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Confrontation still? Examining parties' policy positions in Greece

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Recent research has shown that, in several countries, the Comparative Abstract Manifestos Project (CMP) estimates of party positions do not seem to perform well in terms of face validity and reliability. A fairly typical example of such a deviant case is that of Greece, where for the most part the findings based on this approach seem to suggest that parties' positions are characterized by extreme discontinuity and leapfrogging. Employing a different coding methodology whose departure point is that party competition is still a matter of direct confrontation between parties, this analysis attempts to measure the positions of Greek parties on three issue dimensions: level of state intervention in the economy, support towards the political integration of the European Union and common European cultural identity. According to its findings, the traditional left-right distinction is still evident in parties' economic stances whereas the other two issue dimensions indicate that there is an emerging new politics dimension which distinguishes between the centripetal political forces on the one hand and the extreme right and left parties on the other. Importantly, this relatively new coding procedure seems to provide estimates that outperform those stemming from the CMP data both in terms of reliability and face validity.

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Introduction

Studies of post-1974 Greek politics have focused primarily on two different but interrelated issues: the classification of the party system according to the

typology suggested by Sartori (1976) and the ideological transformation of its major political parties (see Zafeiropoulos and Marantzidis, 2001; Pappas, 2003 and Kalyvas and Marantzidis, 2002; Lyrintzis, 2005, respectively). The discussion about this second aspect was for long sustained upon circumstantial evidence because it is only recently that scholars have tried to examine the parties' ideological trajectories by using the data gathered by the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), which allow for an over-time analysis of the evolution in the ideological image of the parties (for example Konstantinidis, 2004). The problem with these analyses, however, is that they tend to take the findings produced by these data at face value, without examining the extent to which the method employed in this coding applies to the Greek case (for example Budge and Klingemann, 2001; Konstantinidis, 2004). Thus, although the picture provided by these data does not seem to match with commonsensical knowledge about the parties' ideological trajectories, the validity of these results remains unquestionable.

The purpose of this paper is to empirically examine the ideological spectrum of the Greek party system by using a different methodology. Questioning the applicability of the theoretical underpinnings of the CMP data in the Greek case, we employ a relatively new method for measuring the parties' ideological positions and test this method on the 2004 European election. Rather than adopting a salience approach with regard to the way parties differentiate between each other, our departure point is that party competition in Greece is mostly characterized by a confrontational aspect. This hypothesis finds considerable empirical support in the parties' manifestos in the 2004 election for the European Parliament (EP), because the findings suggest that a 'confrontational' approach seems to account more adequately for the positions of Greek parties in the ideological space. The implications from this analysis go beyond the case of Greece, however. Without enjoying the available data to test this theory in a longitudinal perspective, we argue that the distinction between confrontation and salience is ultimately an empirical question that merits more systematic attention in a case-by-case analysis.

Locating Party Policy Positions: Theories and Methods

Spatial models, largely inspired by Hotelling's (1929) model of market competition and the work by Downs (1957) and Black (1958), have been employed extensively for the analysis of party competition (for example Wittman, 1990; Budge, 1994; Adams, 2001). What began as an attempt to locate each party's position in the ideological left–right dimension developed later to more elaborate models, which introduced more policy dimensions. In general, however, regardless whether parties are represented in a one- two- or

multiple-dimensional space, there is a common underlying idea: parties can be located according to their positions on one or more dimensions whose extremes represent two diametrically opposing situations: left *vs* right, libertarian *vs* authoritarian, pro-EU *vs* anti-EU attitudes and so on.

Three main approaches have been proposed for the study of party location: expert surveys, opinion poll data and content analysis of party manifestos. Although there is an ongoing discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (Budge, 2000; Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings, 2001; Mair, 2001; Marks *et al*, 2007; McDonald *et al*, 2007; Steenbergen and Marks, 2007; Volkens, 2007), the content analysis of party manifestos has nevertheless become widely popular mainly because of its greater degree of impartiality. Expert surveys and opinion poll data give us a picture of the party as this is perceived by political analysts and voters, respectively. Apart from being essentially less objective, these judgements combine both the party's discourse and its every-day policy practice. Although parties' real policies are the ultimate and probably most reliable indicator of a party's stances, it is impossible to be examined without the introduction of case-specific and idiosyncratic parameters.

Given the immense difficulties associated with the systematic measurement and evaluation of parties' policies in the real practice, most political researchers have shifted their attention to party manifestos. The latter provide an accurate and representative picture of where the parties stand in the policy space, without requiring any further knowledge about their policy record. Measuring policies is a seemingly endless procedure with ambiguous results when it comes to inter-party comparisons (because real policies are only available for government parties). Thus, it seems that, among the available alternatives, the safest way to measure parties' stances is to refer to the parties themselves. Most of them construct and update their manifestos, which can be a valuable source to examine party stances over various policy dimensions. In most cases they are designed before the elections and thus might not bear a full resemblance to their policy postures. Some controversial issues might not be included or parties' positions in certain policy areas might be qualified so that they can come closer to median voter preferences. Furthermore, they are usually written by a small group of party experts and may thus fail to represent the whole spectrum of party's policy views. Consequently, their propositions do not always reflect in full detail the various different aspects that are likely to coexist within the party. Nevertheless, party manifestos seem to constitute the most reliable source to make estimates of party positions. Given that, in most cases, they are either discussed or at least confirmed in party congresses, they are a safe source to identify party's mean policy stances. This is not to treat parties as closed unitary actors. They are not. Yet, party discipline in parliamentary democracies leads parties to conceal intra-party differences and

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to demonstrate a unified policy view. It is this precise view that is reflected in their manifestos. Furthermore, an added advantage of this approach is that it allows researchers to trace back to the past so as to estimate party positions in previous decades. This possibility, which is not offered by either expert surveys or opinion polls, facilitates the examination of changes in party platforms through time.

Two different approaches have been developed for the study of party manifestos. The first, which emphasizes issue salience, stems from the valence theory of voting behaviour (Stokes, 1963, 1992). According to its originator, on most issues public opinion is clustered around a common policy aim. People tend to agree on most policy goals and parties compete to show which of them is most competent to achieve those globally desired aims. This is also reflected in their manifestos. Even if specific policy areas are essentially discussed by all parties, the relative intensity with which each party stresses each issue depends largely on the extent to which it considers it to be salient (Robertson, 1976). Under this perspective, parties enjoy some type of issue ownership in negotiating and elaborating certain matters because of the fact that they are regarded by the vast majority as more capable of administering them (see Petrocik, 1996; Sanders, 1996, pp. 203-231; Clarke et al, 2004, pp. 62-64). Thus, in an effort to make use of their comparative advantage, they tend to weight these issues more disproportionately in their manifestos. For instance, right-wing parties are expected to have relatively more frequent statements regarding issues of free market than socialist parties (Clarke et al, 2004, pp. 62-64). Following this line of argument, the Manifesto Research Group (MRG, later renamed CMP) began in 1979 a large comparative project to measure the frequency with which certain coded issues are mentioned in each manifesto (Budge, 2002; Volkens, 2002), a trend followed later by several computerized word count methods that work along the same salience assumptions (Pennings and Keman, 2002; Laver et al, 2003).

The second approach, which has been called 'confrontational', is substantially different. Its departure point is that parties do not differentiate themselves in an indirect way. Instead, they are competing rather directly, supporting openly their, often opposing, positions (Pellikaan *et al*, 2003, 2007). The underlying logic behind this approach is that having only scarce information, citizens will decide which party to vote for by weighting more those issues in which they can identify greater policy inter-party differences (Downs, 1957, p. 46). In many cases, what is more important is not simply the extent to which each party purports to either overstate or underplay a specific issue, but its specific view on it. For example, on issues such as the death penalty, euthanasia, legalization of drugs or homosexual rights, voters do not judge parties according to whether they adopt a position but they rather examine what exactly their stances about a given issue are (Laver, 2001, p. 66). So, in a hypothetical left–right dimension where the only indicator is voters' views on the deregulation of the health system, two parties with relatively different views are to be located to either the left or the right of the dimension on the grounds of their position on this precise matter rather than on the grounds of the relative frequency with which they mention this subject.

If we agree that the content analysis of party manifestos is the best (feasible) approach for locating political parties along policy dimensions, which of the two methods – 'salience' vs 'confrontational' – is more appropriate? Over the past 20 years, the MRG/CMP approach has emerged as the *prima facie* method of coding party manifestos. Apart from theoretical concerns (for example Laver, 2001; Benoit and Laver, 2007), several criticisms have been made of the MRG/CMP approach based on empirical evidence (for example Pelizzo, 2003; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006). The inability to produce plausible left–right scores for parties in several countries including Greece (Dinas and Gemenis, 2009) and the successful implementation of 'confrontational' coding schemes to various projects (for example Pellikaan *et al*, 2003, 2007; Kriesi *et al*, 2006; de Lange, 2007) prompted us to turn to the following alternative method of estimating the Greek political parties' policy positions.

A 'Confrontational' Approach of Estimating Policy Positions

Although Budge (2001, pp. 221–222) has dismissed the possibility of a 'confrontational' approach in estimating parties' policy positions as costly, unreliable and theoretically inconsistent, his argument assumes that any approach is required to use CMP data as its basis. Nevertheless, as the Party Change Project has shown (Harmel *et al*, 1995), political scientists can always generate data from party manifestos using alternative operationalizations and coding schemes.

In this paper, we employ the operationalization developed for an EU-wide comparative project of coding parties' manifestos according to the 'confrontational' approach. In particular, we examine the Greek political parties' positions regarding three policy dimensions: economic reform, political integration and cultural identity. Each dimension consists of 10 policy issues with a common reference point (see Appendix A). The choice of policy issues for each policy dimension was based on the following four rules (Pellikaan *et al*, 2003, p. 33). Policy issues had to

- (a) be representative of the dimension which they intended to be measures of;
- (b) be politically relevant to the 2004 EP election;
- (c) represent a conflict between different positions because 'valence' issues would not make good indicators;
- (d) appear in as many party manifestos as possible.

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The three dimensions chosen for the project largely reflect the political space of the European Union (EU) (Hix, 1999; Hooghe *et al*, 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2009). The first dimension (dimension X: 'Economic Reform') is related to the classic distinction between economic left and right (between free market and state intervention in the economy). The second dimension (dimension Y: 'Political Integration') measures the parties' positions regarding EU institutions and pillars. Finally, we examine the parties' positions on a third policy dimension (dimension Z: 'Cultural Identity'), which considers issues concerning the cultural identity of the EU (see Appendix A).

Each of the authors of this paper coded the texts for each of the three dimensions, independently of the other. We followed this process in order to be able to cross-check the results and to eliminate certain types of errors, associated with the reliability of results, which can occur when humans are involved in the coding of data (Crittenden and Hill, 1971). Following the 'confrontational' method of the above-mentioned research project, we coded as 1 each party's position in favour of economic reform (for issues in policy dimension X), in favour of European integration (for issues in policy dimension Y) and in favour of a European cultural identity (for issues in policy dimension Z). Opposing positions were coded as -1. In cases of an equal number of references on conflicting positions, or in cases of no reference on any one issue, the code assigned was 0. Thus, each party for each policy dimension was placed on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 to 10.

Before assessing the measurement aspects of the constructed scales, it is important to point out a few possible shortcomings. The most important deficiency we encountered during the coding procedure was the use of zeros. Because we measured each party's position for each issue with either 1 or -1, 0should represent an intermediate, neutral stance. The non-reference to a specific issue, however, does not necessarily imply neutrality. In fact, one of the reasons that a manifesto might not mention the specific issue might be the party's attempt to 'duck' the issue. In this case non-reference is a truly neutral stance. There are several instances, however, where the reason for nonreference is that the party in question does not really have a specific policy position on the issue. As the coding scheme that we employed was developed for a comparative project involving several EU countries, it is reasonable to expect that not all policy issues used as indicators in the three dimensions are suitable for each of the countries in the project. What is important, or salient in one might be a non-issue in another. The issue of 'open skies' (X_4) , for example, did not come up in any party manifesto because it has not been an issue of political discussion in Greece. Therefore, a non-reference to X₄ does not correspond to a neutral stance but to a non-stance and it would be preferably coded as a missing value. Unfortunately, the current design of the method does not allow us to deal with this problem effectively.¹ Therefore, we coded all missing values as 0, equating them with a neutral stance on the issue. With these caveats in mind, we now proceed to a more detailed examination of the measurement properties of the coding procedure.

Measurement Diagnostics

In terms of measurement theory, the three dimensions belong to the family of summated rating scales, which from a data theory perspective implies that the coding procedure has generated single stimulus data (see Jacoby, 1991). The basic characteristic of these models is that they consist of a number of items all of which are conceptualized as imperfect indicators of a latent unobservable dimension. Because we generally assume that objects are allowed to be located along the latent dimension in a continuous fashion and given that each item here only classifies parties with respect to each dimension in three discrete categories (pro, against and neutral), it necessarily measures their true position with considerable error. This inherent discrepancy, however, smoothes out through the summation of the scores in all items that are intended to measure the same (unobservable) attribute (McIver and Carmines, 1981).

The most important condition for the construction of this type of scale is that the relationship between the items of the scale is monotone. A rough-and-ready way to examine whether this criterion of monotone homogeneity is satisfied here is to run correlations between each item and the scale constructed by all the other items except this item. However, because correlations measure linear functions, which are based on a stricter assumption than monotone functions, this is a quite problematic diagnostic test for the scalability of each item. The approach adopted here is thus somewhat different and less formal but probably more informative. A locally weighted regression curve (loess) has been fitted to a scatterplot between each item and the scale consisting of all other items.² Like all non-parametric regression methods, the basic idea behind the loess curve is to trace the salient features of the mean response making only minimal assumptions about its distribution (see Fitzmaurice *et al*, 2004, p. 69). Thus, a loess curve showing a monotonic pattern can be considered as a good indication that a given item fits the scale.

The graphs generated from this procedure (see Appendix B) show that the assumption of a monotone relationship seems to be generally satisfied. In the cases in which this does not appear to be the case, the fit of the curve is severely affected by unique observations, which may very well constitute outliers. Alternatively, for a small number of items, the source for the discrepancy seems to be the fact that there is very little variation among parties' positions. In effect, small N works only against the assumption of monotone homogeneity because the slope of the loess curve at each point of the graph depends on a

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very few cases and thus not only its magnitude but also its sign is estimated with very low precision.³

We next examine how well each scale captures the underlying dimension. This implies that we have to come up with some measure of the scale's reliability, that is, the proportion of the observed variance among the scale items that is due to the true variance along the underlying dimension. Of course, because the true dimension is never observable, we cannot directly apply the mathematical derivation of this definition with real data. To overcome this difficulty, a good way to proceed is to find parallel measures of the same underlying dimension and to look at the extent to which they correlate to each other. Given that such information is unavailable here, and because we lack a longitudinal perspective, we have only measured the parties' positions in a single election – thus lacking a longitudinal perspective which could permit a test of reliability net from true changes in the positions of parties – the only way that reliability can be assessed is by estimating the mean of correlations between random samples of all the items in each dimension. Such a measure is given by Cronbach's α , a statistic that calculates the mean from all off-diagonal pairwise correlations among the items in the scale. This implies that only linear relationships are tested. However, this only leads to a downward bias of the estimates, because to the extent that this assumption is not satisfied, α underestimates the true reliability score. The coefficient for dimension X is 0.904. The equivalent figures for dimensions Y and Z are 0.851 and 0.801, respectively.⁴ To be sure, given that α is based on inter-item correlations, the very small number of observations makes these estimates quite imprecise. However, as a minimum, they provide some indication that a high percentage of the variance in each true dimension is accounted for by the variation between the items of each scale.⁵

To be sure, the results are based on the assumption that fluctuations across the items summed to create each scale are only random. If, however, fluctuation among the items reflects systematic deviations stemming from various other underlying dimensions, the scale will appear reliable even when 'true' sources of variation stem from more than one latent dimensions.⁶ Summated rating scales cannot be used as a criterion for the identification of the underlying dimension (Jacoby, 1991, p. 40). In other words, we have only assumed but not established empirically that the items chosen for each scale do indeed fall under the same dimension. To test this assumption more cases are needed so that we can employ more elaborate methods specifically oriented to the exploration of the dimensional structure generating the data.

Having said that, we can still explore the extent to which the classification of our items in these three particular scales is justified by the data. We do that by using Mokken scale analysis, a semi-parametric technique, which has been primarily designed as an extension to the classical Guttman scaling for polytomous variables and adds a probabilistic aspect to the ranking of the items. If the probability of errors in ranking is significantly lower compared to the probability of such a ranking occurring by chance (Oppenheim, 1992), this is a good sign that the items of each scale form a common underlying dimension. The overall scale coefficient, Loevinger's *h*-score, which tests the extent to which the items follow an ordinal sequence (that is, a high score for one item can imply high scores for all items classified below it), is 0.70, 0.52 and 0.45 for X, Y and Z, respectively, thus surpassing the conventional limit of 0.3 (van Schuur, 2003). These findings provide further diagnostic confirmation about the measurement properties of the scales used in this study.⁷

Interpreting the Results

In this section we take a look at the results of the 'confrontational' method. Figure 1 presents the results in the economic reform policy dimension (dimension X). As can be seen, the distribution of party positions is skewed towards the left. Not unexpectedly, the only party located at the right-of-centre in this dimension is the conservative party, New Democracy (ND), which, like all other parties belonging to the group of the European People's Party, sees the EU as an institution that advocates similar macroeconomic goals emphasizing the liberalization of the market economy. Yet since the mid 1990s, ND has slowly abandoned its intense neo-liberal strategy, following a more 'populist' centripetal strategy (Pappas and Dinas, 2006, pp. 483–485) and finding itself closer to the middle of the right side of the scale. The socialists (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK), on the other hand, are located on the left side, near the mid-point of the scale, reflecting what is unanimously acknowledged as the gradual transition of European social democracy towards the right (Volkens, 2003).

Coming to the two left-wing parties, KKE (Communist Party of Greece) and SYN (Coalition of the Left, Movements and Ecology), we see that both are placed closely together near the extreme left-hand side of the scale. Although this might easily be anticipated for KKE, it might be surprising for SYN given



Figure 1: Dimension X: Economic reform.

that the party is not usually thought to be that extreme (and is usually analysed as a Euro-Communist or Green party) (Dimitras, 1996). A closer examination of SYN's manifesto, however, reveals that the party shares most of the KKE's Marxist critique of the market economy, supporting the sarcastic view of SYN as another 'watermelon' party: green on the outside, but red on the inside. It should come as no surprise then to see that the SYN, just like the Nordic 'red/ green' parties, joined the communist parties in the Confederal Group of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left of the EP.

Next is the interesting case of the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), which is much more to the left than one might have expected. Quite similar to other radical right parties in Europe (Taggart, 1995), LAOS's manifesto and other official documents evoke an obvious aspect of populism in the party's policy aims regarding the economy. Although such a deviation from mainstream liberal economic positions is evident in most radical right parties (Cole, 2005), the case of LAOS is quite distinctive because it reveals a rational strategy induced by the structure of party competition (see also van Spanje, 2007): with PASOK discarding its populist past, and moving towards the modernizing centre, LAOS aimed to cover this space so that it could appeal to this section of non-Communist voters who advocate further state intervention in the economy.

This is not unrelated, however, to a more general strategy adopted by the party to represent an important portion of voters who feel reluctant to support the general process of modernization and globalization resulting in an outright rejection of their most explicit representatives: the governing Socialist party and the EU, a point to which we will return later. To be sure, this is also the most promising constituency of most European parties (see Betz and Immerfall, 1998; van der Brug et al, 2000; van der Brug and Fennema, 2003). However, given the long-term association of these attitudes with the early PASOK era during the 1980s, characterized by the expansion of public sector, the connection between general cultural differences among social groups and economic attitudes is much clearer in the Greek case (see Diamandouros, 1993). Until the early 1990s, PASOK managed to attract a small number of social groups among disfavoured strata by launching its populist discourse. Since the early 1990s, however, this strategy was followed by KKE and, more recently, by LAOS. Because most of these voters abandoned PASOK on the grounds of its move to more centrist economic policies, LAOS was quick to formulate its economic agenda so as to appeal to this part of the electorate. In any case, LAOS is no exception to the general pattern among extreme right-wing parties, which almost invariably concentrate much more on cultural rather than traditional economic issues (Cole, 2005).

Figure 2 shows the locations of Greek parties in the cultural identity policy dimension (dimension Z). A polarized pattern emerges, because all parties



Figure 2: Dimension Z: Cultural identity.

appear to be clustered near the two extremes of the scale. This is probably because of the nature of the indicators themselves, which measure attitudes to issues such as nationalism, immigration, ethical issues and civil liberties. In effect, if the first scale can be treated as measuring party stances, in the purely economic dimension this scale can be deemed to measure party orientations in the 'libertarian–authoritarian' axis. Consequently, it illustrates more precisely than the previous (X) dimension, the new cleavage over the nature and character of value priorities. Many of the indicators refer to 'new politics' issues, although this dimension is not strictly speaking a measure of postmaterialism.

PASOK appears here to be the party most strongly advocating a common European cultural identity, closely followed successively by SYN and ND. Since the early 1990s, while in power, PASOK showed a remarkable capacity to drastically alter its previous populist image, initiating an ambitious modernizing project that gave the party three successive electoral victories. By doing this, PASOK began to transform in a gradual but steady fashion from a party that was rather indifferent to post-materialist issues into a party that stresses the importance of multiculturalism, environmental protection, gender issues and civil liberties, following the trend of other Social Democratic parties in Europe. The first evidence of this development can be seen in the party's support for what seemed like a controversial decision of the Data Protection Authority, which was denounced by the Orthodox Church of Greece (Stavrakakis, 2003) and which rejuvenated a latent political cleavage between modernizers and the adherents of what Diamandouros (1993) calls the 'underdog culture'. However, it was only after the party's change in leadership a few months before the 2004 election that this new tendency became widely evident. With a new leader determined to demonstrate in both symbolic and substantial terms the party's focus on these issues, PASOK emerged as a budding representative of post-materialist values in Greek politics.

An important contender of PASOK in this policy dimension is SYN, a party that differs from KKE less in its economic views than on cultural issues. SYN has prioritized environmental protection, grassroots democracy, multiculturalism and other post-materialist issues in its policy agenda. As the EU is seen by green (or red/green) parties as a supra-national institution that can enforce

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standards on what they consider to be salient issues and 'embrace integration if it means moving towards the 'uniting of the peoples' of Europe, the dismantling of artificial borders and increased co-operation on issues which transcend national borders' (Bomberg, 2002, p. 33), we should expect SYN to be fairly responsive to the prospect of a European cultural identity.

The case for ND is somewhat more complicated. What is shown here is most probably the result of a gradual long-term transition of the party from an authoritarian to a somewhat more libertarian position, launched primarily in order to escape from PASOK's dominance that lasted for almost two decades. In order to return to power, ND needed to shift away from its traditional image of a pure conservative party so that the profile of a more liberal party could be shaped. It could not sacrifice, however, its principles on market economy, trying to avoid a belated 'contagion from the left'. Consequently, would have to take place on another policy dimension. This change thus took place largely in the 'authoritarian-libertarian' dimension, where the new party leader, Costas Karamanlis, adopted the strategy of claiming what he referred to as the 'middle space', and ND managed to release itself from the legacy of the old-right (often associated in collective memory in Greece with authoritarian regimes) to a modern centre-right party adhering to the values of free economy and civil liberties. Its reluctance, however, to position itself in favour of a common European culture on issues such as the incident involving the Data Protection Authority may explain why the party is positioned towards a more 'national identity' position compared to PASOK or SYN.

Finally, at the other end of the scale we find both KKE and LAOS, two parties that seem to mostly adhere to materialist views (LAOS, for example, makes absolutely no reference to environmental issues in its 52-page long manifesto, whereas for KKE 'new politics' issues are always subsumed under Marxist orthodoxy). Both parties nevertheless adhere to a very nationalist discourse. For KKE, this is legitimized on the grounds of its more general anti-Western attitudes upon which the party has lately based its electoral strategy (Kalyvas and Marantzidis, 2002, pp. 678–679), which does not leave much room for pro-European attitudes towards culture-related issues. Blended with generous doses of conspiracy theory, the political discourses of both parties (but especially LAOS) has been based on the effort to capture the underdogs from the globalization process, which is to be blamed for the destabilization of traditional social structures and values.

Figure 3 shows the results of the policy dimension on European political integration (dimension Y). In this dimension, the Greek parties seem divided between those clearly favouring the perspective of the further unification of the EU (PASOK, ND) and those readily rejecting it (KKE, LAOS). Interestingly, the two groups reflect the parties' views toward the issue of the European Constitution. Although this was already an issue to which most parties referred



Figure 3: Dimension Y: Political integration.

in their manifestos, their actual positions were not fully articulated until the referenda that took place in other European countries brought the issue onto the political agenda. In effect, both anti-EU parties (KKE and LAOS) declared their strong disagreement with the Constitution whereas the two 'mainstream' parties (ND and PASOK) supported it. In general, the EU dimension represents more clearly than the economic dimension the cultural distinction between anti-Western parties, which regard the EU as a symbolic feature of the globalization process, and moderate parties, which support the project of European integration on both political and economic grounds. Thus for ND, supporting the EU's political integration is self-evident because it was the founder of the party that initiated and initially supported the accession procedure to the European Community. By contrast, PASOK has moved steadily away from its anti-European rhetoric of the mid-1970s and became an increasingly Europeanist party in favour of strengthening the Common Foreign and Security Policy, social cohesion and increasing the EU budget (Moschonas, 2001, pp. 11–24).

The SYN is yet another interesting case, as it finds itself in a middle position because it is, *in principle*, in favour of the European integration but disagrees with the steps taken towards its implementation. Indicative of this is the fact that, whereas it explicitly stated in its manifesto that it agreed with the idea of a common European Constitution, it has felt obliged to reject the Treaty as the symbol of a project of integration pushing towards a neo-liberal trajectory. The SYN in fact encourages more left-wing policies and prefers to align itself with social movements against capitalist-oriented globalization.

What distinguishes this party with the two more extreme anti-EU parties is that for the latter anti-EU attitudes are simply part of broader anti-Western discourse which sees the EU and the United States alike as two powerful actors whose supposedly great influence on domestic politics is only or mostly negative (Lyrintzis, 2005, p. 256). For LAOS this is primarily so because this influence challenges national sovereignty. Thus, any transfer of power from the national to an international level is condemned. For KKE, it is mostly justified by associating the active role of the EU on national politics with the greater imposition of capitalist ideas and practices. On the whole, a rather familiar picture emerges. As is the case in most European countries, the distribution of

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attitudes towards the EU can be best described as an inverted U-curve, whereby moderate centrist parties are much more sympathetic towards the EU whereas both far-left and far-right parties are against (Hooghe *et al*, 2002, pp. 973–976). Consequently, to the extent that it will ever become salient, the issue of the EU cuts across the existing left–right dimension, creating new social identities sometimes based on cultural and sometimes on social and economic characteristics, as demonstrated in the two previous policy dimensions (X and Z).

Conclusions

Political parties typically fight elections in two different ways: advocating their political stances on salient issues and/or claiming themselves as more capable of satisfying globally desired aims. To this general rule, Greece is no exception. Where, however, it does appear as a deviant case (Dinas and Gemenis, 2009) is the extent to which the second goal has dominated the first. To be sure, the waning of traditional cleavages (such as class) and the rise of short-term electoral influences (government evaluations and leadership assessments) have shifted voters' focus towards incumbent's managerial competence and valence issues, whereby the electorate converges with regard to the desired policy aims and only varies in its judgements about which party is most capable of achieving those globally desired goals (for the British case, see Clarke *et al*, 2004). Having said that, there still seems to exist a confrontational aspect that seems to leave long-term footprints among the electorate. Greece appears to be such a case because there still seems to be considerable divergence both in broad macroeconomic and cultural terms.

To be sure, lack of convergence on various issues does not imply necessarily that the salience assumption embedded in the data collection method of the CMP is violated. However, as with any other authoritative statement, at least in principle, this assumption has to be tested against the empirical evidence and compared to alternative approaches. Our exploratory 'confrontational' analysis of the Greek parties' placement on three policy dimensions seems to confirm that the choice between 'salience' *vs* 'confrontation' is ultimately an empirical question. In fact, there are various reasons for believing that different political contexts might favour either of the two approaches. As Bartolini and Mair (1990, p. 199) have argued, parties might not always have incentives to produce manifestos that are particularly representative of their policy stances. When public opinion cannot distinguish between the parties' political stances, electoral manifestos may be a potential channel through which parties can expose their ideological platforms and differentiate themselves from their opponents. In doing this, they incidentally yield party manifestos a useful

source for the measurement of party policy stances. This, in turn, might explain the good performance of the CMP project in countries in which ideological differences between the parties are, or used to be, small such as the United States and Great Britain. However, in countries such as the Netherlands or Italy, embedded ideological distinctions give to some parties (most of the cases extreme parties) the opportunity to appear more moderate than they would otherwise be. This implies that manifestos cease to be a reliable source of parties' policy positions. If this is the case, then, of course, the findings will fail to reflect true party positions no matter which method is adopted. However, among the two methods, the confrontational approach seems to be less vulnerable to such contextual elements as it measures real policy propositions about particular issues, without simply capturing only whether and the extent to which particular issues are discussed by the parties.

For the Greek party system, the 'confrontational' approach, with all its limitations, gave clear and plausible estimates of Greek political parties' policy positions. We found no anomalies that we could not explain by observing the ideological mutations of Greek parties during the last 30 years. In a way, this also complements our analysis of the properties of the proposed measurement strategy. Our analysis of the confrontational method reveals that this new scheme is quite reliable and performs well in terms of face validity. However, although this hypothesis seems plausible, the examination of contextual heterogeneity regarding the two measures is the focus of future research. Following recent examples of the application of alternative 'confrontational' approaches to content analysis (for example Pellikaan *et al*, 2003, 2007; Kriesi *et al*, 2006; de Lange, 2007), we showed that such approaches are neither economically costly nor unreliable, nor are they theoretically inconsistent; they are, indeed, worth exploring.

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Notes

- 1 To the extent that the fact that zeros and empty cells are not distinguished in the model seems problematic for the analysis, we engage in sensitivity testing so as to account for possible differences in the results. We use the following formula: $S_{\chi\tau} = \sum_{\chi=1}^{10} 10 - \gamma_{\chi\tau}/10$ where S is the total score of party τ , γ is the score of the party in each indicator and γ is the number of missing values, that is, the number of indicators where the party appears to hold no position. In this way, a party that has references for all indicators and comes up with a mean score of +4 could be coded as 4, whereas a party which only mentions only four of the issues included in the scale and still has a total score of +4 would be coded as 1.6. Equivalently, were a party to score +1 in all issues, it would be coded as 10. Following this strategy, zeros are explicitly distinguished from missing values by the value of γ . Although the magnitude of the differences between the parties changes when this formula is employed, the final picture remains mainly unaltered, because there is no particular party with many more empty cells than average. Apart from reasons of simplicity, we choose not to report these findings in the main text because we believe that the extent to which this procedure manages to deal with the difference between neutral points and missing values more effectively is still questionable. This is because we still ignore the possibility that silence might indicate neutrality. What we did, however, in order to reduce zeros stemming from no references and to increase the validity of the results, was to code, in addition to party manifestos, a series of other documents that we believe they express the parties' positions. These included the parties' manifestos for the parliamentary election of 2004, which took place 2 months earlier, as well as several 'quasi manifestos', usually pamphlets, which were published in hard copy a few weeks before the election. The use of parliamentary manifestos for coding party positions vis-à-vis the EU is justified by findings that suggest that national parties' manifestos are increasingly focusing on EU policy and institutions (Binnema, 2003) as well as with the view of EP elections as 'second-order' elections fought over national issues (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). In this sense, both types of manifestos (national and European) can be treated as roughly equal in giving us the parties' policy positions regarding EU-related policy issues.
- 2 Given that the coding procedure has only been applied to five parties, it is almost impossible to come up with reliable estimates about the measurement properties of each dimension. To address, at least partially, this issue, we also add cases from the party federations of the European Parliament. Because the coding of European parties' manifestos is/was the starting point of this ongoing project, we add these cases so as to come up with more meaningful results. It is logical to believe that a dimension aiming to measure the positions of parties in a comparative perspective will not be severely affected by contextual case-specific factors. Having said that, it may very well be the case that some of the items provide measures of the latent dimension with less error in some cases (contexts) rather than others. If this is the case, the fact that the items were initially selected in order to measure parties stances in the three dimensions across Europe rather than in a particular country might bias the results in a favourable direction for the case of Greece. However, without data from other countries this assumption cannot be tested. In general, contextual heterogeneity can be addressed only once there are enough observations to shed light on significant between-country differences. This limitation notwithstanding, the analysis presented here is still valuable in its own right because it constitutes the first attempt to systematically examine the measurement features of this coding scheme. Of course, the results are

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only indicative and only a future replication of this analysis with more countries or time points can provide further insight into this issue.

- 3 These two factors seem to explain all the observable deviations from monotonicity. In effect, with such a small *N*, the detection of monotone relationships requires only minimal noise. Under this perspective, it is probably encouraging the fact that most of the graphs show that the corresponding items adhere to this rule. Interestingly, with many more cases, a similar analysis of the CMP data for Greece yields much more problematic findings regarding the assumption of homogeneity (Dinas and Gemenis, 2009). This is important because the most common ideological scale constructed with these data is based upon the same summation logic.
- 4 These figures, which were calculated with the algorithm for unstandardized variables, are slightly lower than when the standardized formula is used.
- 5 As in the case with loess curves, in order to enable the estimation we added six more observations that represent the positions of six of the European parties (or federations) in each item of the three scales.
- 6 To see why this is the case consider the following example: given that $\alpha = k_r/1 + \bar{r}(k-1)$, if we assume that we have a 25-item scale measuring a single dimension, with $\bar{r} = 0.1$, $\alpha = 0.74$. Thus, without being sure about the unidimensionality of the selected items, the summated rating scales might lead to false perceptions about the sources of variation in the chosen variables.
- 7 Importantly, the item-specific coefficients, which measure in a more formal way the assumption of monotone homogeneity, point to the same direction as our more informal visual analysis: problematic items (with *h*-score less than 0.3) are the X_{10} , the Z_3 and the Z_5 .

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Appendix A

A 'Confrontational' Coding Scheme for Estimating Political Parties' Policy Positions for the 2004 EP Election

Dimension X: Economic reform

- X₁: Privatization/liberalization of the energy market (gas or electricity) contra (-)/pro (+)
- X₂: Privatization/liberalization of public transport contra (-)/pro (+)
- X₃: Deregulation/liberalization of health care contra (-)/pro(+)
- X₄: Aviation: open skies, that is, access of airlines to slots of airports contra (-)/pro (+)
- X₅: Liberalization (flexibility and individuality) of pension (retirement) schemes

contra (-)/pro(+)

- X₆: Reduction of the tax burden contra (-)/pro(+)
- X₇: Privatization/liberalization of social security contra (-)/pro (+)
- X₈: Deregulation/liberalization of the labour market (flexibility, wages and so on) contra (-)/pro (+)

- X_{10} : Deregulation of agricultural policy and market orientation contra (-)/pro (+)

Dimension Y: Political integration

- Y₁: EU as a political union contra/confederal (-)/pro/federal (+)
- Y₂: European Constitution contra (-)/pro (+)
- Y₃: Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) contra (-)/pro (+)
- Y₄: Common Justice and Police Policy contra (-)/pro (+)
- Y₅: EU as an independent (federal) tax authority contra (-)/pro(+)
- Y₆: Veto power of member states veto decision (-)/majoritarian rule (+)
- Y_7 : Guarantee the independent status of the European Central Bank contra (-)/pro (+)
- Y₈: Stick to the provision of the Stability (and Growth) Pact contra (-)/pro(+)

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Y<sub>9</sub>: European Army
contra (-)/pro (+)
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Y₁₀: One currency (Euro) for all member states contra (-)/pro (+)

Dimension Z: Cultural identity

- Z_1 : Enlargement of EU with Turkey against (-)/pro (+)
- $Z_2: \quad \mbox{View on nationalism as an ideology/nationalistic movements} \\ \mbox{pro } (-)/\mbox{warning against nationalism } (+)$
- $Z_3: \quad \mbox{Media (TV and newspapers): protection of local/regional media pro (-)/contra (+)}$
- Z₄: European culture: diversity *vs* unity of Europe diversity (-)/unity (+)
- $Z_5: \quad \mbox{Right of citizens in all other EU countries (European citizenship)} \\ \quad \mbox{contra } (-)/\mbox{pro } (+)$
- Z₆: History: national history vs common European history national history (-)/common European history (+)
- Z₇: Enlargement of EU (other than Turkey)



against (-)/pro(+)

- $Z_8: \quad \mbox{Common values (such as democracy, equality freedom) in Europe disagree (-)/agree (+)}$
- Z₉: Immigration National policy (-)/EU policy (+)
- Z₁₀: Christian Judaic Humanist tradition as national characteristic (-)/as European characteristic (+)

Appendix B

Assessing the Reliability of the Constructed scales with Loess Curves

See Figure A1.



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