of uncertainty about the future, which provides a fertile ground}
\text{for conspiracy theories to emerge and spread.}

Technology development contributed highly to the spread of these theories since through
the electronic press and the social media there is a chance to widely spread these theories and
especially through the anonymity of a nickname. For Keely (1999: 116), “[a] conspiracy
theory is a proposed explanation of some historical event (or events) in terms of the
significant causal agency of a relatively small group of persons – the conspirators – acting in
secret”. However, as we will see next, although the description of Greek conspiracy theories
has secrecy as its main characteristic, those who spread them not only they are anonymous
but also they strive for large publicity. How is this explained?
This choice is based on the fact that these theories glorify indirectly the glorious past of the Greeks, by empowering national conscience, operating in a unified way for the nation, and infusing a vision to younger generations. As in the Old Testament, the prophets who prophesied the fate of Israel were accepted by the people as carriers of the Holy grace, and their words were the lodestar for the Hebrew nation, I would dare claim that similarly the representatives of archeolatry and byzantinolatry are faced positively by a large part of the Greek people.

The economic crisis in Greece is a favorable condition for their expansion as the common denominator is the supremacy of the values and the way of thinking of our ancestors. So it is not accidental that the slogans of public demonstrations studied during the financial crisis (Kourdis 2012) indicate the emergence of a new national integration paradigm, based on a revival of the classicist values. This is why slogans are condensed historical memory (the struggle of Greeks in 1821 against the Ottomans, in 1940 against the Italians, and in 1967-1974 against the colonels’ junta).

It is interesting, as we will see next, that the economic crisis fueled the Greek readership with new theories about new enemies of Hellenism – as, for instance, the Germans who are accused on a European level of orchestrating the economic crisis – although negative stereotypes were revived about them, in place of the positive stereotypes that existed. Especially for the Germans, the fact that in Germany there is a numerous Greek community that transfers to Greece the positive image that it receives from a people who is disciplined, hardworking, with social welfare, a very good education system, and a very good healthcare system, resulted in the negative stereotypes structured for the only time this people came in contact with the Greek people, during World War II, mainly through the press, mainly TV and printed, to revive stereotypes long forgotten and discarded.

5. Hellenocentrism and archeolatry.

The conspiracy theory I will present is Hellenocentrism/Archeolatry. It should be mentioned that apart from Hellenocentrism as conspiracy theory there was also Historical Hellenocentrism, a cultural-literary movement in early 20th century Greece and had nothing to do with the conspiracy theories. Vayenas (1997: 45) defines Hellenocentrism as “[…] a conviction of the uniqueness of the Greek element and its superiority over everything foreign – a conviction that usually leads elevating Greekness to the level of an absolute value”. Metsos & Mossialos (2000: 336) speak for “[…] a country used to seeing itself as the centre of the whole world suffering from what has been termed as the syndrome of Hellenocentrism”. The term Hellenocentrism refers to the movement or wave of people and literature that express views compatible with the syndrome of Hellenocentrism. This trend seems to be represented by Kyriakos Velopoulos.

The term Archeolatry refers to followers of the ancient Greek religion and/or admirers of the ancient Greek civilization. Mouzelis (1978: 147) defines Archeolatry as “obsessive preoccupation with and blind admiration of everything ancient”. Currently, the term is often used for generic movements about the superiority of ancient Greeks, in various TV shows. As in mainstream conspiracy theories, Archeolatrists are classified into religious and anti-religious enthusiasts. Some conspiracy theorists of Archeolatry, such as Dimosthenis Liakopoulos, are devout Christians believing that true Orthodoxy can protect and guide the people against the anti-religious New World Order. On the other hand, there are factions who

---

6 For Vayenas (1997: 46), Hellenocentrism is a kind of traditionalism that excludes some of the most well-known writers of the time and overemphasizes the discovery of a ‘silenced’ Greek tradition (such as the writings of the general of the Greek Revolution for Indepenendency Ioannis Markiyannis, the popular art of Theofilos, etc.).

oppose Christianity, which they consider a part of the Zionist plot to exterminate the original Ancient Greek religion.

5.1. The Kyriakos Velopoulos’ case

Kyriakos Velopoulos is a 51-year old Greek politician and former parliament member, and television personality. Born in Germany, his parents were immigrant peasants. He studied journalism. He is a member of the Academy of the Greek language in Germany and a member of the Union of Writers of Northern Greece. He was a member of ONNEQ, the youth organization of the Right Party New Democracy (ND) until 1988, and ideologically defines himself as belonging to the ‘patriotic ND’. He was a member of the Popular Orthodox Rally, the nationalist populist party of Georgios Karatzaferis, and in the 2007 parliamentary elections he got elected as deputy of Thessaloniki with the political party LAOS. In 2012, a number of former deputies of the populist and fairly Eurosceptic radical right-wing LAOS, among them Kyriakos Velopoulos, deserted their party in order to join the New Democracy party.

As a journalist he has worked in a number of radio and television stations, such as TV Thessaloniki, Ermis, Best, Top, Orion, TeleAsty, where he presented his two major shows The parliament and Greek Vision, in which he promotes his books (see fig. 1). He is a cofounder of the Hellenocentric association ‘Δίαυλος Ελλήνων’ (Channel of the Greeks).

The titles of his books are typical of his ideology. Below there are Velopoulos’ most important books from 2008, when the economic crisis burst out, until now when the world economic crisis has been transformed since 2010 into a purely Greek crisis. It is also worth mentioning that during the last decade Velopoulos promoted greatly the book, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, published in Greece by several extreme-right-wing publishers such as Ouranos and Mpimpis.

In 2008, he republished the book Μακεδονία και Ύβρεις (Macedonia and offenses) by Kadmos editions in Thessaloniki. In this book, Velopoulos “reveals” all the statements by Greek politicians from the past till now about the fight against provocative FYROM inhabitants and foreign anti-Greek centers. Velopoulos attempts to shed light on the dark sides of this national problem in relation to people who pull anti-Greek strings and act within Greece against the Greek nation. In his point of view, a historic linguistic perspective proves

8 This political movement was covered by the conspiracy facet that “[t]he leader of LAOS, Giorgos Karatzaferis, reacted to this development by suggesting that the US and Israeli embassies in Greece were seeking to destroy his party” (Vasilopoulos & Halikiopoulos 2014: 134).

that FYROM inhabitants are of Greek origin but unfortunately of the so-called Janissaries, whereas certain documents reveal the obscure role of people beyond suspicion who voluntarily or not betray Macedonia behind the scenes while on stage they speak differently.

In 2008, he publishes the book Ελλήνων μυστικά (Greeks’ secrets) with Kadmos editions in Thessaloniki. In this book, the achievements of the ancient Greek spirit are described, which the whole world praises and celebrates as these have unique features, and are portrayed in the Arts, Sciences, History, Literature, Philosophy, with a strong human element. According to the writer, the ancient Greek civilization is by definition an advocate of the highest good – spiritual freedom, and the cogitation and insightfulness of ancient Greeks penetrated successfully all the fields of knowledge, and had fruitful outcomes which the humanity has been enjoying ever since 10.

In 2009, the book Η Ελλάδα του 21ου αιώνα. Γεωστρατηγική - Γεωπολιτική Αλήθειες και ψέματα (Greece in 21st century. Geos strategy – Geopolitics. Truths and Lies) was published by Kadmos editions. In a time of directed information, the writer aims for the book to become a treasure of knowledge for the pure Greek citizen and the historian of the future, who would like to study unknown sources for the Greek – and beyond – issues of the 21st century. Some of the topics addressed are: the clash of civilizations, global government, the dirty war of pharmaceuticals, the shocking data about “green growth” and GMO products, the confidential Kissinger report, the Treaty of Lausanne, Russia, Putin and the neoByzantine Sendersky circle, and the geostrategical place of new Russia 11.

In 2010, the book H Ελλάδα στην παγκόσμια σκακιέρα της γεωπολιτικής (Greece in a world chess game of geopolitics) was published by Kadmos editions. The book states that countries, small or large (in power or territory), run a race of empowering their role irrespective of the price their peoples have to pay, and focuses on how the Big Powers act in a framework of instability and insecurity worldwide 12.

In 2010, Velopoulos’ book Epsilonism: Epsilon Team was published by Books LLC in the USA in English. Epsilonism describes an eschatologist conspiracy theory trend, usually (but not always) revolving around the so-called Epsilon Team, called that way by its emblem that is a Delphic Epsilon ‘Ε’ [‘epsilon’ is the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet] connected back to back (see fig. 2). The term was introduced and propagated approximately around 1997 through Greek magazines and books whose subject is conspiracy theories and the paranormal (for instance, the Delphic Epsilon appears on ancient Greek monuments, on Inca monuments, but also on UFOs) 13. Usually, Greeks refer to this conspiracy theory as “epsilonism” in a disapproving manner 14. The Epsilon Team is viewed as a secret retaliation weapon meant to attack and destroy anyone ‘threatening’ Hellenism 15.

---

13 See https://sites.google.com/site/programmeepsilonproject/greek-epsilon-team.
15 One of the main researchers of Group E, Gialourakis (1998: 189) mentions that “the members of the Group are members of secret Greek brotherhoods that hold in their hands all the secrets of the Secrets, such as mind reading, beaming, the philosopher’s stone, prediction of the future, the secrets of the soul (psychogenesis and immortality), knowledge of the secret scripts, lost civilizations, but also mystical languages”.

In the book Χρεωκοπία και κερδοσκόποι (Bankruptcy and profiteers) published by Kadmos editions in 2011, the author accuses the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the credit rating agencies of their leading and also obscure and misleading role in the structure of world economic reality, calling the readers to help Greece to free itself from the bankruptcy of the spirit in the present and in the future of the country\textsuperscript{16}.

In 2012, the book Η επόμενη μέρα. Προτάσεις για την οικονομία. Μαζί μπορούμε (The next day. Proposals for the economy. Together we can make it) published by Kadmos editions involves the state of big fear for the exit of Greece from the eurozone and the euro by addressing the question if there is a solution for the suffering country or the absolute destruction is the only way\textsuperscript{17}. In 2013, Velopoulos publishes the book Η κερκόπορτα της προδοσίας (The back door of treason) where he develops that in Greece there are Greeks with a glorious past, who love their country more than their own life, but also people who live literally at its expense\textsuperscript{18}. In 2013, the book Η Ελλάδα στη δύνη της παγκόσμιας σκακιέρας (Greece in the swirling world chess game) was published by Kadmos editions. Velopoulos addresses the inhuman reality the Greek people has experienced over the past few years, which is due to the geopolitical place of Greece, according to him, and its energy resources. In relation to its energy resources, a clandestine war has been set in the world economic-political chess games, unparalleled with any other in world history\textsuperscript{19}.

In 2014, the book Η Ελλάδα της κρίσης (Greece in crisis) is published by Kadmos editions. The author stresses that all the developments in the wider area of the Mediterranean are totally connected with the issues of the Greek Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), energy and the large volume of deposits in the basin of the Mediterranean. A number of scientific findings prove that Greece has made huge mistakes in relation to the mapping and delineation of its EEZ, and in the search for and extraction of hydrogen. Also, the writer mentions the fuel of the future, gas hydrates, which is in abundance in Greece. There is extensive mention to Papandreou family and the crimes committed during their governance and how, based on them, Greece reached the bankruptcy stage. Data are provided to show that the Greek political leadership is driven by the German leadership. There is also mention to the death of the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church, Christodoulos, whose role in internal affairs was crucial, and data are revealed about the fall of the former prime-minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, the role of the secret services and the issue of wiretappings related to the government of that period\textsuperscript{20}.

In 2014, the writer publishes the book Πριν το τσουνάμι της Ελλάδας (Before Greece’s tsunami) where he explains why Greece is led to a definite bankruptcy, what exactly the

\textsuperscript{16} \url{http://www.biblionet.gr/book/176613/Βελόπουλος_Κυριάκος/Χρεωκοπία_και_κερδοσκόποι.}

\textsuperscript{17} \url{http://www.kadmos.org/contents/el/d_2_politiki_epikariotita_03.html}.

\textsuperscript{18} \url{http://www.malliaris.gr/Η-ΚΕΡΚΟΠΟΡΤΑ-ΤΗΣ-ΠΡΟΔΟΣΙΑΣ-978-960-6851-55-1}.

\textsuperscript{19} \url{http://www.malliaris.gr/Η-ΕΛΛΑΔΑ-ΣΤΗ-ΔΙΝΗ-ΤΗΣ-ΠΑΓΚΟΣΜΙΑΣ-ΣΚΑΚΙΕΡΑΣ-978-960-6851-63-6}.

\textsuperscript{20} \url{http://www.malliaris.gr/Η-ΕΛΛΑΔΑ-ΤΗΣ-ΚΡΙΣΗΣ-978-960-6851-73-5}. 
country’s lenders want, which the geostrategical role of Greece is, and which the claims of the international capital from our country are in terms of fossils and ports. In the book, there is also mention of the political party Golden Dawn, Islam, and Turkey. Going through international agreements and treaties, it is proved that the memorandums signed and the way they were imposed on Greece are illegal. The innovation of the book is that it includes sample documents which the readers can use to defend oneself legally against bank forfeiture and debts to the National Insurance Organization (IKA in Greek) and the revenue tax office.

In 2016, Velopoulos’ book Το 4ο Ράχ είναι εδώ Η διάλυση της Ευρωπαϊκής ιδέας (The 4th Reich is here. The dissolution of the European ideal) was published by Kadmos editions, where the writer addresses the powerful narrative of the European values on which the structure of a unified Europe was based. Unified Europe is a unique undertaking in the political history of humanity, whose strengths are tested and seems to have reached its limits. Germany plays an important role in this course of Europe and, as indicated by the facts, it does not seem interested in returning to the noble ideas once strived for by Europe.

5.2. Dimosthenis Liakopoulos’ case

Dimosthenis Liakopoulos lives in Thessaloniki. He set up his own publishing company and bookshops in Athens and Thessaloniki for the promotion of his own books. These bookshops are now closed. He keeps a website with online book sales.

In his TV shows (see fig.3) and internet publications, he presents a conspiracy theory that is quite unusual. Being a high-school teacher of physics, his work relates to mechanical engineering, electricity, thermodynamics, mathematics, nuclear science, the philosophy of natural science as well as optical fibres, microelectronics and astrophysics. His work consists of apocalyptic texts and novels which combine commonly acceptable data with mythical and legendary texts, and data from unverified and unknown sources. Specifically, he uses: Ancient Greek literature, references to people he allegedly met while doing his military service in the NATO forces, undefined sources on today’s Brotherhood of Darkness.

Fig. 3: Dimosthenis Liakopoulos promoting his books

Liakopoulos is considered to be the most famous member of the Epsilon Team. He combines data from various sources, passes them through the filter of a Christian Orthodox teaching, and concludes that the Hellenic race has played and will play a significant role in History. Liakopoulos seems to take advantage of the pride of the Greek people in its origin and the fact that Greece has maritime borders with Catholic Italy, the headquarters of Papism, on one side and on the other with Muslim Turkey, which occupies the capital of the modern Greek state, Constantinople.

One of his most important publishing works which continued in the period of crisis is the multi-volume edition (0-55 volumes) of the work Γιατί και πούς ζούν ανάμεσά μας (Why and

22 See https://www.ianos.gr/to-4o-raix-einai-edo-0362239.html#tab-description.
how they live among us). One of the basic theories Liakopoulos develops is that of the supremacy of the Russian technology which will bring the ‘blonde nation’ of the Russians to world power again, under President Vladimir Putin. According to this theory, Russian will need five months to dominate in the upcoming World War III thanks to its hyper-weapons. Orthodox Christianity will spread throughout the world and the Russian Empire, under the guidance of the Greek nation, will bring peace to the world.

Another popular theory of Liakopoulos is that of Elohim and Nephelims. According to Liakopoulos, past-life regressions to Atlantis show a struggle between two groups of people: the ones who were exclusively attached to the satisfaction of their senses and to material goods, the so-called “Sons of Belial”, and the “Sons of the Law of One”, who were spiritual beings and were trying to save the world from annihilation through meditation and teaching. Belial is one of the kings of the Nephelim, the half-human half-animal creatures who posed as gods to many ancient civilizations. Belial has a human body and the head of a wolf and belongs to the race of the Malcheh, the giant wolf people. The Nephelim were born out of the union of 201 fallen Elohims (angel-like shapeshifters) with terrestrial women.

Elohim and Nephelims theory does not seem useful any more, while it was successful in the past decades. The new economic situation needs answers and theories concerning the new role of Greece next to a new super power, such as Russia, outside the EU and NATO. But why would such a fantasy make sense? Within the new power blocs being formed in the world (Russia, China and Brasil), such ideas seem to many people to answer many questions about what is happening today.

6. Conclusions

For Keely (1999: 116), “[…] a conspiracy theory need not propose that the conspirators are all powerful, only that they have played some pivotal role in bringing about the event. They call be seen as merely setting events in motion”. We observe that in Greek conspiracy theories and urban legends nations are usually involved, which are powerful in terms of politics and military (USA, Russia, Israel), and finances (Germany), and pull the strings by involving less powerful states (Turkey, FYROM, Albania).

Also, in general, conspiracy theories and urban legends do not have well-known theorists to spread them for fear of becoming a public laughing stock by those who will not believe them and who are considered by conspiracists that they usually control the media. However, we also observe that in the case of Greece, this is not true. The theorists of conspiracies are well-known people and advocate their positions publicly and strongly. They are Hellenocentric issues based on Archeolatry and on a semiotic level we can claim that the past is recalled as a force of resistance to the emerging insecurity.

These two conspiracy theorists, Velopoulos and Liakopoulos, combine history with contemporary issues. Their ideas hardly follow official scholarly premises or religious positions. A dominant aspect of their communication skills, which also explains their success, is their eloquence, passion, simplicity, and friendliness that support a style of defense against ‘evil’. This is the best mechanism of communication with a nation ‘in crisis’ feeling the injustice of sudden and unexplained poverty. These theories have existed since at least early nineties and now they are almost mainstream acceptable views. On a social level, the results of these theories create networks of power in the media which then goes to the parliament.

It is true that in a country of the European North, as Greece is, suffering from the economic crisis, the reader of conspiracy theories and urban legends would expect the demonization of Germany as the country which, as widely believed, manages informally the European Union and imposes the rules of financial policy to it, as happens to all other EU member states facing similar problems. But Archaeolatry and Hellenocentrism underplay in Greece this reaction to stereotypes which the media revive and spread, and continue to

characterize the theories and legends that already existed before the crisis. It would be too hard to flourish a conspiracy theory against Germany with solid ground in Greece since the German people only came in contact with the Greek people once, during World War II. I believe that if in the end a conspiracy theory or an urban legend about Germany in Greece emerges, then the harm done to the European ideal will be immense but, hopefully, reversible.

**Bibliographic references.**


Gialourakis K. (1998) *Ολόκληρη η αλήθεια για την Ομάδα ‘Εψιλόν* [All the truth about ‘Epsilon’ Team], Apollonios, Athens


Petrounias E. (1993) Νεοελληνική Γραμματική και Συγκριτική Ανάλυση [Modern Greek Grammar and Comparative Analysis], University Studio Press, Thessaloniki


