

3.7 Democracy and Participation

Chair: Roula Nezi (University of Surrey)

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London School of Economics and Political Science

Hellenic Observatory

10th Biennial PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus

Friday 26 May 2023

RECLAIMING THE PAST: WALL-PAINTING IN TIMES OF CRISIS



Aristea Grivakou, PhD in Political Science,
Department of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Cyprus

Thesis:

The Politics of Whispers

How exclusive democratic deliberation
leads western democracies to crises.

Contribution to the **understanding** of democratic crises:

- Detects the conceptual dipole between **voice** and **silence** in democratic theory.

- Explores **communicative** and **participatory** forms of silence.

- Introduces the concept of **whispers** in politics.

- Introduces the concept of **noises**.

Paper:

Reclaiming the Past: wall-painting in times of crisis

What?

The outbreak of the global **financial crisis** triggered a **participatory outburst** in western democracies. Citizens **occupied** public spaces, organized **demonstrations**, and widely engaged in forms of **electronic activism** calling for a **rupture** with the (political) **past**. In this high-tech, highly vocal and confrontational participatory framework, the Greek capital became the canvas of a **low-tech, non-vocal** and **peaceful** form of political engagement: **murals**.

The study of the **murals** in **Athens** shows that the **social movements**, which were formed after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, express an **agony for conservation** rather than a desire for radical progress. Street **artworks** encapsulate the struggle to preserve the **national identity** and **democratic acquis**. Murals display the **protagonists** of previous historic **struggles** to make the **past more relevant** to everyday life and defend what citizens consider as **rightfully** belonging to them. In contrast to the popular interpretation of murals as calls for rebellion and rupture with the past, most artworks are actually **reclaiming the past**.

How?

This **paper** brings together literature on **democratic theory, public art** and **visual semiotics**. It presents approaches exploring the relationship between **street art** and **democracy**. It briefly discusses the history of **wall-painting in Athens** while focusing on **contemporary murals** and it addresses their visual and **historical references** to analyze their **relations** with the **past**. The artworks were selected upon three criteria: (a) murals **located** in Athens and **created** after the outbreak of the global financial **crisis**, (b) artworks that **display** a direct **reference** to figures and symbols of the **past** and (c) interpretations based on **existing semiotic analysis** by other researchers and/or artists themselves.

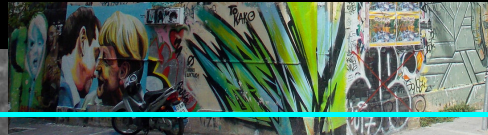
Why street art?

- intervention on the urban landscape and formation of the city's culture, atmosphere and citizens' interaction with the architectural environment.
- a form of soft power (peaceful strategic communication) within the democratic framework which entails disagreements and unrest.
- visual communication supporting social movements and carrying information regarding citizen participation, citizens' ideas and stances.
- spontaneous and less controlled form of public iconography in contrast to forms of public art controlled by the state or advertisements dominating urban public space.
- artists are citizens that belong to the same political institutions, get involved in the same social relations and experience the same political reality as any other citizen.
- visual subjective narratives enriching the political imagination, expanding the range of acceptable political behaviors, cultivating an alternative participatory culture.
- it creates imagined communities and unveils untold stories, social phenomena and ways in which crises redefine history and power relations.



Why Athens?

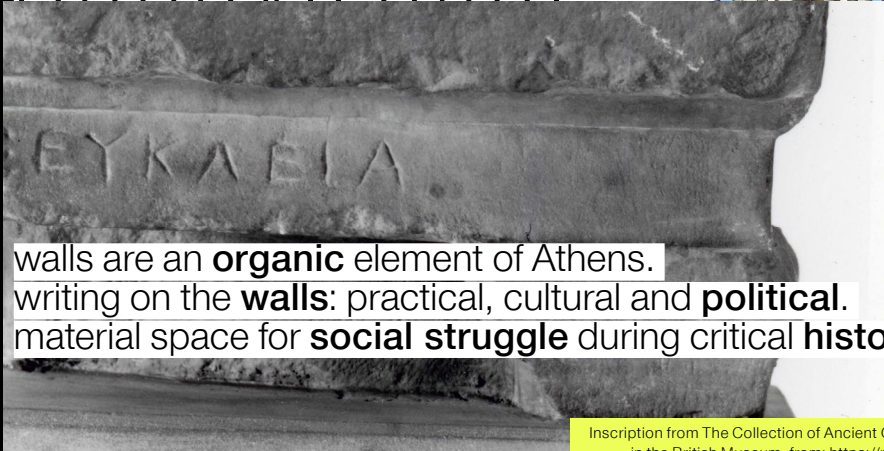
- densely populated capital cities form the cultural identity of states since they are the heart of political socialization, technological progress, democratic legitimacy and political unrest.
- the financial crisis was more intense in Athens than in any other European capital.
- the ancient city coexists with the contemporary urban landscape creating a unique and vibrant interplay between past and present.
- the Athenian walls have been recognized as a symbol of freedom with wall-painting being a practice as old as the city itself. In modern history, walls remained the material space of political struggle during critical periods.
- in contrast to earlier periods when wall-painting consisted of written phrases, contemporary wall-painting took the form of murals turning the city into one of the most significant street art scenes in the world within the first five years of the crisis.
- the protagonists and dominant references are often drawn by critical historical periods, thus making the murals acquire great symbolic character.



An unexpected surface for interaction

Origins

Βασανίζομαι



walls are an **organic** element of Athens.

writing on the **walls**: practical, cultural and **political**.

material space for **social struggle** during critical **historical** periods.



Inscription from The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions
in the British Museum, from: <https://rb.gy/zz2mu>

Vasanizomai at Empros Theatre in Athens, from: <https://rb.gy/dicku>

Contemporary context

outbreak of the global **financial crisis** followed by a **participatory outburst**.

wall-painting: **low-tech, non-vocal** and **peaceful** form of political engagement.

shift from writings to **murals** referring to **historical** figures and symbols **revising the past**.



FREEDOM, wall-painting in Athens Polytechnic, from: <https://bit.ly/2ZRvX19>.

FIVE EURO BY WILD DRAWINGS



melancholic **portrait** combined with five-euro banknote referring to **classical architecture**.

neoclassical **ruins** symbolize the country's **decay**.

contrast between the ancient birthplace of **Western ideals** and the contemporary **urban** landscape where these ideals are **canceled**.



WD, *Five Euro*, from: <https://bit.ly/3o5vPZx>.

FIVE EURO BY WILD DRAWINGS



melancholic **portrait** combined with five-euro banknote referring to **classical architecture**.

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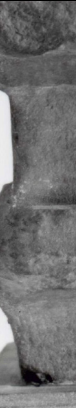
Neoclassical building in Thessio, from: <https://tinyurl.com/kt3x66na>.

VOTE NOBODY BY BLEEPS

goddess **Athena** participating in a **demonstration**.

mural connects ancient democratic *polis* with contemporary Greek **politics**.

failure to comply with the ideal of participatory **democracy**.



VOTE NOBODY BY BLEEPS

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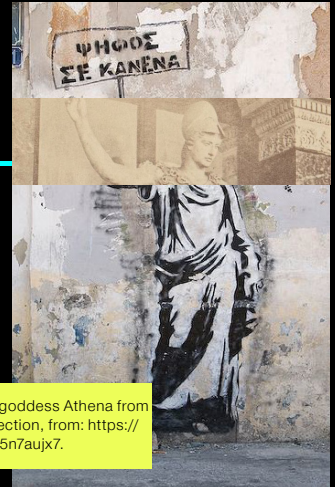
failure to comply with the ideal of participatory **democracy**.



Bleeps, *VOTE NOBODY*, from: <https://tinyurl.com/5dxckf9f>.



Photograph of statue of goddess Athena from the Rijks Museum Collection, from: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7aujx7>.



WAKE UP! BY INO

reference to the representation of resurrection in **Byzantine iconography**.

a **critique** to the devaluation of life and deification of **profit**.

shift towards a more **human-centered** organization of **society**.



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reference to the representation of resurrection in **Byzantine iconography**.

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The Resurrection of the Lord, Monastery of Chora in Constantinople, from: <https://bit.ly/3kgt4U7>.



INO, *WAKE UP!*, from: <https://rb.gy/hjxa8>

EVZONE HOLDING A EURO-SHAPED MOLOTOV BY ABSENT



References:

Banksy, "*(Rage) Flower Thrower*"
Greek War of Independence

EVZONE HOLDING A EURO-SHAPED MOLOTOV BY ABSENT

presents Theodoros **Kolokotronis** as a contemporary **protester**.

reference to representations of scenes of the **Greek War of independence**.

relocates fighting Evzone on **modern walls** to defend Greece's independence.



Absent, *Evzone with euro-shaped Molotov*, from: <https://tinyurl.com/4mh85mkm>.



Dionysios Tsokos, *Portrait of Theodoros Kolokotronis*, 1861, from: <https://tinyurl.com/mrht7hbb>.



EVZON MOLOT

presents Theo
contemporary

reference to re
the **Greek Wa**

relocates fight
walls to defen

T. P. Vryzakis, *The Exodus from Missolonghi*,
1853, from: <https://tb.gy/sh0hj>.



AIAPED



DENIAL BY BLEEPS

1. EVZONES AND THE GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

protagonist's **careless** appearance
representing modern **Greeks**.

appearance of **Presidential Guards** resembling the **ideal** of
Greek **rebels**.

contradiction portraying the
degradation of the Greek **nation**.



Bleeps, *Denial*, from: <https://t.ly/dSs7>.



Evzone, member of the Presidential Guard of Greece, from: <https://t.ly/19Zo>

DENIAL BY BLEEPS

2.FROM EVZONES TO THE GREEK MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Denial by Giorgos Seferis:
we **lived** our life: **a mistake!**
So, we **changed** our life.

reference to the poem's **personal**
and **political** meaning (as a song).

symbol of **Phoenix** reminding
resistance against **dictatorship** to
defend democracy.



Kids dressed in military uniforms by a poster of the Greek Military Dictatorship, from: <https://t.ly/BKHPc>.



THEN WITH TANKS...NOW WITH BANKS BY CACAO ROCKS

reference to the suppression of
the Athens Polytechnic **uprising** in
1973.

visual resemblance of the **words**
TANKS and BANKS to imply
similarity of their **political role.**

connects past uprising with
present **protesting.**



Cacao Rocks, *THEN WITH TANKS...NOW WITH BANKS*, from: <https://bit.ly/3mwYNII>.



Tank outside the Polytechnic School of
Athens, 1973, from: <https://bit.ly/3CwRlqq>.



I WISH YOU COULD LEARN SOMETHING USEFUL FROM THE PAST BY DIMITRIS TAXIS

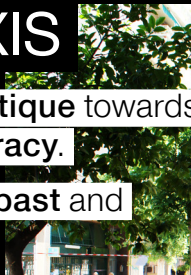
encapsulates murals' overall **critique** towards failure to maintain welfare and **democracy**.

comparison between **glorious past** and **contemporary misery**.

the past becomes a **criterion** to assess present times.

dominant **historical** narrative of a continuous national **identity**.

murals **re-introduce** heroes and symbols of Greece's history to express citizens' desire to **reclaim the past**.



Dimitris Taxis, *I wish you could learn something useful from the past*, from: <https://rb.gy/gpdgg>

I WISH YOU COULD LEARN USEFUL FROM THE PAST BY DIMITRIS TAXIS

encapsulates murals' overall **critique** towards the government's failure to maintain welfare and **democracy**.

comparison between **glorious past** and **contemporary misery**.

the past becomes a **criterion** to assess present conditions. The dominant **historical** narrative of a continuous national **identity**.

murals **re-introduce** heroes and symbols from history to express citizens' desire to **reclaim**



THANK YOU!

*this paper could be useful for further research on:

Comparative analysis among different historical periods and/or states.

The limits of toleration towards various forms of wall-painting (art or crime?).

Participatory forms of visual communication and the relationship between word and image.

Comparative analysis between various forms of public art.



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Do political parties keep their promises?

Election Pledge and policy implementation linkage for parliamentary parties in Greece 2000-2023

Paper drafted for the 10th Biennial PhD Symposium on Contemporary
Greece and Cyprus, 26/05/2023

Constantinos Saravakos¹

Abstract

Downs' party mandate model suggests that political parties ask for votes by offering a set of policies, and voters select the party whose policies align best with their preferences. If Downs is correct, there ought to be a connection between election promises and policy implementation, as parties behave rationally by fulfilling most of their promises so that voters, in turn, behave rationally and reward them. In this study, we aim to test this theoretical approach and its underlying hypotheses in the context of Greek politics. We begin by constructing a series of pledge fulfillment indices, by using the pledge enactment method on parties' election manifestos from 2000 to 2023. Next, we examine the statistical relationship between these indices and parties' electoral performance (t_{+1}). We also seek to explain any variations in pledge fulfillment across different parties and election pledges to identify the factors that contribute to keeping (or not keeping) election promises. The primary scope of this paper is to present and scrutinize the selected methodological approach for investigating these research questions.

Keywords: election pledges fulfillment, election promises, Greek political parties, democratic mandate, party mandate model, pledge enactment method.

¹ PhD candidate at the International and European Studies Department, University of Macedonia. Supervisor: Ioannis Konstantinidis, Associate Professor at the Department of International and European Studies, Deputy Head of Department, University of Macedonia. The author would like to thank Sofia Serra-Silva, Visiting Professor at Georgetown University and Research Fellow at ICS, University of Lisbon, Ana Maria Belchior, Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Policies at ISCTE, University Institute of Lisbon and Tom Louwse, Associate Professor of Political Science at Leiden University for their very important observations and responsiveness in methodological queries.

1. Introduction

Political parties in representative democracies are responsible for shaping public policy and act as intermediaries between the voters and the government (Konstantinidis 2004: 105). Downs' theoretical model (1957: 39-40) suggests that political parties publish distinguishable manifestos, stating their issue positions and aiming to increase their chances of getting better electoral success and gaining office (office-seekers). Voters, in turn, choose between different manifestos and democratically mandate political representation to implement policies based on their preferences (policy-seekers). Downs' theory also includes the concept of retrospective voting, where voters evaluate the extent to which parties behaved responsibly and fulfilled the policies for which they were elected, and subsequently reward or punish parties accordingly. The mechanism described by Downs works on the premise of rationality: parties have an electoral goal, so they behave rationally and responsibly by trying to fulfill most of their promises so that voters will reward them. The responsibility in Downs' theory (responsible party model) is related to the classic party mandate model, in which the mandate is considered a control mechanism in the relationship of representation between voters and parties (Louwerse 2011b: 3).

Representation seems to be closely related to mandate theory and party accountability. The basic assumption of the party mandate model is that parties try to keep election pledges to differentiate themselves from party competition and achieve their goal of increasing electoral success. This is where, despite Downs' model-wide criticism,² the theory of party competition and democratic mandate seem to converge. The fulfillment of election pledges is essential to mandate theory and relevant to party competition in the context of democratic representation as 'promissory representation' (Mansbridge 2003: 515). The party mandate model connects manifestos' pledges and consequent decision-making (Downs 1957), under which parties responsibly try to fulfill the mandate that they have been granted by voters (Serra-Silva and Belchior 2020: 74).

According to the classification developed by Andeweg and Thomassen (2005), after the election, the control mechanism to ensure that representatives (parties) follow the mandate given by the voters operates retroactively (ex-post control). Voters have the power of control by not voting again for a party if it fails to fulfill its commitments. This control mechanism highlights the importance of knowing whether parties keep their promises and implement the democratic mandate they received in the context of democratic representation. The concept of the party mandate model requires three conditions to work (Thomassen 1994). The first one is for the political parties to offer

² Strom (1990: 569-70) argues that Downs' model of party behavior contains unrealistic and consequential assumptions. Firstly, it is static and fails to account for individual characteristics of separate elections and governments. Secondly, it overlooks the complexity of parties as organizations and the restrictions they impose on their leaders' behavior. Thirdly, it disregards the role of institutional environment. In general, Downs' model is limited by its simplification, which is necessary for a methodological framework based on rational choice theory tools. However, Kalyvas (2017: 113-4) argues that rational choice models in social sciences provide a clear methodological context by identifying actors, their preferences, available strategies, institutional frameworks, and the specific political, social, and cultural context that surrounds them. This simplicity can be considered as deduction, which is necessary to analyze complex reality. For a comprehensive critique of Downs' theory on parties' behavior and rational acting conditions, see Stokes (1963).

distinguishable and competing election manifestos. The second relies on the premise that voters choose based on policy issues. The third condition is that parties fulfill their pledges.

In the Greek political framework, there is a big lacuna in the study of democratic representation, in particular via the party mandate model and the linkage between election pledges and fulfillment, which is rather neglected domestically. There is no mechanism of political accountability on election pledges and the extent Greek political parties fulfill their democratic mandate. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap by exploring the extent Greek political parties keep their promises, given the party mandate model, its relation to Downs' theoretical model of representation, and the determinants of keeping (or not) the promises. The scope of this paper is to present the theoretical background of the study and scrutinize the selected methodological approach for investigating its research questions. We demonstrate and explain the methods chosen and then we pose open questions regarding the eligibility of our choices in terms of concept, validity, and design. The objective of this paper is to end up with a robust set of methodological options.

2. Brief literature review

The evaluation of the government's performance, via the extent to which political parties have kept their election pledges, and the factors that have influenced their implementation are frequently at the epicenter of public discussion. According to Costello and Thomson (2008), during the 2002 Irish elections, the media extensively covered 40% of campaign pledges, with the majority of coverage going to the two major parties. Although the degree of implementation of election pledges has been the subject of research in political science and public administration for almost four decades, the empirical aspect of the phenomenon was only recently explored.

The program-to-policy linkage investigates the degree of convergence between what parties promised during the election campaign and what they finally implemented after their election (Thomson *et al.* 2010). Contrary to popular belief, governing parties manage to fulfill the majority of their election promises, as shown in Table 1, which demonstrates the rate of election pledge fulfillment by governments in various countries over a wide period (Thomson *et al.* 2017; McMillan, 2020). In 13 Western democracies, between 1974 and 2016, the average election pledges fulfillment rate by governments was 65%, ranging from 46%-86%.

Table 1. Election pledges fulfillment rate by governments.

| Country | Time frame | Election pledges fulfillment rate |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Italy | 1996-2011 | 46% |
| Austria | 2000-2013 | 50% |
| Bulgaria | 1995-2013 | 51% |
| Ireland | 1977-2016 | 52% |
| Netherlands | 1986-1998 | 57% |
| USA | 1976-2000 | 62% |
| Germany | 2000-2013 | 63% |
| Canada | 1993-2015 | 68% |
| Spain | 1989-2004 | 72% |
| Scotland | 1999-2011 | 77% |
| Portugal | 1995-1999, 2005-2009 | 78% |
| Sweden | 1994-2014 | 79% |
| United Kingdom | 1974-1997 | 86% |
| Average | 1974-2016 | 65% |

The degree of election pledge fulfillment has been widely explored in Western parliamentary democracies, revealing significant variation. The findings suggest that factors influencing the degree of fulfillment may differ across political and social institutional contexts, in addition to varying over time. International research has identified several determinants that affect the implementation of electoral pledges, including whether parties formed one-party or coalition governments. Coalitions tend to fulfill slightly over half of their pledges (Thomson *et al.* 2017: 535; Brandenburg *et al.* 2019). In Portugal, Moury and Fernandes (2016) found that minority governments implemented their election pledges to the same extent as their majority counterparts, after studying over 3,000 election pledges of socialist governments from 1995 to 2009.

International empirical research on election pledge fulfillment goes beyond the ruling parties to include the opposition, as well. Even though opposition parties may not have a direct influence on the existing policy agenda (Laver and Shepsle 1996; Norton 2008), research on their level of commitment to election pledges is significant as it considers the representative aspect of democracy, namely parliamentary representation (Louwse 2011a). The inclusion of opposition parties is important for two other reasons: firstly, it highlights the nature and scope of the alternatives between the manifestos in the context of party completion (a premise of the theory); secondly, opposition parties are likely to fulfill their commitments even if they are not in government positions (Costello and Thomson 2008: 21).

Research regarding the extent to which Greek political parties fulfill their election pledges is limited. A relevant study on this topic focuses on the period 1981-1985, during PASOK's one-party government formation under Andreas Papandreou, and found that PASOK managed to fulfill approximately 70% of its main economic issued election pledges (Kalogeropoulou 1989). Since then, research on election manifestos in Greece has primarily focused on the structure of the ideological space and references of political parties, or changes in the content of political manifestos (Pappas 2001; Konstantinidis 2004; Andreadis *et al.* 2011). Recently, Kartalis (2022) in his PhD thesis has explored party mandate fulfillment by focusing on the comparison between election pledges and parliamentary discourse congruence in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain. However, the primary objective of the study was not to investigate the parameters of election pledges in Greece, but rather to measure a) the impact of economic conditions on the politics of legislative debate, b) the extent to which supranational economic constraints affect the representative performance of parties in parliamentary democracies, and c) explore the case for legislators to meet the needs of their constituents in times of relative prosperity or austerity in countries affected by the Eurozone crisis.

3. Research question and research hypotheses

The main research questions of the present thesis are to determine the extent to which the election pledges of Greek parliamentary political parties are implemented and to investigate the factors that influence this implementation from 2000 to the 2019 elections. The research focuses on three specific questions:

- a. To what extent do Greek political parties fulfill their election pledges?
 - b. Is there a relationship between parties' election pledges fulfillment rate (t_1) and election rate?
 - c. What factors influence the degree of fulfilling election pledges:
 - i. Variation across parties (what makes a party fulfill its pledges).
- Institutional factors: Electoral system, quality of democratic and liberal institutions, coalition government, the percentage in previous elections, first election, degree of election commitments in previous elections, degree of opposition from other parties, previous electoral experience.
 - Economic factors: Economic growth, GDP per capita, inequality, level of government spending.
 - Factors related to the structure, organization, function, and composition of parties: Ideology: Left - center - right, populist parties, democratic organization, grassroots presidential election, demographic characteristics of politicians (average age, gender, re-election).
 - Other possible factors: Time since the election, crisis period.
 - Time frame, such as the period of crisis (years from 2009 to 2018).

- ii. Variation across individual pledges (what makes a pledge fulfilled).
 - Status quo: pledges that aim at maintaining the status quo are more likely to be fulfilled.
 - Government - opposition: pledges given by governing parties are more likely to be fulfilled.
 - Issue: pledges related to economic issues are more likely to be fulfilled.
 - Economic pledges orientation:
 - a. Expansionary commitments: pledges aiming to raise public spending are more likely to be fulfilled.
 - b. Tax cut: pledges aiming to reduce taxes are more likely to be fulfilled.

Given the absence of previous research on the Greek political parties' election pledges fulfillment, the research questions posed have as their main objective the description and interpretation of the field. However, the above research questions combined with the basic theory of party competition and international research lead to the following relevant hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is in line with the fundamental framework of party competition in Downs' theory. Through this hypothesis, it is expected to test Downs' approach to party reward and retrospective voting. Parties, as rational actors, aim to fulfill as many election commitments as possible so that voters will (behave rationally and) re-elect them. Parties that fail to keep their commitments lose some of their electoral appeal.

H₁: Parties formulate electoral manifestos to increase their electoral success (thus aligning with social demands) and the degree to which parties keep their election promises is correlated to their electoral rates (gains or losses) in the next election.

The second hypothesis is related to the access to the government and the expected variation in the degree of pledges fulfillment depending on the different types of government formed and the issue of a pledge:

H_{2i}: One-party governments are expected to have a higher degree of election pledges fulfillment than parties do in coalition governments.

H_{2ii}: In coalition governments, parties that are the major government partner are expected to have a higher degree of election pledges fulfillment than parties that are the junior government partner.

H_{2iii}: In coalition governments, a pledge is more likely to be fulfilled if the party committed owns the respective government office.

The third hypothesis relates to the variation in the degree of pledges fulfillment for opposition parties, the degree of convergence of their manifestos with government by policy area, and overall institutional stability:

H₃: Opposition parties in the crisis period (2009-2019) seem to gain a greater say in public policy making (by voting for more government bills), compared to the single-party governments of 2000-2009, thus the degree of election pledges fulfillment of parties in opposition during the crisis is much higher than the pre-crisis period (before 2009).

The fourth hypothesis concerns the factors influencing the implementation of the parties' pledges as derived from the international empirical findings. The governments' performance in the economy appears to play a crucial role in fulfilling election pledges and is consistently highlighted in the majority of international empirical research.

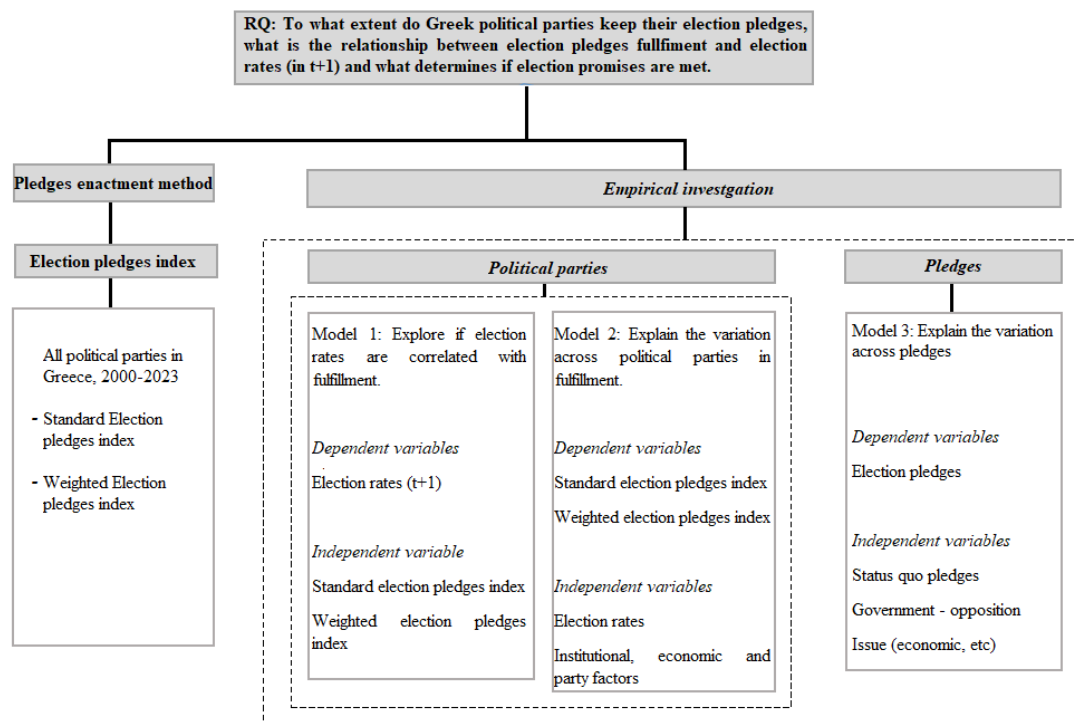
H4: The most influential factors in fulfilling election pledges are the ones related to economic performance.

There is also a fifth hypothesis that concerns the crisis period in Greece and is related to the previous one as it attempts to include the exogenous constraints on the exercise of public policy in Greece. The increasing intervention of supranational institutions in the formulation and implementation of public policies during the bailout programs increased the institutional barriers and reduced the independence of parties in formulating and implementing public policies in line with their election pledges.

H5: The degree of fulfillment of the election pledges of government parties in the crisis period (2009-2019) is lower than the rest period examined (2000-2009 and 2019-2023).

Through exploring the above questions and hypotheses, the thesis aims to provide an indicator of parties' election pledge fulfillment and to perform an interpretative analysis of the factors that influence adherence to commitments and explain variations. It also aims to test and interpret the implementation of pledges in the context of the theory of representation and party competition.

Figure 1. Thesis Structure



4. The methodological approach selected

In this section, we present and explain the methods, the variables, and the empirical strategy selected to investigate the above research questions and test the hypotheses. In the next section, we will discuss the open questions on this methodology, as we consider this paper a robustness check of the set of methodological options made in the first place.

4.1. Case selection

The study covers the parliamentary periods from 2000 to 2023, which dichotomizes the Greek modern political environment in two distinct periods. This period witnessed the collapse of the traditional party system, the dealignment and de-legitimation of the two-party system and the emergence of new political actors. The study will investigate the election manifestos of the parliamentary parties during this period. Table 2 demonstrates the case selection for election pledges fulfillment rates in Greece.

Table 2. Case selection for election pledges fulfillment rates in Greece

| Parliament terms | Governing parties | Opposition parties | Total parties | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|----|
| 2000-2004 | PASOK | ND, KKE, Sinaspismos | 4 | |
| 2004-2007 | ND | PASOK, KKE, SYRIZA | 4 | |
| 2007-2009 | ND | PASOK, KKE, SYRIZA, LAOS | 5 | |
| 2009-2011* | PASOK | ND, KKE, LAOS, SYRIZA | 5 | |
| 2012-2015** | ND, PASOK | SYRIZA, ANEL, GD, DIMAR, KKE | 7 | |
| 2015I-2015II | SYRIZA, ANEL | ND, GD, Potami, KKE, PASOK | 7 | |
| 2015II-2019 | SYRIZA, ANEL | ND, GD, Potami, KKE, PASOK, EK | 8 | |
| 2019-2023 | ND | SYRIZA, PASOK-KINAL, KKE, EL, DiEM25 | 6 | |
| Sum: | 8 | 11 | 35 | 46 |

*The government formed in November 2011, under Loukas Papadimos, will not be included.
**Elections of May 2012 will not be included.

We aim to investigate election pledges fulfillment for both governing (11) and opposition parties (35) in the last eight parliament periods, excluding the short-lived government formed by Loukas Papadimos. With this case selection we could end up with possible 46 party cases (party observations) in the best-case scenario. We include the opposition parties, contrary to the expectation of low public policy engagement, for two reasons. The first reason is that international empirical research finds opposition to having a relatively good performance in fulfilling election pledges. Serra-Silva and Belchior (2020) studied the degree of fulfillment of election pledges by opposition parties in Portugal between 1995 and 2005. Their findings indicate that parties that

rotate in opposition have a higher probability of fulfilling their commitments compared to those that are permanently in opposition. Additionally, the probability of fulfillment for opposition parties increases as there is policy convergence with legislative initiatives (i.e. the government). However, the success of this condition relies on a broad consensus and co-shaping of public policy by elected political parties, which is far from the case in the Greek parliament. Furthermore, Artés (2011) found that in Spain opposition parties are 20% more likely to keep their promises in minority governments than in majority governments. On the other hand, Bulut and Yildirim (2020: 108-9) studied the party system in Turkey between 2002 and 2011 and concluded that opposition parties find it difficult to keep their election pledges.

The second reason for studying opposition parties is that the Greek case has cases where the opposition has significantly influenced public policies. For instance, Potami and KINAL in 2015-2019 had no access to government positions, but their manifesto pledges on the civil union for same-sex couples (Law 4356/2015) were realized with their voting since the junior coalition partner (ANEL) voted against the bill proposed by the major coalition partner (SYRIZA). Without the legislative support of the opposition, SYRIZA would not have proceeded with the legislative initiative since it did not have the governmental majority. A similar case is the Prespes Agreement (Law 4588/2019), where opposition parties made a decisive contribution to its adoption. The most significant case was when the opposition parties played a crucial role in the voting of the third Memorandum (Law 4336/2015) when, in August 2015, 43 MPs of the government majority SYRIZA - ANEL did not vote for the bill. Without the support of the opposition (ND, Potami, and PASOK), voting for the law, that would not have been possible. Given these cases, and some other not-that-important ones, it can be concluded that even opposition parties in Greece can influence public policies and that a certain degree of variation in opposition parties' fulfillment rates is expected between pre-crisis and crisis periods.

4.2. Pledge enactment method

To answer our basic research question, namely to what extent do Greek political parties fulfill their election pledges, we employed the pledge enactment method. This approach examines whether a party has taken a testable action to implement the pledges it made, in the way in which they were stated (Royed 1996; Pétry and Collette 2009: 70). Put differently, the pledge enact method assesses whether a pledge that is clearly defined in terms of how it will be fulfilled is implemented through stated policies or actions (Royed 1996; Pétry and Collette 2009: 70). This method seems to be prevalent in the international studies on pledge fulfillment (Costello and Thomson 2008; Naurin 2011; Artés 2011; Moury and Fernandes 2016; Thomson *et al.* 2017; Brandenburg *et al.* 2019; Toros, 2015), as opposed to other methods such as the saliency and spatial approach. To briefly explain, the former examines the relationship between policy issues and the resources allocated to them by the party, which is related to party competition theory (differentiation by issue emphasis). The latter examines the policy positions taken by parties and their consistency in parliamentary stance; if parties are consistent between elections issues and parliament positions, the mandate is fulfilled (Louwerse 2011a: 9). Figure 2 illustrates the main attributes of each of the three most prominent methods as

analyzed by Louwse (2011a: 5). There are two main reasons we opted for the pledge enactment method over the saliency and spatial approaches. The first reason is that the pledge enactment method is mostly linked to our theoretical background, the party mandate model; simply, a party fulfills the mandate given, to the extent, it fulfills its manifesto pledges (Louwse 2011a: 3-4). The second reason is that we primarily focus on pledges thereof, rather than parties' consistency in policy positions.

Figure 2. Approaches to the Party mandate

| | Pledge approach | Saliency approach | Spatial approach |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Object of comparison</i> | Pledge | Emphasis (saliency) of issues | Party issue saliency and position |
| <i>Fulfilment test</i> | Enactment | Correspondence with spending | Similarity in two arena's |
| <i>Representation-acquiring arena</i> | Elections | Elections | Elections |
| <i>Representation-acting arena</i> | Government | Government | Parliament and/or Government |
| <i>Level of comparison</i> | Party level | Party level | Party level & Party-system level |

Source: Louwse (2011a: 5).

The pledge enactment method considers a manifesto statement to be a pledge only if it demonstrates a commitment to a future action or outcome (Serra-Silva and Belchior 2020: 78). According to Thomson *et al.* (2017: 6), a pledge must meet the *testability criterion* (Royed 1996: 79),³ which it is defined as a statement committing a party to a specific action or outcome that can be objectively assessed as having occurred or not. The language used in the statement should include phrases such as 'we will' or 'we promise to' (hard pledges), or 'we support' or 'we favour' (soft pledges) (Royed 1996), which unequivocally express the party's support for the action or outcome in question. Statements that merely promise to 'analyse' or 'look into' a matter are not eligible to be considered pledges (Serra-Silva and Belchior 2020: 78). Even though the testability criterion helps a lot in turning a manifesto statement into a specific pledge, codification challenges may still occur. To reduce the subjective codification that may happen in this process we suggest that a reliability test should be applied. The most common inter-

³ An example of a not testable pledge is the phrase "our government will uphold family values," since it cannot be objectively verified whether the party has delivered on it. In contrast, a statement that meets the testability criterion is "our government will legalize civil marriage for same-sex couples".

rater reliability method, which measures the agreement among two or more independent coders (inter-coder reliability), is Krippendorff's Alpha (Toros 2015: 245).⁴

Assessing if a promise is fulfilled or not also requires a codification scheme. Regarding the fulfillment codification, there are three coding methods as to whether the testable pledge has been fulfilled. Table 3 sums up the codification schemes employed in this research, which derive by Naurin (2014: 1052-3).

Table 3. Fulfillment codification of testable pledges

| Status | Guidelines |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Fulfilled</i> | 'A promise is fulfilled when there is an action or result corresponding to the action or result expected from the promise'. |
| <i>Partially fulfilled</i> | 'Late fulfillment within the election period: promises that are decided upon after a specified date, but still within the election period, are defined as partially fulfilled. The promise of the Alliance for Sweden to introduce a cost ceiling for dental care costs by 1 July 2007 is coded as partially fulfilled, since the proposition was accepted by the Riksdag on 2 April 2008 – one year after the target date, but still within the election term'. |
| <i>Partially fulfilled</i> | 'Obvious changes along the lines of the promise that does not 'go all the way': in some outcome promises, a party mentions specific numbers, levels or amounts that should be reached. The approach here is that all these promises should be judged individually and coded according to reasonable, transparent arguments. It is worth noting that such promises are relatively rare: 16 out of the 445 promises investigated in this study are defined as outcome promises and of these, only two demanded further discussion'. |
| <i>Partially fulfilled</i> | 'Fulfillment that is similar to what was promised, but not precisely the same: election promises may be carried out almost as promised but not exactly. For example, the government sometimes comes up with slightly different technical solutions for social benefits than those described in their manifesto. If the general idea of the promise is respected, even though the policy does not exactly follow the design laid out in the promises, the promise is coded as partially fulfilled. |
| <i>Unfulfilled</i> | 'A promise to act is unfulfilled if no significant action has taken place. The notion of 'significant action' is used to illustrate that symbolic or minor action is not considered enough for fulfillment. Symbolic or minor action can consist of government investigations ('utredningar'), and statements of intent by the government (sometimes called 'skrivelser'). 'Minor action' can also be pilot projects that are not followed up by permanent policies'. |

Source: Naurin (2014: 1052-3).

In this stage, for the same reasons of coding reliability explained before, we also use the inter-rater reliability method, Krippendorff's Alpha, to measure the agreement among the independent coders on if a pledge is *fulfilled*, *partially fulfilled*, or *unfulfilled*.

⁴ An alternative method is the percentage agreement of inter-rater consistency (Serra-Silva and Belchior 2020: 79). However, this method only accounts for agreements and disagreements, without giving credit to coders whose decisions are close, as it does not correct for expected chance agreements and thus overestimates the level of agreement (Cohen, 1960; Hallgren, 2012; Krippendorff, 1980). The level of agreement between the coders is suggested to be above 0.8/1, while the lower acceptable limit is usually set at 0.67.

4.3. Data and variables

To identify pledges and code them with the above methods, we study election manifestos instead of other public sources of information such as speeches, interviews, posters, etc. We opt for manifestos because they reveal strategic elements of pledges (Louwerse 2011a: 8) and they are considered more suitable as they a) come from a collective effort and constitute official positions of the party and b) are renewed more often and maintain a higher degree of comparability (Konstantinidis 2004: 109-10). We use the manifestos available by The Manifesto Research Group database, which covers the period 2000-2015; however, there are cases the database either contains documents that are not official election manifestos or it does not contain any manifestos at all. These cases are ND 2004, PASOK 2007, LAOS 2009, ANEL 2012, ANEL 2015I+II, and all the cases in the 2019 elections (ND, SYRIZA, PASOK-KINAL, KKE, Greek Solution, DiEM25). In these cases, the election manifestos have already been retrieved in digital format by the author. To check if the pledges coded as testable have been fulfilled we look into the state's official regulations such as laws, ministerial and presidential decrees, circulars, and amendments. Also, we look at supplementary material such as newspapers, websites, public speeches, the very same election manifestos, and other similar sources.

Since we have coded and assessed all the testable pledges for all parties available in previous stages, we will be able to construct a quantitative index that captures the extent to which each parliamentary party has fulfilled its pledges made in its election manifesto for the period in question. This index will be expressed as a percentage: it will be the number of pledges fulfilled or partially fulfilled by the party over the number of pledges made overall in the party's manifestos.

Formula 1 represents what we measure with the standard election pledges fulfillment index (SEPMI).

$$(1) \text{ Election pledges fulfillment index (EPFI)} = \frac{\text{Pledges fulfilled}}{\text{Total pledges made}}$$

However, not all pledges are equally important. For example, SYRIZA's anti-austerity pledges in January 2015, we could say that 'carry' the democratic mandate over a random pledge promising to reform the public administration. If the first one is not fulfilled and the second is fulfilled, this does not account for 50% of election pledge fulfillment. For this reason, we introduce another measurement which we call the weighted election pledges fulfillment index (WEPFI). In this index, we measure only if the most significant pledges were fulfilled or not. On how to decide which pledges are more significant, we consider that the pledges that occurred in the party's leader speeches in the election period are the ones for which the party asks the mandate. An election speech addressed to the public should focus on the essential aspects of a campaign, highlighting the key pledges to win the mandate. Therefore, the weight of each pledge in terms of its significance is how frequently a pledge is mentioned in a party's leader's public election speeches. The more a pledge is mentioned, the more significant a pledge is considered. This index will be expressed as a percentage: it will be the number of significant pledges fulfilled or partially fulfilled by the party over the number of significant pledges made overall in the party's manifestos.

Formula 2 represents what we measure with the weighted election pledges fulfillment index (WEPMI).

$$(2) \text{ Weighted election pledges fulfillment index (WEPMI)} = \frac{\text{Significant pledges fulfilled}}{\text{Total significant pledges made}}$$

4.4. Research design and empirical strategy

In our empirical analysis, we aim to answer the last two research questions, namely if there is a relationship between parties' election pledges fulfillment rate ($t_{.i}$) and election rate of a party and what factors influence the degree of fulfilling election pledges both across parties and across pledges. We aim to answer these questions using the variables we created in the previous section. We employ a regression analysis and we use the standard election pledges fulfillment index and the weighted election pledges fulfillment index both as dependent (model 1) and key independent variables (model 2), while we also use as a unit of analysis the individual pledges, coded as a dichotomous variable (fulfilled + partially fulfilled) and as a three-category variable fulfilled, partially fulfilled and not fulfilled (models 3i and 3ii).

In terms of other explanatory variables as controls of the relationships we seek to explore, we use variables suggested by the literature review, which seem to influence the chosen dependent variables. The selected explanatory variables have been used widely in a large number of empirical studies (Tuttnauer and Wegmann 2022; Thomson *et al.* 2017; Duval and Pétry 2019; Moury and Fernandes 2016; Toros 2015; Schwarz *et al.* 2009).

4.4.1. Model 1: Explain the variation across political parties

To identify the determinants of election pledges fulfillment indices for a party we use a standard OLS model with individual party and parliament period fixed effects.

Dependent variables

We use as dependent variables the standard election pledges fulfillment index for party i and the weighted fulfillment index for party i .

Independent variables

We use as independent variables the following:

- Type of government: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = single-party government.
- Government majority size (measured in MPs).
- Government duration (measured in months).
- Economic Performance Index (EPI – composite indicator).
- Standard fulfillment index for party i in $t_{.i}$.
- Weighted fulfillment index for party i in $t_{.i}$.
- Manifesto length (measured in words).

- Party role in the parliament:
 - a dichotomous variable, where 1 = current government party.
 - a dichotomous variable, where 1 = major opposition party.
- Party characteristics:
 - L-R axis.
 - Populism score.
 - Distance from the center of the L-R axis.
- Crisis: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = years from 2009 to 2018.

4.4.2. Model 2: Explore if election rates are correlated to the pledges fulfillment index.

To identify the effect of the election pledges fulfillment indices in the previous term on the election rates of a current election we use a standard OLS model with individual party and parliament period fixed effects. However, since in that case, we are interested (also) in a causal effect (if any correlation occurs), we need to employ a causal inference empirical design. We suggest that an Instrumental Variables (IV) approach seems to be the most appropriate method to identify the causal effect of pledge fulfillment for party i in time $t-1$ on the vote share. However, further details of this design are going to be determined depending on the results of the analysis in the previous steps.

Dependent variable

We use as dependent variable the election rate of party i in each election.

Key independent variables

We use as key independent variables the standard fulfillment index for party i in time $t-1$ and the weighted fulfillment index for party i in time $t-1$.

Controls

- Economic factors:
 - Economic development, proxied by GDP per capita growth rate in the parliament term.
 - Economic Performance Index (EPI – composite indicator).
- Party role in the parliament:
 - a dichotomous variable, where 1 = current government party.
 - a dichotomous variable, where 1 = major opposition party.
- New/old elected party, a dichotomous variable, where 1 = old party.
- Early elections, a dichotomous variable, where 1 = elections before the end of the term.
- Party characteristics:
 - L-R axis.
 - Populism score.
 - Distance from the center of the L-R axis.
 - Election rate of party i in $t-1$.
 - Legislative consensus of party i in $t-1$.

4.4.3. Model 3: Explain the variation across pledges

To examine the factors that affect the fulfillment of a pledge we use logistic regression in case *i* and multinomial models for case *ii*.

Dependent variables

We use as a dependent variable the individual pledges measured by *i*) a dichotomous variable, where 1 = fulfilled or partially fulfilled, and *ii*) a three-category variable where 2 = fulfilled, 1 = partially fulfilled, and 0 = not fulfilled.

Independent variables

- Significance: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = significant, according to the weighted fulfillment index.
- Status quo: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = pledges that aim at maintaining the status quo are more likely to be fulfilled.
- Government - opposition: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = pledges given by governing parties.
- Issue: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = pledges related to a specific issue (i.e. economy).
- Economic pledges orientation:
 - Expansionary commitments: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = pledges aiming to raise the public spending.
 - Tax cut: a dichotomous variable, where 1 = pledges aiming to reduce taxes.

5. Discussion: the open questions on methodology

In the previous section, we provided a detailed explanation of the methodology chosen for each step in our analysis. However, we acknowledge that some open questions still need to be addressed to establish a robust set of methodological options. In this section, we will pose some open questions related to the selection of cases, the variables and their measurements, and the basic method of pledge analysis on fulfillment.

In terms of case selection, an open question is if opposition parties should be included, given that some of them do not have pledge-oriented manifestos, rather they tend to pose an anti-establishment rhetoric with no specific pledges. Some parties, given their position in party competition, can be ‘niche parties’ (Meyer and Miller 2015), single-issue parties (Mudde 1999), or both; in such cases party manifestos can be severely dedicated to one dimension/issue, lacking specific pledges. Another open question concerns the decision to investigate PASOK’s 2009 government in terms of its election pledges until November 2011, when PM George Papandreou resigned. We consider that the new three-party government formed under Loukas Papadimos, cannot be studied as a continuation of PASOK’s 2009 mandate.

Regarding the variables, an open question is our consideration that election pledges do not have the same significance; there are certain pledges which ‘carry’ the mandate. Although this is a criticism well-known in pledge fulfillment studies, most of them use a standard version of election fulfillment. We consider that the party model mandate is

probably related to certain pledges over others, in particular in Greece during the crisis (2009-2019) and the anti-austerity promises given. Therefore, the idea of creating a standard fulfillment index and a weighted fulfillment index would solve this problem and could be used as a robustness check over the basic variable created. Moreover, we pose a supplementary open question on if election speech mentions is a good measurement of a pledge's significance.

As for the basic method of pledge analysis on fulfillment, we explained why we consider the pledge enactment method most appropriate; however, the main criticism is that it works mostly with government pledges and policies over which opposition parties arguably have limited control (Louwse 2011a: 4). Even though the pledge approach has been used to study opposition parties (Serra-Silva and Belchior 2020; Artés 2011), this seems to be the case in parliamentary systems in which opposition has a more active law-making initiative. However, this is what we expect to find also in our study during the crisis period, in which opposition parties showed an extensive legislative consensus (Saravakos 2023). Another challenge of the pledge method is that in reality, many pledges are fulfilled only to a certain extent and the way to deal with those pledges is not unique (Louwse 2011a: 4). Further to the method of codification, we also pose an open question regarding the suitability of inter-rater reliability method both on testability and fulfillment.

With regards to the empirical strategy and the models, we are looking for factors that we may have not included and they are really important to explain the fulfillment across parties and pledges. Also, we are open to suggestions on alternative specification techniques from the ones presented, that could be more suitable for our research questions.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to present the theoretical and empirical framework on election pledges fulfillment in Greece over the past 23 years and examine the selected methodological approach to address the research questions. To this end, we introduced the theory related to the democratic mandate and party competition in Western democracies and reviewed the literature and empirical findings thus far. Greek political parties are a subject that remains understudied, and this thesis aims to contribute to the academic discourse. The primary research questions this thesis aims to answer are: *i*) to what extent do Greek political parties fulfill their election pledges, *ii*) is there a correlation between parties' election pledges fulfillment ($t_{.j}$) and election rates, and *iii*) what factors influence the degree of fulfilling election pledges across parties (what makes a party to fulfill its pledges) and across individual pledges (what makes a pledge fulfilled). We explained why we selected the pledge enactment method over other alternatives and presented the methods suggested to ensure the objective codification of pledges on testability and fulfillment. Based on the pledge enactment method we aim to create an Election Pledges Fulfillment Index (EPFI) and a Weighted Election Pledges Fulfillment Index (WEPFI), weighted in terms of pledge significance, for all parliamentary parties in Greece during the 2000-2023 parliamentary terms. We aim to use these measurements as both dependent and key explanatory variables in our

empirical analysis to answer our research questions. The last section discusses the overall research and empirical design selected, and its challenges, and raises open methodological questions related to case selection, variables, and the basic method of pledge analysis on fulfillment.

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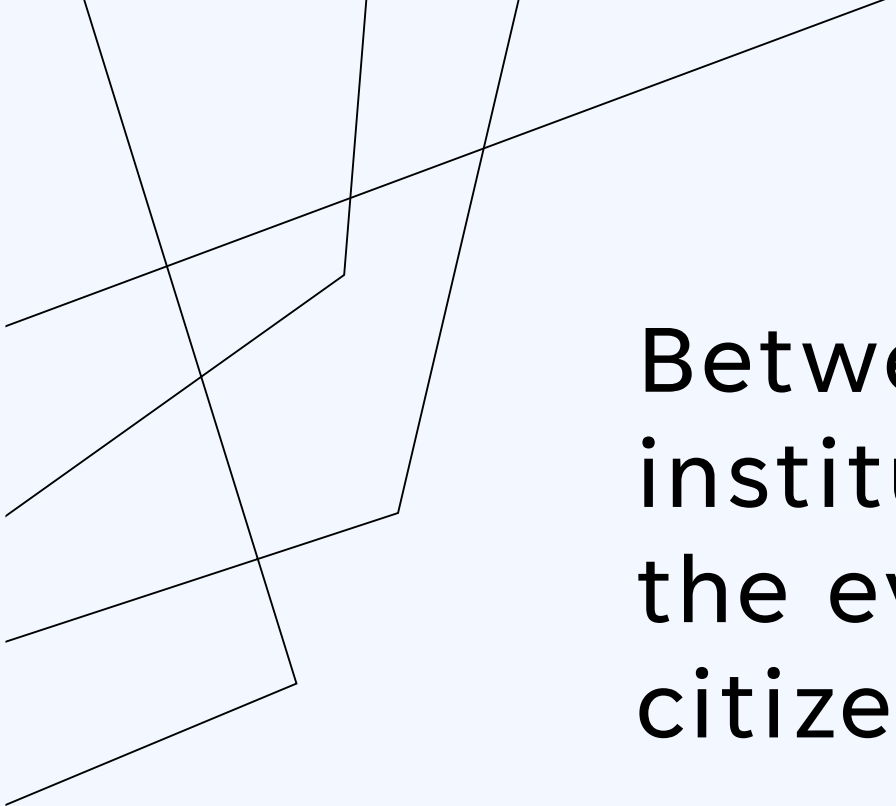
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Between the (hate for the)
institutional and the (appeal to)
the everyday: Researching Greek
citizen's representations of politics.

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The research puzzle and objective

Addressing the rise in anti-politics and shifting citizenship norms marking contemporary political participation in Greece, in light of social representations theory.

Hypothesis: These developments might denote a new way of defining and relating to politics that goes beyond changes in participatory repertoires.

Aim: Identifying transformations at the level of citizens' social representations of politics. Exploring the meanings Greek citizens attribute to politics and the constituents of political participation.



Theoretical framework & Research design

Changes in political participation- the implications for politics

- Structural shift of societies in late modernity, with consequences for identity formation and political behaviour (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991; Hall 1992).
 - Personalisation of politics (Bennett 2012)
 - Politicisation of everyday life (de Moor 2014; Micheletti 2003)
 - Preference for more direct ways of engagement (Dalton 2008; Norris, 2004)
- Transformation of citizenship norms → altering the patterns of political behaviour → blurring the distinction between the public and the private.
- Existing research:
 - Dominance of negative connotations of politics (Hay and Stoker 2009; Stoker 2006).
 - Variations in citizens' understandings of politics, influencing their behaviour (Görtz and Dahl 2021).
 - Discrepancies in the definitions given by researchers and citizens (Manning 2010; Quintelier 2007).

→ **Indications of deeper, qualitative changes that substantiate the need to delve into the altering meanings and contents of politics (Bang and Sorensen 1999; Hay 2007).**

Employing social representations in the study of politics

- **Interdisciplinary approach**, bringing the fields of political science and social psychology together. Social representations as “ways of worldmaking” that “concern the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that gives coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe” (Moscovici 1988: 231, 124).
- Recent work (Elcheroth *et al.*, 2011; Howarth *et al.* 2014; Tileaga 2013) calling for the integration of social representations into the field of political behaviour:
 - Offering a bottom-up understanding of the way political categories are embedded with meaning(s) (Staerkle 2009).
 - Exploring their links to action and mobilisation (Wagner 2015).
- Active process of developing social representations of a social object, allowing for agency and resistance, hence both supporting and transforming the social and political order (Howarth 2011).
- Hegemonic and oppositional representations (Howarth 2006; Moscovici 1988).

Research design

- **Data collection:**
 - 6 focus groups among Greek citizens 17-64 years-old, living in the capital area (N=32, 16 f & 16 m)
 - Interview guide focusing on the perceptions of politics and constituents of political participation
 - Use of images as a minimally intervening way of eliciting social representations (Gaskell 2000)
- **Sampling:**
 - Purposive sampling (Barbour 2005; Patton 2015)
 - Age as a break characteristic (17-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64)
 - Maximizing ingroup variation to reach meaning saturation (Mason 2002)
- **Analysis:**
 - Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006; 2021)
 - Inductive coding process: from description (manifest themes) to interpretation (latent content)(ibid; Joffe 2012).



Main findings - Conceptualising politics

Politics as oppositional dualisms/“themata”

- **The institutional vs. The every-day: the personal is political**
“In Greece, when we say politics, our mind often goes directly to parties. For me, this is not politics. Politics in the sense of dealing with what happens in everyday life and trying to leave an imprint on it. [...] Now, I think more of every-day life, like the damaged pavement and the car parked in the handicap spot” (BA student, F, 22)
- **The social vs. The political**
“Why, what you are now saying isn’t it also politics? Bringing food to your neighbour? What is it? Doesn’t it reveal an opinion, an approach to life?” (Freelancer, M, 50)
- **The individual vs. The collective: the small change**
“[Referring to food waste] You will go, shop and then waste. If you become aware and so does one and the other, it ultimately becomes collective. But it starts with you, with one person.” (Designer, F, 32)
- **Idealism vs. realism: the concept of critical citizens**
“Politics brings to mind something phony, something I will not respect, because it evokes the current situation. If you said politicians, I would be even more certain... It is something that seems to be beautiful, very beautiful in its theory, but in its practice not interesting at all.” (Marketing executive, F, 42)

Politics as participation

- **The actor/the locus/the address of participation**

“[Referring to civil society activism] On the one hand, you promote the value of being a community, helping each other, etc. [...], but in the sense of politics, actual politics there are no parties there to declare that this is politics. So, maybe there are different levels, a sociopolitical one and one more robust, related to institutions, laws etc.”
(Private sector employee, F, 25).

- **Taking a (public) position/Influencing others**

“This also has to do with your involvement. E.g., I have been a vegetarian for a while now, yet I think that ultimately, I have not politicised my stance enough. I mean there a lot of aspects I do not bring to light when I discuss it.”
(Philosophy MA graduate, M, 29)

- **Having an impact**

“I believe [whether boycotting a company constitutes political participation] depends on its extent and its actual imprint. Thinking of what is happening in Israel in terms of boycotting, I feel it went right over the companies’ heads. So, I am not so sure. It is an intention, but I don’t know if it is a political act anymore.”
(Artist, F, 40 y.o.)

Politics as emotions/evaluations

- **A cause of disappointment and frustration**

“I feel it mostly causes negative emotions. Disaffection, frustration, a bit of despair from time to time.”

(Social Sciences BA student, F, 22)

“For me, considering we live in Greece, politics means a way of making good money to the detriment of the people. In Greece, this is really politics, for God’s sake, who are we kidding?”

(Entrepreneur, M, 30)

- **A source of hope and excitement**

“I think politics in general is, I could say, a sensational phenomenon. It is definitely very interesting. I have many positive feelings towards politics in general.”

(Clerk, M, 42)

- **Toil and effort, demanding sacrifices**

“I have a negativism towards politics, that is it does not invoke positive feelings. Because even necessary change brings about negative feelings. It is not only good, but it also needs some effort, or when we change for the best that requires toil as well, which, sometimes, is negative.”

(Employee, M, 25)

Extracting the Social Representations of Politics

- Indications of variations in lay conceptualisations of politics and political participation – expansion of respective definitions.
- Hegemonic representations:
 - Arena definitions: politics as their (formal) institutions (Leftwich 2004)
 - Negative connotations of institutional/formal politics (political parties, politicians)
- Oppositional representations:
 - Process definitions: The politics of the everyday & social practices as political activities
- Chain of associations:

politics=institutional politics ^ institutional politics=unresponsive and corrupt ^ citizens resort to the politics of the everyday as a way of resisting the hegemonic representations.



Conclusions

Varying (and altering) contents of citizens' representations of politics and participation.

Representational field mapped by consensus, as well as ambivalence and controversy, both across and within individuals → Coexistence of hegemonic and oppositional representations of politics.

Key limitations:

- exploratory nature
- the sample

Further research:

- Including more positions/voices
- Examining the relation between representations and political participation



Thank you!

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