

# Views of Greek Candidate MPs on political issues after the election of 2015

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## Abstract

This paper presents the first findings of the Greek candidate survey of 2015, which is still in progress. More specifically, it examines the attitudes of the candidate MPs of the Greek parliamentary parties towards specific political issues, induced by economic crisis. Both consensus and conflict are noticed among the candidates; however the most interesting debate that this analysis points out is the debate between the candidates of the two governmental parties, Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA) and Independent Greeks (ANEL), concerning mainly the authoritarian-libertarian dimension and questioning their future cooperation.

**Keywords:** *Issues, economic crisis, CCS, Greece*

## **Introduction**

This paper aims to analyze the influence of the 2008 economic recession from the perspective of the Greek candidates MPs regarding political, economic and social issues. The interest of this paper revolves around issues relying on the increasing importance of issue voting and taking into consideration the deterioration of economic situation in Greece after the global economic crisis, started in 2008. The sovereign debt crisis de-stabilizes, along with the economy, the political balances of a nation creating unprecedented pressures on the political system. This ongoing political transformation has affected the main political actors and institutions, increasing the dissatisfaction and the lack of trust.

Therefore, the main objective of this paper is the analysis of prospective MPs' attitudes towards specific issues, as they were developed in the aftermath of the parliamentary election of 2015. The 2015 parliamentary elections called prematurely due to the President of Democracy election failure in the Greek Parliament. The framework of the aforementioned election is mainly defined by issues directly related to economic crisis and the recovery of its consequences. The political debate was between pro- and anti-bailout parties and mainly between New Democracy (ND) and Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA), regarding the management of the debt, the attitudes towards the EU, TROIKA and the country's lenders in general. The outcome of the election, the win of the left-wing SYRIZA for the very first time, the coalition government of SYRIZA the right-wing party of Independent Greeks (ANEL) in combination with the marked defeat of ND and PASOK, changed considerably the political and electoral landscape of the country. Within this frame this paper aims to examine the behavior and the attitudes of the political personnel, induced by this period of crisis.

The opinions of candidate MPs were recorded as a part of the international project "Comparative Candidate Survey" (CCS). This project attempts through a survey of parliamentary candidates to study their opinions and characteristics and to illustrate similarities and differences based on their demographic and social characteristics. In Greece, the research has taken place since 2007 by the laboratory of Applied Political Research of the department of Political Science of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.TH). The variables that we examine in this paper correspond to the questions of the Section C "Issues and Policies" of the "CCS Common Core questionnaire" (2013) and reflect the main dimensions of electoral competition

## Literature Review

The major part of our analysis is dedicated to issues. In the last decades there is an upward trend regarding the importance of issues in political arena and electoral competition (See Franklin 1985; Dalton 1996). Therefore, issues and consequently issue voting do matter in modern elections. Generally speaking, during periods of social and economic turmoil, like the current economic crisis, where security and stability in politics is questioned, a hypothesis regarding the increase in the influence of issue voting and other short-term factors can easily be made (Nie *et al.* 1976). Especially in recessionary times the economic conditions have a higher effect in voting decision, in contrast to prosperity times where long-term factors such as party identification or more salient short-term issues dominate the party choice (Bloom and Price 1975; Lewis Beck & Paldam 2000).

“Issues” is one of the three key factors that influence the electoral competition; the other two are “parties” and “persons”. All three operate either independently or in most cases interact defining the electoral behavior. More specifically, issues are “a multidimensional concept” (Borre 2001:13) and they refer to matters or group of matters that cause the public interest and set the agenda, including “any questions of public policy which have been or are a matter of controversy and are sources of disagreement between political parties” (Denver and Hands 1990:20). Therefore, issues have a main role in the electoral or political process as the political discourse of parties and persons is articulated around them.

Usually, when we refer to issues, we refer to a group of issues or the so-called issue-categories. Issues can be classified according to their thematic into categories that reflect the major dimensions of electoral competition<sup>1</sup>. In this paper we examine issues that concern immigration, moral values, law and order, welfare state, economy and European integration. Nevertheless, these categories are part of a broader classification, which can correspond to political cleavages

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<sup>1</sup> Lijphart (1999), for instance, defines seven issue dimensions of political competitiveness (socioeconomic, religious, cultural-ethnic, urban-rural, regime support, foreign policy and post-materialism). Political parties are usually distributed along multiple dimensions of identification, without necessarily meaning that they compete along the same dimensions and all dimensions have the same importance; it is possible some dimensions not to be significant at all or there is the possibility the spectrum of competition to be one-dimensional despite the multiple dimensions of identification.

determining the partisan alignments and voting choices, as they are defined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

The main dimensions of political competitiveness are the left-right dimension referring to socioeconomic issues, the authoritarian-libertarian dimension pertaining to moral values<sup>2</sup> and the dimension of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism that concerns issues such as European integration, immigration and globalization. However, in Greek case this dimension also includes issues regarding the economic crisis and the management of the debt and there is evidence that the economic left-right dimension has been aligned with the Europeanism and anti-Europeanism dimension<sup>3</sup> (Andreadis 2015; Andreadis *et al.* 2014; Freire *et al.* 2014; Tsatsanis *et al.* 2014).

## **Findings**

Relying on data of the Greek Candidate Survey of 2015 this paper intends to provide information concerning the attitudes of the Greek candidates MPs on specific political issues, taking into account their party affiliation. Given that the survey is still in progress, the presented results are not final. Most of the variables in question have the form of a statement, where the candidate MPs have to declare how much they agree or disagree with the given statement. Finally, we examine candidates of all the parliamentary parties in Greece but the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the far-right Golden Dawn (XA) due to lack of adequate data. The parties that are included in this analysis are: The Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA), the centre-right New Democracy (ND), the centre-left POTAMI, the Pan-Hellenic Socialistic Movement (PASOK) and the right or extreme right party Independent Greeks (ANEL) (see table 1)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Lipset (1960) observed that during the 1950s authoritarian issues and their capacity to crosscut the left-right dimension, highlighting values such as freedom and equality, attracted the attention of both electors and electorate. Moreover, Borre (2001:88) elaborates that “Issue of law and order, of minority rights and racial equality and of democratic liberties were observed to rise prominence in certain elections and to form the backbone of mass movements”.

<sup>3</sup> The cleavage between Europeanism and anti-Europeanism or in other words the issue at stake, for or against the EU, constitutes a new political debate with growing significance in European party systems. This cleavage can be part of the more general cleavage of introversion and extroversion or ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism. (See Norris 2003)

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the ideological placement of the parties in the elections of 2015 see Andreadis 2015.

**Table 1 – Distribution of Candidate MPs according to their party affiliation**

		Party_id			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SYRIZA	87	16,9	16,9	16,9
	ND	110	21,3	21,3	38,2
	POTAMI	108	20,9	20,9	59,1
	PASOK	100	19,4	19,4	78,5
	ANEL	111	21,5	21,5	100,0
	Total	516	100,0	100,0	

The first statement in question concerns immigration and more specifically it claims that “immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Greece”. Most of the candidates disagree (36,5%) or neither agree nor disagree (26,7%) with this statement. The candidates that agree the most are the candidates of ANEL (31,3% agree and 25% strongly agree with it), confirming the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the party. On the other hand the statement is less supported by the candidates of SYRIZA (45,1% disagree and 18,3% strongly disagree with it). Finally the opinions of the candidates of ND, POTAMI and PASOK seem to be split into agree, neither agree nor disagree and disagree.

**Table 2 – Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Greece. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

Immigrants should be required to adapt to host country’s customs.						
	SYRIZA	ND	POTAMI	PASOK	ANEL	Total
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	13 18,3%	3 4,7%	5 5,1%	5 6,8%	1 1,3%	27 7,0%
<b>Disagree</b>	32 45,1%	19 29,7%	41 41,8%	29 39,7%	20 25,0%	141 36,5%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	20 28,2%	21 32,8%	30 30,6%	18 24,7%	14 17,5%	103 26,7%

<b>Agree</b>	6 8,5%	16 25,0%	15 15,3%	14 19,2%	25 31,3%	76 19,7%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	0 0,0%	5 7,8%	7 7,1%	7 9,6%	20 25,0%	39 10,1%
<b>Total</b>	71 100,0%	64 100,0%	98 100,0%	73 100,0%	80 100,0%	386 100,0%

The following statement examines the role of the state in the economy claiming that “Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy”. Although the role of the state in the economy has always been a controversial issue in public debate having its roots in the eternal battle between capitalism and socialism, the majority of the candidates no matter their placement in the political spectrum disagree (53,2%) with this statement. However, the candidates of SYRIZA disagree the most with it, as 33,3% strongly disagree and 52,2% disagree.

**Table 3 – Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

<b>Governments should abstain from intervening in the economy</b>						
	<b>SYRIZA</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>POTAMI</b>	<b>PASOK</b>	<b>ANEL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	23 33,3%	10 15,2%	14 14,6%	16 21,3%	15 18,1%	78 20,1%
<b>Disagree</b>	36 52,2%	42 63,6%	52 54,2%	41 54,7%	36 43,4%	207 53,2%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	2 2,9%	4 6,1%	14 14,6%	6 8,0%	11 13,3%	37 9,5%
<b>Agree</b>	7 10,1%	7 10,6%	12 12,5%	12 16,0%	15 18,1%	53 13,6%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	1 1,4%	3 4,5%	4 4,2%	0 0,0%	6 7,2%	14 3,6%
<b>Total</b>	69 100,0%	66 100,0%	96 100,0%	75 100,0%	83 100,0%	389 100,0%

The statement “Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law” seems to constitute a matter of controversy among the candidate MPs. It is less supported by candidates of SYRIZA (50%

strongly disagree and 37,1% disagree with it) and candidates of POTAMI (43,4% strongly disagree and 34,3% disagree with it). On the other hand the aforementioned statement is more supported by candidates of ANEL (32,9% strongly agree and 28% agree with it). Finally, the candidates of ND do not seem to have the same attitude towards this statement, since 30,2% agree or neither agree nor disagree with it, while 22,2% disagree with it.

**Table 4 - Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law. Distribution of Candidates' attitudes by political party**

Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law						
	SYRIZA	ND	POTAMI	PASOK	ANEL	Total
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	35 50,0%	3 4,8%	43 43,4%	14 19,4%	5 6,1%	100 25,9%
<b>Disagree</b>	26 37,1%	14 22,2%	34 34,3%	24 33,3%	9 11,0%	107 27,7%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	7 10,0%	19 30,2%	11 11,1%	21 29,2%	18 22,0%	76 19,7%
<b>Agree</b>	0 0,0%	19 30,2%	6 6,1%	7 9,7%	23 28,0%	55 14,2%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	2 2,9%	8 12,7%	5 5,1%	6 8,3%	27 32,9%	48 12,4%
<b>Total</b>	70 100,0%	63 100,0%	99 100,0%	72 100,0%	82 100,0%	386 100,0%

The following statement refers to women: “Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs and promotions”. The majority of the candidate MPs disagree more or less with statement (57,8% disagree and 17,8% strongly disagree with it); while PASOK candidates seem to disagree the most with it (21,1 % strongly disagree and 59,2% disagree).

**Table 5 - Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs and promotions. Distribution of Candidates' attitudes by political party**

Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs and promotions						
	SYRIZA	ND	POTAMI	PASOK	ANEL	Total

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	8 11,4%	10 15,4%	19 19,2%	16 21,1%	17 20,5%	70 17,8%
<b>Disagree</b>	40 57,1%	40 61,5%	59 59,6%	45 59,2%	43 51,8%	227 57,8%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	13 18,6%	10 15,4%	12 12,1%	10 13,2%	13 15,7%	58 14,8%
<b>Agree</b>	9 12,9%	4 6,2%	7 7,1%	4 5,3%	6 7,2%	30 7,6%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	0 0,0%	1 1,5%	2 2,0%	1 1,3%	4 4,8%	8 2,0%
<b>Total</b>	70 100,0%	65 100,0%	99 100,0%	76 100,0%	83 100,0%	393 100,0%

The following statement concerns law and order claiming that “People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences”. The statement is supported more by candidates of ND (60% agree with it) and candidates of ANEL (27,7% strongly agree and 36,1% agree with it). On the other hand, this statement is less supported by candidates of SYRIZA (24,6% disagree and 33,3% neither agree nor disagree with it) and candidates of PASOK (although 40,5% agree with it, 23% disagree with it).

**Table 6 - People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

<b>People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences</b>						
	<b>SYRIZA</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>POTAMI</b>	<b>PASOK</b>	<b>ANEL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	4 5,8%	0 0,0%	1 1,0%	2 2,7%	1 1,2%	8 2,1%
<b>Disagree</b>	17 24,6%	7 10,8%	12 12,1%	17 23,0%	8 9,6%	61 15,6%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	23 33,3%	10 15,4%	26 26,3%	14 18,9%	21 25,3%	94 24,1%
<b>Agree</b>	23 33,3%	39 60,0%	43 43,4%	30 40,5%	30 36,1%	165 42,3%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	2 2,9%	9 13,8%	17 17,2%	11 14,9%	23 27,7%	62 15,9%



<b>Total</b>	69	65	99	74	83	390
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Another statement that seems to be supported by almost all the candidate MPs no matter their party affiliation and their ideological background refers to social security. More specifically, the statement “Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government” is supported by 97,5% of the candidate MPs who participate in the survey (55,6% strongly agree and 41,9% agree with it). However, most supportive seem to be the candidates of SYRIZA, since 74,6% strongly agree with it and then the candidates of ANEL with 58,5%.

**Table 7 - Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

<b>Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government</b>						
	<b>SYRIZA</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>POTAMI</b>	<b>PASOK</b>	<b>ANEL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	0 0,0%	2 3,0%	2 2,0%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	4 1,0%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	1 1,4%	4 6,0%	1 1,0%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	6 1,5%
<b>Agree</b>	17 23,9%	28 41,8%	49 49,5%	37 49,3%	34 41,5%	165 41,9%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	53 74,6%	33 49,3%	47 47,5%	38 50,7%	48 58,5%	219 55,6%
<b>Total</b>	71 100,0%	67 100,0%	99 100,0%	75 100,0%	82 100,0%	394 100,0%

Income inequalities are another important issue that it was deteriorated considerably because of the economic crisis and the collapse of middle class. The statement that is examined claims that “The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels” and it is supported by the majority of the candidates of all the parties. However, it is supported more by the candidates of SYRIZA (74,7% strongly agree and 23,9% agree with it) and then the candidates of ANEL (51,8% strongly agree and 47% agree with it). Finally, it is worth

mentioning that a considerable group of ND candidates (12,5%) and some candidates of POTAMI (8,2%) neither agree nor disagree with the aforementioned statement.

**Table 8 - The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels. Distribution of Candidates' attitudes by political party**

The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels						
	SYRIZA	ND	POTAMI	PASOK	ANEL	Total
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	c 0,0%	0 0,0%	3 3,1%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	3 ,8%
<b>Disagree</b>	0 0,0%	3 4,7%	5 5,1%	2 2,7%	1 1,2%	11 2,8%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	1 1,4%	8 12,5%	8 8,2%	3 4,0%	0 0,0%	20 5,1%
<b>Agree</b>	17 23,9%	31 48,4%	48 49,0%	42 56,0%	39 47,0%	177 45,3%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	53 74,6%	22 34,4%	34 34,7%	28 37,3%	43 51,8%	180 46,0%
<b>Total</b>	71 100,0%	64 100,0%	98 100,0%	75 100,0%	83 100,0%	391 100,0%

Another statement referring to immigration is the following: “Immigrants are good for Greek economy”. Most of the candidates seem to agree with it (41%) and especially the candidates of SYRIZA, the most pro-immigrant parliamentary party in Greece, (53,5% agree and 26,8% strongly agree with the statement), the candidates of POTAMI follow (55,6% agree and 13,1% strongly agree; while 22,2% neither agree nor disagree with it) and the candidates of PASOK (50% agree with it). However, as far as the candidates of PASOK are concerned, 20, 3% disagree while 18,9% neither agree nor disagree with it. A more negative attitude have the candidates of ND towards this statement but they also seem divided (36,9% disagree 24,6% agree or neither agree nor disagree with it). Finally, the statement is less supported by the candidates of ANEL (34,5% disagree and 29,2% strongly disagree with it).

**Table 9 – Immigrants are good for Greek economy. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

<b>Immigrants are good for the country's economy</b>						
	<b>SYRIZA</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>POTAMI</b>	<b>PASOK</b>	<b>ANEL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	1 1,4%	8 12,3%	2 2,0%	1 1,4%	17 20,2%	29 7,4%
<b>Disagree</b>	2 2,8%	24 36,9%	7 7,1%	15 20,3%	29 34,5%	77 19,6%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	11 15,5%	16 24,6%	22 22,2%	14 18,9%	20 23,8%	83 21,1%
<b>Agree</b>	38 53,5%	16 24,6%	55 55,6%	37 50,0%	15 17,9%	161 41,0%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	19 26,8%	1 1,5%	13 13,1%	7 9,5%	3 3,6%	43 10,9%
<b>Total</b>	71 100,0%	65 100,0%	99 100,0%	74 100,0%	84 100,0%	393 100,0%

Finally, it is worth examining the attitudes of the candidate MPs towards the EU. More specifically, they were asked to evaluate the Greek Membership of the EU choosing among good bad or neither good or bad. The absolute majority of the candidates of all the parties consider the Greek membership as a good thing. More supportive are the candidates of ND (98,5% it is a good thing), PASOK (98,6% it is a good thing) and POTAMI (96% it is a good thing) and less supportive seem to be the candidates of ANEL (11,1% it is a bad thing and 38,3% it is neither good or bad) and SYRIZA(3,1% it is a bad thing and 34,4% it is neither good or bad).

**Table 10 – Evaluation of the Greek membership of the EU. Distribution of Candidates’ attitudes by political party**

<b>Generally speaking, do you think that Greek membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?</b>						
	<b>SYRIZA</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>POTAMI</b>	<b>PASOK</b>	<b>ANEL</b>	<b>Total</b>
a good thing	40	65	96	72	41	314

	62,5%	98,5%	96,0%	98,6%	50,6%	81,8%
a bad thing	2	0	0	0	9	11
	3,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	11,1%	2,9%
neither good or bad	22	1	4	1	31	59
	34,4%	1,5%	4,0%	1,4%	38,3%	15,4%
Total	64	66	100	73	81	384
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

## Conclusions

This paper examines the attitudes and the stances of the candidates MPs towards specific issues after the elections of 2015 investigating consensus or conflict among them. There are issues where the ideological differences of the candidates are not very obvious and the majority of the candidates of all the parliamentary parties in question seem to share the same opinion such as social security and income inequalities. Hence, it seems that the conjuncture of economic crisis leaves aside some ideological differences. Regarding the EU, the absolute majority of the candidates of all the parties consider the Greek membership as a good thing; however some of the candidates of SYRIZA and ANEL do not have the same opinion, as a result of their anti-bailout stance. On the other hand there are issues where marked differences are observed in the attitudes of the candidate MPs and they are mostly issues related to immigration, law and order and some moral issues, especially the same-sex marriages. Therefore, it is noticed a conflict between authoritarian and libertarian attitudes. The most considerable debate is noticed between the candidates of the two governmental parties, SYRIZA and ANEL questioning the future of their collaboration.

However, since the survey has not been completed yet, no absolute conclusion can be drawn. Taking into account, for instance, issues concerning the management of the debt or the commitments of the Greek government to its lenders which determined the electoral competition before and after the election we would have a more integrate image of the political debate between the candidate MPs. In this paper the statements in question focus more on the

authoritarian-libertarian dimension and less on the pro- or anti- bailout debate. This paper presents only some first findings of the Greek candidate survey of 2015, hoping to be the first stone to more analyses to come.

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# **The role of Greece in the Council of Ministers from 2000 till today: The Greek stimulus to the ECOFIN. How do we assess the role of Greece in coalition building?**

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## **Abstract**

The Council of Ministers is the most important decision-making body in the European Union, especially when it comes to day-to-day EU legislation. It is desirable to acquire more knowledge of the sources, mechanisms and conditions of political success there. A deeper understanding of negotiation procedures and the influence of obscured variables will allow us to detect the factors that determine actor's bargaining power. Negotiations in the European Union Council of Ministers are not only taking place within formal decision-making structures. National actors organize themselves in coalitions and strive to find allies and coordinate their positions prior to formal negotiation meetings. For a country to be successful in implementing negotiation strategies means to master the complexity of the process. Member states have different approaches to the process of EU negotiation in order to increase their bargaining power. The question that has to be answered here is to what extent and under what conditions can the coalition-building process enhance bargaining power of Greece.

## **Introduction**

European Union is a relatively strong organization today, as, according to William Wallace (2005: 491), "The EU system, through the intensive interactions of transnational and trans-governmental networks which now characterize it, has become a collective system of governance, resting on overlapping elites". He adds to this that "it is, however, a post-sovereign system, within which many of the traditional distinctions between domestic and international have been eroded. It is, also, only partial political system, with little popular engagement and fragile legitimacy" (*ibidem*: 483). An instrument of utmost importance in integrating Europe is negotiation and is seen as "the predominant policy mode and the main source of the EU's successful functioning" (Lodge and Pfetsch 1998: 293). Given that the EU was born as a voluntary association of sovereign states, one could even describe negotiations as "a behavioural manifestation of the EU's fundamental identity" (Dür and Mateo 2010: 615).

Negotiating in the Council of the EU poses some challenges common to most international negotiations, but there are some dimensions much more specific. The EU as a system of international negotiation can survive only if a certain quality and quantity of policy outcomes is reached. It is common knowledge that without progress

in the integration process, EU is facing disintegration. Therefore, the negotiation process in the Union is of relatively greater importance than negotiations in other international institutions (Meerts 1999: 79-93).

Some of the general traits of EU negotiations are the following.

- A. Negotiations within the Council take place in Brussels, in the Justus Lipsius and Borchette buildings, in an institutional framework made up of formal and informal rules. The member states reach decisions via a set of precise procedures and rules defined by a series of norms. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that, despite the potential threat of a vote, decisions are reached by consensus, even when it is not imposed by the rules. In more than 75% of the cases where decisions might have been taken by voting procedure, Member States have still arrived at an agreement by consensus (Hayes-Renshaw *et al.* 2006: 163). Only 30 % of all Council decisions are taken by applying a unanimity voting rule (Wallace *et al.* 2010: 95).
- B. These are complex negotiations because of the dense interaction of Member States and European Institutions, a unique trait in the world. The main eu institutions act not only as a forum, but are also stakeholders in the decision-making process itself (Ioakeimidis 1995: 32-41). Moreover, the EU's institutional set-up ensures that negotiations among its member states and supranational institutions are "recurrent in nature" (Dür and Mateo 2010: 615)
- C. European multilateral and multicultural negotiations always involve more than two players. High level of homogeneity, cultural identity and shared values are conducive to structuring productive negotiating behaviours (Checkel 2005: 804-812). "Subject to a distant shadow of the future" (Dür and Mateo 2010: 617), meaning eu membership doesn't expire, member states and institutions build a relationship based on trust, or even the creation of common identity (Lewis 2005: 937-71). Thus actors learn to react in accordance with the standards in place and even consider them as beneficial (Heisenberg 2005: 65-90). This is the case of Sweden: the country received a record number of votes contesting decisions in its first year of membership, later adopting the standard consensus once it had become used to it (Talberg 2010: 633-647).
- D. EU negotiations also tend to be multi-issue in scope as they often cover several items on the agenda, as, for example, in COREPER. It is then possible to link several themes together, with a view of bargaining one item against another. Formal discussions take place simultaneously and this may facilitate cross-issue trade-offs, by making agreements on the exchange of ascent more credible. Hard bargaining may occur (Fearon 1998: 269-305).
- E. Consensus-seeking behavior and problem-solving capacity in EU negotiations is probably the oldest normative understanding in the Council's collective action. The Council's preference for consensus-based outcomes is recurrently confirmed from published voting data, going back to the mid-1990s (Hayes-Renshaw *op.cit.* 2006: 163). Ernst Haas's description of the Council as "a novel community-type organ" was insightful (utterly different to what he was detecting in other international institutional settings). There is a perception on the part of member states that the EU will provide them with mutual efficiency gains on the basis of common values.



## **Scholarly Community: The plurality of methods, theories and empirical data**

One important source of strength of the new wave of research on the Council of the EU derives from reviewing some of the most cited recent work on the institution. The plurality of methods, theories and empirical data being used is overwhelming. From diverging conclusions and methodologies of academics we can infer that it is easier to describe what is not. Oddly enough, The Council, the lifeblood of the Union, is still the least accessible part of the EU decision-making process. Thus it is relatively more difficult to study. Nevertheless, we can discern categories of academic work. Drawing on Dorothee Heisenberg's work (2008: 261-276) we can categorize often-cited work on the Council. She distinguishes four (4) separate strands in the broad literature negotiations driven by the data being used: 1. qualitative empirical approach, 2. quantitative empirical approach, 3. quantitative formal approach, 4. qualitative formal models.

The qualitative empirical approach was dominant in the analysis of the Council until the mid-1990s. Researchers (Westlake 1995; Van Schendelen 1996; Corbett 2000, 2001; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1995, 1997 2006; Lews 1998, 2000, 2003a; Sherrington 2000; Elgström and Jönsson 2000) were theorizing on the best way to study and understand the developments in the Presidency and its stimulus in the EEC.

Proponents of the quantitative empirical approach (Bueno de Mesquita and Stokman 1994; Mattila and Lane 2001; Pajala and Widgren 2004; Thomson et al 2006) endeavored to scrutinize not only the input (initial bargaining positions) and the output (voting behaviour) of the negotiations, but also the actual process of coalition-building. They have looked at voting patterns in order to analyze who tends to vote with whom, against a qualified majority.

In the mid-1990s mainly American scholars began to apply rational choice formal modeling techniques, previously used for US legislative process, to the EU institutions (Garrett and Tsebelis 1996, 2001b). Two main varieties flourished. The first was calculating the institutional interplay to make hypotheses about agenda-setting in the EU and relative institutional power. As to the second variety (Hosli 1993; Widgren 1994; Johnston 1995; Sutter 200; Aleskerov *et al.* 2002) a range of studies have calculated the theoretical power of different hypothetical coalitions, based on member states' voting weights. For example, Hosli (1999) calculates the voting power of the Benelux countries and the Nordic countries acting as "blocs" in the Council. Another way of capturing coalition patterns is by looking at the expressed positions (revealed preferences) of member states. An important effort at data-gathering is the Decision-Making in the EU (DEU) project (Thomson *et al.* 2006; König and Junge 2008).

The qualitative formal approach we assume it exists, but only the EU's website asserts that the formal rules accurately reflect Council's operation.

## **Preliminary theoretical considerations**

Despite the “new phase of sophistication” in research on the Council of the EU, there are still many “dark corners waiting to be revealed” (Naurin and Wallace 2008: 1-20). One such dark corner is accounting of how, why and when institutional environments facilitate different logics of action and co-operative negotiation styles (Lewis 2010: 648-664). Rational choice institutionalism has not paid much attention to the potential independent effects of institutional environments on national negotiating behaviour. Council settings are social constructs and, according to Fritz Scharpf (1997: 84) “intermediate forms”. A more sociological reading, through process tracing and case-study-based research would provide added value in explaining a member states’ patterns of co-operative negotiation styles.

At this point the paper mainly focuses on how we can approach Greece’s negotiation behavior in the inner workings of ECOFIN, from 2000 till today, at (1) ministerial level, (2) the preparatory group structures and (3) inter-institutional venues such as in the field of codecision or Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs). A full test of the institutional environments could deliver a grained picture of the different patterns of negotiation styles. For conceptual clarity, negotiation styles are coded in dichotomous terms, either as more competitive and prone to “hard bargaining” tactics or more co-operative and prone to compromise, accommodation and consensus-seeking (Dür and Mateo 2010a: 557-578; McKibben 2010: 694-707). Andreas Warntjes (2010: 655-679) distinguishes four (4) modes of decision making employed by EU member states and institutions. The first one is “distributive bargaining”. “In this mode, actors aim to elicit as many concessions from their negotiation partners as possible while making as few as possible themselves”. Second mode is “co-operative exchange”, or trade-off and package deal, also labelled as “integrative bargaining” or “value creation”. The third one is “norm-guided behaviour”: “Through a process of socialization, actors internalize norms which become part of their identity and prescribe appropriate behaviour for certain types of situations”. This mode can also be named “Brusselization”, meaning that the dynamics of the processes in Brussels force negotiators to adjust and thereby being more apt to wheel and deal. His last mode is “deliberation”, which “establishes through truth-seeking discourse what ‘the right thing to do would be’”.

Elgström and Smith (2000: 673-683) conceptualize the EU as “a negotiation system”. They argue that the perspective of institutional environments allows us to gauge how EU negotiations are “embedded in a rich framework of formal and informal norms and rules”. Through process tracing the patterned similarities and differences across Council’s formal and informal settings, one could endeavour to map variations in institutional environments and negotiation styles. A contextualized analysis of actors’ preferences could better serve a credible empirical work, in order to make progress in understanding coalition building in the ECOFIN.

The effects of institutionalized –of various degrees- coalitions on the bargaining outcome are, as mentioned, largely unexplored. Causal theories, facts and observed behaviour are meat for political science (Heisenberg 2008: 261-276). Theorizing

about greek stimulus in the ECOFIN and causal mechanisms of institutionalized coalitions prior to formal decision-making, the study attributes significance to the pre-negotiation phase in contrast to the common tradition in coalition research of approaching the end-game. Theory is tested with qualitative empirical research.

## **Research methodology**

Jeffrey Lewis (2008: 165) supports “power in the Council transacts in several currencies”. Issues of influence and power have continuously been under in depth analysis from politicians and scholars. While large EU member states have advantage of structural power in terms of territory, population and economic strength (Moravcsik 1998, Shure and Verdun 2006), small states bargaining power increasingly depends on behavioural power resources, such as coalition building (Meerts 2013: 93-98; Ioakeimidis 2007: 95-110). “Coalitions entail the pooling of power and resources by the constituent parties in pursuit of a desired outcome” (Blavoukos and Pagoulatos 2011; 561). Coalition-building in terms of “coordinated action in reaching jointly agreed goals” (Elgström *et al.* 2001) has been widely acknowledged by the existing scholarship as “a strategic behaviour of power pooling”. Thus “coalitional behaviour is an inevitable part of EU decision-making” (Klemenčič 2005).

Informal interaction, consulting and coordination have increasingly become a part of the negotiation process in the EU. Active pre-negotiation is facilitated by informal cooperation prior to meetings. Pre-meeting coordination within institutionalized coalitions is usually held through informal consultations. It has become a tradition that the Prime Ministers and ministers meet during the breakfast in the run-up to the European Council and Council meetings (Meerts 2013: 91- 93).

As previously discussed, there are surprisingly few empirical studies of how the collective, consensus-seeking decision-making in the EU affects actors’ bargaining behaviour. The issue of power-pooling through institutionalized cooperation at the preparatory phase of the negotiations is almost missing in the explanations of bargaining power. Focusing on coalition-building as a potential source of bargaining power, a key question is addressed: “How Greece engages in coalition formation and why and when the country increases its bargaining power and acquire social influence”. In other words, which are the effects of institutional coalitions on the bargaining behaviour of Greek agents. Furthermore, what gives more bargaining advantage: *ad hoc* or institutionalized coalitions?

The PhD study hypothesizes that: The higher the degree to which a coalition is institutionalized, the higher the potential to affect its members bargaining power. Drawing on rational choice institutionalism and normative theoretical approaches of institutionalism a competitive testing of theories is trying to detect potential synergies between the logic of action. What gives more bargaining advantage – preference-based aggregations of member states on an *ad hoc* coalitions (Elgström 2001,

Tallberg 2007), or institutionalized coalitions (Naurin 2007) that influence negotiation outcomes due to repeated networking interactions?

The independent variable, coalition building, represents variation on the degree of institutionalization (Elgström *et al.*2001:113; Lewis 2010). Highly institutionalized versus *ad hoc* cooperation is spelled out by drawing on three conditions: more or less formal structures and procedures, which are supporting the channels of cooperation; frequency and continuity of interaction, and commonly defined goals.

Greece's preferences constitute a second explanatory, though endogenous, variable, by distinguishing between high and low convergence of preferences amongst the coalition. Preferences are conceptualized as preconditions within coalitions, as they determine "who is cooperating with whom" (Naurin 2008:4).

The dependent variable is Greek bargaining power, that is the capacity to achieve a "distributional outcome in the Council negotiations that as closely as possible reflects its preferences" (Tallberg 2008: 687). Defining initial positions as policy positions and the applied positions as negotiation positions (Arregui 2008: 852-875), the bargaining power is measured by the difference between the distance to outcome and the distance to reversion point. Reversion point, often treated as *status quo*, is the point where negotiations end up if the member states fail to reach the agreement.

A daunting array of intervening variables comes into play, including: actor characteristics (Dür and Mateo2010b), issue characteristics (McKibben 2010), and domestic-level factors (Bailer 2010).

Finally, I test hypotheses by a qualitative empirical approach in two steps. The first step draws on primary and secondary data and on surveys with Greek government officials in Athens and Brussels. The main questions addressed here relates to the government's "choosing cooperation partners prior to the Council negotiations and the underlying motives behind these choices". The second step is conducted on the basis of three case studies - economic governance, financial integration and taxation matters- and semi-structured elite interviews that focus exclusively on legislative negotiations on particular legislative dossiers. In addition, the quantitative voting record can be triangulated with the qualitative interview data.

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