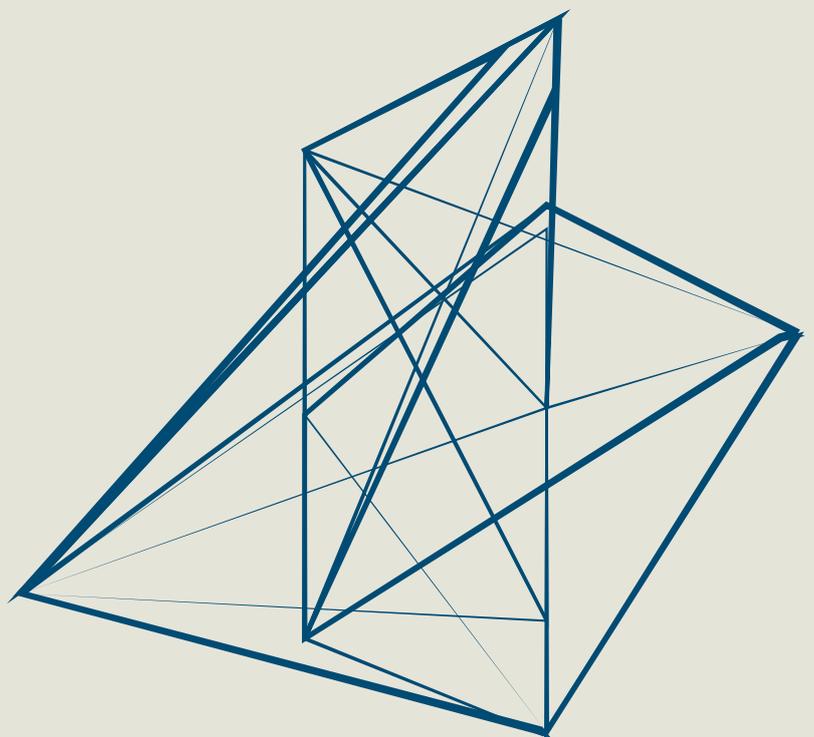# THE 2011 POLITICAL PARTIES EXPERT SURVEY IN GREECE

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The 2011 Political Parties Expert Survey in Greece

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Introduction

This report presents a new dataset on the ideological and policy positions of Greek political parties, based on an expert survey conducted approximately three years after the beginning of the global economic crisis which has became known as the 'Great Recession'.

Using experts to elicit knowledge has a long history in the social and behavioural sciences (Hoffman et al. 1995). Ever since the publication of the expert survey on parties' Left-Right (L-R) positions by Castles and Mair (1984), expert surveys have seen extensive use in political science, especially in a cross-national context (Huber and Inglehart 1995, Kitschelt et al. 2009, O'Malley 2007, Ray 1999, Vowles and Xezonakis 2009). Notwithstanding some methodological concerns (Budge 2000) which we partially address in this report, expert surveys have been shown to provide valid and reliable estimates of political parties' positions (Benoit and Laver 2006, Hooghe et al. 2010, Steenbergen and Marks 2007).

After pretesting a pilot survey to a small number of political scientists in order to get feedback on the included parties and questions, we contacted 52 political scientists who have an extensive knowledge of Greek politics and asked them to participate in our survey. The selection of experts was based on the directory of the Hellenic Political Science Association (`http://www.hpsa.gr/`) and a Google Scholar search for authors publishing on Greek contemporary politics. 25 of the experts we contacted were affiliated with higher education institutions in Greece, 24 with institutions abroad, whereas three experts were affiliated with institutions both in Greece and abroad. Questions were asked in the Greek language and our survey was sent via e-mail using the Lime Survey platform (`http://www.limesurvey.org/`).

Lime Survey ensured the anonymity of the survey as well as compliance with the regulations of the Dutch telecommunications authority (OPTA). To ensure that the survey would be completed only by the invited experts, each e-mail address was associated to a unique randomly generated token. There were 34 responses to our survey which were collected in the period between 5 December 2011 and 2 January 2012. This gave our survey a response rate of about 65.4%, one of the highest among expert surveys on political parties conducted in Greece (see Table 2).

Our questionnaire surveyed 12 parties (Table 1), far more than any other expert survey conducted in Greece so far (Table 2). Our data therefore allow the placement of many small but established extraparliamentary parties which made gains during the 2010 regional elections or created after recent splits in established parliamentary parties (PASOK, ND and SYN). The survey included 14 questions. Three questions

Table 1: Parties included in the expert survey.

Abbreviation	Name	% Vote	Seats
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement	43.92	153
ND	New Democracy	33.47	83
KKE	Communist Party of Greece	7.54	21
LAOS	Popular Orthodox Rally	5.63	16
SYRIZA	Coalition of the Radical Left	4.60	9
GREENS	Ecologist Greens	2.53	-
ANTARSYA	Front of the Greek Anticapitalist Left	.36	-
Chrysi Avyi	*Chrysi Avyi* (Golden Dawn)	.29	-
DIMAR	Democratic Left	-	4
DISY	Democratic Alliance	-	4
ARMA	*Panellinio Arma Politon* (Panhellenic Citizens Chariot)	-	1
DRASSI/Liberals	*Drassi*/Greek Liberals	-	-

Note: % vote Oct. 2009; seats as of Dec. 2011.

regarding parties' positions on general ideological scales (Left-Right, social and moral issues, state intervention in the economy), four questions about parties' positions on policy dimensions (environment, immigration, European and foreign policy), four questions about the importance of these dimensions, two questions about party leader positions and internal party dissent on the issue of solving the debt/deficit problem respectively, and one question about experts' sympathy towards the surveyed parties. The question wordings make the data comparable to those collected by previously conducted expert surveys.

Based on the survey responses we have created two datasets, with experts and parties as units of analysis respectively. The translation and further details about the question wordings and response scales are available in the associated Codebook which has been deposited to the Data Archiving and Networked Services (`http://www.dans.knaw.nl/`) along with the datasets and the original Greek language questionnaire.

In the following two sections, we present some preliminary analyses and showcase how the two datasets, at the expert and party level, can be used for methodological and substantial analyses.

Using the experts dataset to address methodological issues

Although the positions for most of the parties in our survey have never been estimated before, we decided to include them in the survey because we anticipated the response of a large number of experts. One could ask whether the inclusion of small parties on the far left (ANTARSYA) or the far right (*Chrysi Avyi*) could have influenced the position of the established parties. Albright and Mair (2011) have recently put this question to test using a randomized survey experiment and found that there is no consistent evidence that the inclusion of smaller parties affects the mean or median placement of larger parties.

Including small extraparliamentary parties still leaves the possibility of their positions being estimated with a lot of uncertainty. To address the issue of uncertainty, we included at the bottom of each response scale a link for each party

Table 2: The 2011 expert survey compared to the Greek component of other expert surveys.

| Survey | Parties | Questions | Experts | | Response rate |
			Total	Surveyed	
Laver and Hunt (1992)	4	36	23	5	.22
Ray (1999)	8	12	15	10	.67
Lubbers (2001)	7	7	15	4	.27
2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey	4	15	19	11	.58
Benoit and Laver (2006)	4	20	44	16	.36
2006 Chapel Hill Expert Survey	6	39	22	10	.45
Vowles and Xezonakis (2009)	5	14	29	12	.41
This survey	*12*	*14*	*52*	*34*	*.65*

Table 3: Uncertainty in parties' L-R estimates.

Party	RR	SD	A
PASOK	.91	1.11	.76
ND	.97	.74	.84
KKE	.97	1.51	.77
LAOS	.97	.83	.82
SYRIZA	.97	1.58	.71
Ecologist Greens	.97	.86	.79
ANTARSYA	.88	1.84	.81
Chrysi Avyi	.97	.03	.99
DIMAR	.97	1.03	.80
DISY	.91	.88	.81
Panellinio Arma Politon	.71	1.69	.64
Drassi/Greek Liberals	.91	.45	.65

Note: RR: response rate; SD: standard deviation; A: perceptual agreement coefficient

pointing out to its latest party manifesto or policy statement available in the official party website. This way experts could use party manifestos and policy statements as 'informational cues' (Einhorn 1974) and make more informed judgements. Moreover, our data allows addressing uncertainty resulting from expert disagreement in a systematic way. For instance, Table 3 presents three indicators of uncertainty regarding parties' positions on the L-R scale:

the response rate (RR), the standard deviation (SD) and the perceptual agreement coefficient A, a non-standard deviation based statistic which aims to measure the 'peakedness' of a distribution (van der Eijk 2001).

As shown in Table 3, for most parties there is a fairly high perceptual agreement among the experts. There are two exceptions however, *Panellinio Arma Politon* and the electoral coalition between two small liberal parties *Drassi* and the Greek Liberals. The former is a party created by Giannis Dimaras, an erstwhile PASOK MP who disagreed over the government's decision to accept the IMF/EU bailout package and contested the 2010 regional elections as a governor candidate against his former party on a anti-IMF programme (Gemenis 2012b). The party has little access to the media in terms of presenting its programme so it is not surprising to see that experts have different perceptions over where this new one-MP party stands ideologically.

Uncertainty is slightly less pronounced in the case of the electoral coalition between the small liberal parties. Although none of the two parties enjoys parliamentary representation or has supported independent candidates during the latest regional elections, the liberal label made it easier for experts to estimate the L-R position as evident by the higher response rate and lower

Table 4: Assessing experts' ideological bias on parties' L-R estimates.

Party	Regression		Simulation		Survey	
	Coeff.	95% CI	Mean	95% CI	Mean	95% CI
PASOK	**-.266**	[-.438, -.094]	5.14	[4.78, 5.49]	5.35	[4.95, 5.76]
ND	**-.365**	[-.522, -.209]	**6.40**	[5.96, 6.86]	**7.33**	[7.07, 7.59]
KKE	-.015	[-.315, .285]	1.87	[.88, 2.87]	1.91	[1.37, 2.44]
LAOS	**-.296**	[-.430, -.162]	**7.48**	[7.02, 7.99]	**8.45**	[8.16, 8.75]
SYRIZA	.042	[-.191, .275]	2.35	[1.62, 3.14]	2.24	[1.68, 2.80]
Ecologist Greens	.113	[-.019, .246]	3.25	[2.95, 3.55]	3.39	[3.09, 3.70]
ANTARSYA	-.077	[-.648, .494]	1.43	[-.76, 3.37]	1.67	[.98, 2.36]
Chrysi Avyi	.031	[-.335, .397]	10.07	[8.54, 11.65]	9.97	[9.91, 10.03]
DIMAR	-.077	[-.262, .107]	3.83	[3.42, 4.22]	3.76	[3.39, 4.12]
DISY	-.055	[-.208, .098]	6.37	[6.06, 6.68]	6.39	[6.06, 6.71]
Panellinio Arma Politon	.093	[-.463, .648]	3.96	[2.14, 5.66]	3.79	[3.08, 4.51]
Drassi/Greek Liberals	**-.309**	[-.537, -.082]	6.41	[5.93, 6.89]	6.39	[5.85, 6.92]

Note: bold font indicates statistically significant coefficients and mean differences between the simulation and the survey.

standard deviation among the responses.

In a way, the measures in Table 3 assess the degree of random measurement error stemming from disagreement among the experts. Random error makes estimates less precise but does not bias them in any way. Ideology, however, has long been recognized as a potential bias in expert judgement (Mumpower and Stewart 1996, 194) especially when experts are asked to make estimates about the ideological positions of political parties. Our survey makes estimating the presence of such bias possible since, like Laver and Hunt (1992) and Benoit and Laver (2006) have done before, we asked experts to state their degree of sympathy for each party. Following the approach of Curini (2010), we regress the L-R scores to the sympathy scores for each party and then estimate the mean placement by simulating the scenario where all experts would be neither sympathetic nor hostile to parties (5.5 on a 1–10 sympathy scale).

As evident from the results in Table 4, in four out of 12 parties (PASOK, ND, LAOS and *Drassi*/Greek Liberals) the regression coefficient indicating the presence of ideological bias is statistically significant. Out of these four cases, for only two parties this bias is translated in substantive and statistically significant differences in the mean placement on the L-R scale. For both conservative ND and radical right LAOS parties, the simulations implemented by Clarify (King et al. 2000, Tomz et al. 2003) indicate that the mean placement of ND and LAOS under the simulation scenario of unbiased experts would be about one point to the left on the 1–10 L-R scale. Interestingly, the placement of the extreme right *Chrysi Avyi* does not seem to be influenced by this bias, although this has more do with the lack of variance in the data (32 out of 33 experts placed the party on 10) which prevent us from making reliable statistical inferences. These findings are consistent with previous studies where experts have been found to be biased against radical right and mainstream conservative parties (Curini 2010), although we found that the bias was less prominent when ex-

perts were asked to position parties in specific policy dimensions.

Making inferences by using the parties dataset

Greece was one of the hardest hit countries in Europe and the first to request the financial assistance of the IMF and its EU partners. Politically, the financial crisis has led to a snap election in October 2009 where the incumbent conservative party (ND) suffered the worst defeat in its history. Consequently, the main opposition party PASOK was elected on a platform which included promises for a 2 billion Euros stimulus plan, which were quickly abandoned when prime minister George Papandreou accepted a joint EU/IMF bailout package. Amidst the austerity measures and continuing protests, support for the government quickly evaporated. The declining in support for the two major parties (Dinas 2010, 394–395) together with the internal party disagreements over economic policy which resulted in party splits contributed to the fragmentation of the party system. After a cabinet reshuffle in June 2011 and much deliberation, Papandreou resigned the following November. A cabinet formed by former president of the ECB, Lucas Papademos received support by an unlikely combination of coalition partners which includes PASOK, ND and the radical right LAOS.

Figure 1 presents Greek parties' positions on the L-R scale. The placement of parties from left to right is very intuitive, especially when contrasted to the placement of parties by the Comparative Manifestos Project (Dinas and Gemenis 2010, Gemenis 2012a, Lefkofridi and Casado-Asensio 2012). ANTARSYA, KKE and SYRIZA are placed on the extreme left, in many respects an expected placement. ANTARSYA is an electoral coalition of anti-capitalist extra-parliamentary groups, KKE is an orthodox communist party which rehabilitated Stalin in its last
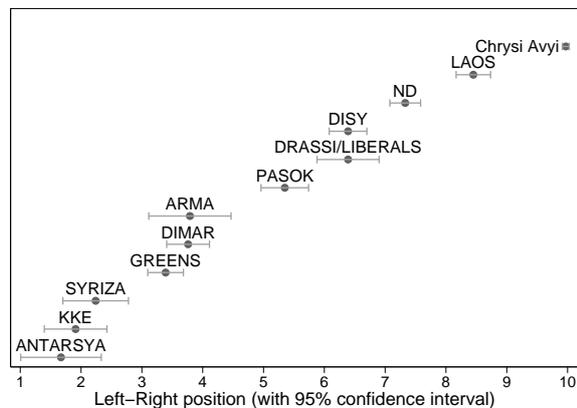

Figure 1: Party positions on the L-R scale.

congress, whereas SYRIZA is an electoral coalition of Maoist, Trotskyist and other leftist parties (Gemenis 2010, 355–356). The 95% confidence interval bars indicate that the differences in their mean placements are not statistically significant. This implies that the positions for the three most leftist parties are largely indistinguishable from one another, although the experts were able to find differences in other policy dimensions.

To the right of these three parties we find another group of three parties which occupy indistinguishable from one another places on the the L-R scale. Again, this is an expected outcome as DIMAR collaborated with the Ecologist Greens in the 2010 regional elections by supporting common candidates in three regions (Gemenis 2012b). DIMAR was created on February 2010 when the most moderate faction within SYN (the largest constituent party of SYRIZA) walked out due to organizational and ideological disagreements. Nevertheless, the proposal for an electoral coalition between the two parties for the upcoming parliamentary election was rejected by the Greens, who apparently wish to keep their coalition options open. For *Panellinio Arma Politon*, a very small PASOK splinter which primarily mobilizes against the terms of the IMF/EU bailout, the measures of uncertainty show that,

5

apart from the opposition to the IMF, the experts found it very difficult to assess its position in other policy dimensions.

PASOK occupies the centre of the L-R scale, a finding consistent with all the expert and mass surveys conducted in Greece over the past twenty years, even though the PASOK MPs tend to place themselves to the left of their party (Nezi, Sotiropoulos and Toka 2009, 1010). To the right of PASOK and the left of conservative ND, we find the three small liberal parties. DISY was created on November 2010 after its leader, Dora Bakoyannis, failed to win the ND leadership and was consequently expelled by the new party leader for voting in favour of the IMF/EU bailout (Gemenis 2010, 355–356). In the previous section, we showed that the observed difference between the liberal parties and ND may be due to the experts' antipathy towards the conservatives but the results in other policy areas reveal the absence of such bias. This means that there are perceivable ideological differences between the liberals and conservatives in Greece which cannot be attributed to bias. In fact, the populist discourse of the new conservative leader as well as his collaboration with the radical right LAOS in the 2010 regional elections (Gemenis 2012b), may signalled a rightward trend which prompted the exit of the liberal faction.

To the right of the conservatives we find the radical right LAOS and *Chrysi Avyi*. LAOS has been traditionally an anti-immigrant party which a particular emphasis on law and order and a nationalist approach to foreign policy (Gemenis and Dinas 2010, 190–191), whereas *Chrysi Avyi* is a nationalist and xenophobic organization akin to the British National Front. In terms of economic policy both parties are characterized by a 'welfare chauvinism' (see Mudde 1999), although this is not reflected in the L-R scores most likely because immigration and nationalism have been the defining characteristics of the radical and extreme right. In general, however, the party scores on the L-R scale are very intuitive

which attest to their usefulness in validating results from other methods of estimating parties' policy positions.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the L-R and parties' positions on the issue of the IMF/EU bailout. High scores on the latter dimension indicate that the party is in favour of a solution for the Greek debt/deficit within the IMF/EU framework whereas low scores indicate that the party is in favour of a solution which involves exit from the Euro and suspending the payment of the country's loans. The relationship between the two dimensions is the classic inverted U where centrist parties are in favour of European integration while extremist parties argue for exiting the EU (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002). The scatterplot also shows the pivotal position of the DIMAR and the Ecologist Greens at the centre of the debt/deficit scale, although this is largely associated with the ambiguity of their policy positions on this issue (Botetzagias 2011).
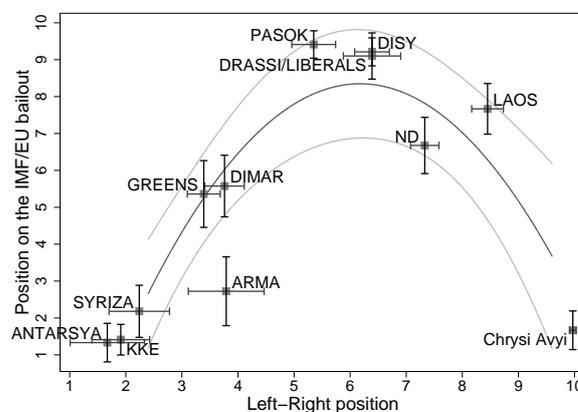

Figure 2: A two-dimensional view of the policy space in Greece during the 'Great Recession' (lines are quadratic fit with 95% confidence intervals).

The importance of the debt/deficit dimension in contemporary Greek politics is evident when one wants to explain the unlikely government coalition among PASOK, ND and LAOS. Even

though the three parties are not very close on the L-R scale, together with the liberal parties which support the government informally, occupy the top positions in the scatterplot that indicate support for a solution within the IMF/EU framework. This implies that the 'Great Recession' is gradually changing the salience of the European integration dimension in national politics. As politicians find it increasingly difficult to separate policy-making at the national level from the European and international developments, the conflict over European integration is becoming increasingly important for national politics.

Acknowledgments

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