

Exploring Congruence in Greece (2009-2019)

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Abstract

Congruence between voters' and candidates' policy position is a key element of political representation. This paper intends to study congruence between candidate MPs and their party voters in Greece during the last decade (2009-2019). After a rather stable period (after the democratic transition in 1974), the Greek party system in the last decade has experienced many alterations and transformations. Old traditional parties have lost their electoral power while new and, in some cases, more extreme parties have appeared in the Greek party system, especially after 2012. These changes could have affected the linkage between political elites and the electorate and as a result the level of congruence in Greece could be at stake. Examining this political phenomenon on different dimensions of political competitiveness (economic Left/Right, GALTAN, pro/anti-European) we answer the following research question: how has congruence been developed in the Greek political context during the last ten years?

In the past congruence was typically studied by comparing the attitudes of voters with what opinion polls or panels of experts considered to be the attitudes of politicians or the positions of parties. In 2010, Golder and Stramski introduced a many-to-many approach, and then many recent studies have followed this approach. Relying on the data of Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS), in line with CSES voter study we study congruence between the voters' and candidates' policy position. Specifically, we include the Greek studies of 2009, 2012, 2015 and the recent study of 2019. In this paper we use Greece as a case study; however, this work contributes to the comparative research on congruence and to a further development of the CCS project. Constituting an archive with common variables, coding and data of all the CCS studies in line with voter studies is an important element for other potential studies and comparative analysis in the future.

Keywords: political elites; representation; congruence

Introduction

After the nineteenth century our understanding of democracy is considerably associated with the term “representative”. Since then a wide range of theoretical and empirical research in political science is dedicated to exploring the connection between policymakers and the electorate, or in other words the function of representative democracies. The fundamental function of democratic representation is to provide a systematic connection between the policy preferences of voters and their representatives (Arnold & Franklin, 2012; Costello, Thomassen, & Rosema, 2012).

Hence, the main essential of any representative democracy is the voters to feel represented, and their representatives to act in accordance with their voters' preferences (Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 1999).

The linkage between citizens and policy makers is conceptualized as congruence (Önnudóttir, 2014). The concept of congruence relies on the claim that policy makers should consider the expectations, needs and wishes of the voters (Powell, 2004, p. 282). Although congruence between representatives and those who they represent is not the exclusive measure of the functioning of the democratic representation; it can be considered as a pertinent starting point (Eulau & Karps, 1977), a key element of political representation (Miller & Stokes, 1963), or an important tool to evaluate the performance of democratic representation (Karyotis, Rüdiger, & Judge, 2014). Therefore, to study the voter-candidate congruence scholars measure to what extent the views of representatives correspond with the preferences and orientations of the voters (Freire, Lisi, Andreadis, & Leite Viegas, 2014).

Studying the performance of democratic representation in terms of ideological congruence between the demand and supply side, is already an interesting subject in political science. Examining congruence in Greece during the last decade, and in 4 different election years, as reference points, permits us to study this political phenomenon in an integrated perspective. This paper explores congruence at the level of the mass public and the political elites, relying on the party identification of the voters and the political competitiveness between parties and party families, as it is mainly reflected in the left/right cleavage (Sani & Sartori, 1983), economic left/right and GAL/TAN.

The following are the main research questions that this study poses: How is congruence developed in the Greek political context, during the last ten years? ii) In which dimensions of electoral competitiveness we observe higher level of congruence?; and iii) Is it L/R dimension enough to explain congruence? Is the congruence between candidates and voters higher in the issue dimension that the voters find it more important;

We address these questions using a many-to-many approach, as it is introduced by Golder and Stramski (2010), based on data from a candidate survey of the Comparative Candidates Study (CCS), in line with the mass survey of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). Below we describe the conceptualization of congruence and we form our research hypotheses. In the next session, we present with more details the methods and the data which we use in our analysis. Then we show the findings of the analysis and this paper ends with some conclusions and discussion.

Conceptualizing Ideological Congruence

There are different conceptualizations and dimensions of congruence. According to Powell (2004) two are the main research approaches to examine the connection of citizens and their representatives: i) 'procedural representation' and ii) 'substantive representation'. The former focuses on a vote-seat correspondence. Vote-seat distributions are "the most tangible and easily quantifiable evidence available about the

preferences of the electorate and their reflection in the legislature”(Powell & Vanberg, 2000, p. 384). The latter focuses directly on the preferences rather than the votes of citizens.

Congruence varies greatly and significantly depends on the issue at stake (Hurley & Hill, 2003). There is evidence that it tends to be greater for ideological or highly-politicized issues (Belchior, Tsatsanis, & Teixeira, 2016, p. 280).. In addition, voters’ preferences tend to match more with the preferences of their representatives, in important and comprehensible for them issues; hence, congruence is more likely to be higher for ‘salient’ issues (Wlezien & Soroka, 2007).

Congruence among citizens and their representatives could be either on an ideological level or a specific policy level. Usually, research on democratic representation focuses on attitudes and ideology because expecting detailed policy preferences from voters could be too demanding (Lax & Phillips, 2012, p. 149). Moreover, Costello et al. (2012, p. 1228) explain that the ideology operates as a ‘shortcut’ that allows voters to identify and vote for a party even without knowing in detail its position on all issues. Thus, there is a linkage between the attitudes and policy choices of policy makers; and if this connection is strong, policy outcomes are likely to reflect voters’ preferences (Miller & Stokes, 1963).

Different methods have been used to position parties and candidates and to conceptualize and measure congruence. In the past congruence was typically studied by comparing the attitudes of voters with what opinion polls or panels of experts considered to be the attitudes of politicians or the positions of parties. These studies have understood congruence as a one-to-one or many-to-one relationships,(see Powell, 2009). Many congruence studies, relying on this approach, compare self-placement of voters extracted by mass surveys with positions of parties extracted by expert surveys (Powell, 2006). Although the use of experts to position political parties is not uncommon (Andreadis, 2013; Benoit & Laver, 2006; Polk et al., 2017), it may introduce a series of problems, mainly concerning the experts’ judgement (Budge, 2000).

Another common method extracts party positions from party manifestos. Klingemann (1995) was one of the first researchers who study congruence comparing the positions of parties (extracted by Manifesto data) with the positions of their supporters (extracted from Eurobarometer survey data). The main advantage of this method is quantity of the manifesto data, in terms of the number of parties, years and countries that it covers. On the other hand, the idea of using a party’s issue saliency to derive its issue position is not easily accepted; manifesto data tend to position the extreme parties closer to the ideological center, comparing to survey based approaches (Gabel & Huber, 2000), let alone the low issue coverage of a manifesto in some cases.

Another method on congruence research is to use voters as the experts who will position parties. For instance, to estimate the position of the parties Dalton, Farrel and McAlister (2011) calculate the average of the answers given by all respondents of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) when they were asked to place the

major political parties in their country on the Left-Right scale. In this approach the data are collected simultaneously for both citizens and parties (Dalton et al., 2011, p. 27). Although “individual citizens may have imprecise impressions about politics”, their aggregated perceptions could be “virtually identical to the Left-Right scores given by political science professors judging the same parties” (Dalton et al., 2011, p. 28).

A similar approach has been used by Golder and Stramski (2010), who used the top 40% of educated respondents in each country. Golder & Stramski (Golder & Stramski, 2010) introduced a many-to-many approach to conceptualize congruence, re-addressing the classical voter-representative congruence. Arguably, this methodological approach measures more accurately political elites’ attitudes and preferences. Dolny and Babos (2015, p. 1278) note that in this approach, congruence reflects “the accuracy of transformation of citizens’ preferences in the legislative body as a whole in terms of the similarity between the distributions of citizens’ and representatives’ preferences”.

Finally, many recent congruence studies follow this many-to-many approach introduced by Golder and Stramski (2010) using surveys of elected members of parliament (Belchior et al., 2016; Dolný & Baboš, 2015) or candidates (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017; Costello et al., 2012; Leimgruber, Hangartner, & Leemann, 2010). Two are the most important benefits of this approach according to Andeweg (2011): i) we can measure “representatives’ positions in the same way as voters’ asking the representatives directly, in a survey, and ii) we do not need to assume that all MPs or candidates or voters share the same preference and use a single measure of central tendency for their position; “It is an empirical question whether parties or other collectivities are unified or not; it is not a question to be resolved by assumption. For less unified parties, and for parliament as a whole, using a mean or a median, results in considerable loss of information” (Andeweg, 2011, p. 41).

Congruence and the Greek political context during the last decade

A key feature of the Greek political context is the dominant position of political parties. As happened in the countries of Southern Europe after the third wave of Democratization, a strong and generally stable party system was created in Greece (Pappas, 1999). The dominant feature of this system in Greece is bipartisanship. Since 1974, after the restoration of democracy in the country, the two largest parties, PASOK and ND, have been alternating in government.

The constant alternation of the two main parties in the government for several decades, allowed the parties of PASOK and New Democracy to develop a modernized version of the clientelist system with party and client ties (Teperoglou & Tsatsanis, 2014, p. 224). Therefore, clientelism becomes a dominant feature of the Greek political reality, which determines the form and quality of political representation (Featherstone, 2005; Haralambis, 1989).

The political scene changed in 2012: the rise of SYRIZA, the dramatic decrease in the electoral power of PASOK (from 43.92% in the 2009 elections, the vote share fell to 6.29% in the elections of September 2015) and the emergence of new parties (such as

the Democratic Left, the Golden Dawn and the Independent Greeks), changing the composition of the Greek parliament. Shortly before the national elections of May 2012, more than 1/3 of the members of the Greek parliament had left their parliamentary groups and many of them had formed or joined new political parties, while the number of independent Members was increased. Especially after the 2015 elections, the majority of MPs come from the radical left and the composition of the parliament includes - in addition to the communists, the socialists and the center-right MPs - MPs from new parties (the liberal, centrist party Potami, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, and the nationalist Independent Greeks party). The fragmentation of the party system and the emergence of new political forces is a result of the sudden social changes brought about by the economic crisis to both the political elites and the electorate (Dogan & Higley, 2012, pp. 269–279; King & Seligman, 1976, pp. 263–264).

Moreover, in times of crisis, a common phenomenon observed is the consensus among political elites (Higley & Burton, 2006, pp. 55–103; Mills, 1956). The same is observed in the Greek political system of the period 2010–2015. Given that before 2010 the Greek political scene was dominated by one-party governments, forming coalition governments is an evidence of change of the political system towards consensus. This tendency for cooperation and coalition between the political elites, in order to maintain their governmental power, is confirmed through the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition in 2015. These two parties, coming from different political areas, seemingly without any ideological related, they formed a coalition government, which relied heavily on their common populist rhetoric (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017).

Previous research on congruence in Greece observes extremely high levels of convergence between candidate MPs and voters regarding the assessment of the bailout agreement (Teperoglou, Freire, Andreadis, & Leite Viegas, 2014). In a more recent study after the 2015 national elections, Andreadis and Stavrakakis (2017) explored the convergence between voters and MP candidates in various dimensions (positions on the Left-Right axis, attitudes towards cultural issues, attitudes towards austerity measures imposed due to the economic crisis in Greece, etc.). This study shows high levels of congruence between PASOK voters and candidates on almost all issues and low levels of convergence between SYRIZA voters and candidates in most dimensions. Specifically, it is observed that in their positions on the Left-Right axis, the SYRIZA candidates place themselves further to the left than the voters. Finally, Andreadis and Kartsounidou (2018), exploring congruence in a comparative perspective provide evidence that the level of incongruence in Greece in 2009 was relatively high; however, the distance between candidate MPs and voters decreased in 2015.

Taking into account the particular characteristics of the Greek party system and the specific time period (2009–15) we expect that:

H1. The distance between the voters and the candidates of the Greek parties will increase due to the economic crisis, which will lead to a lower level of ideological convergence between them.

Left-right dimension

The left-right scale makes it possible to compare the policy-positions of citizens with the policy-positions of the parties or the candidates that represent them (Powell, 2009). The left-right scale is a kind of 'super' issue dimension (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002) able to capture the political issues that are relevant in a given context (Inglehart & Klingemann, 1976). It is a “unidimensional issue space” which is dominant in the literature on congruence, determining the behavior of political parties and voters (Dolný & Baboš, 2015). In this view, party positions on the left-right summarize their general policy stances (Downs, 1957).

Many scholars interested in democratic representation, use the left-right scale to measure congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences (Freire & Belchior, 2013). “In a single-issue dimension, the position of the median is privileged because it is the only policy position that cannot be defeated by another position in a head-on vote. The further from the citizen median the legislative median is located, the larger the citizen majority that would prefer an alternative” (Powell & Vanberg, 2000, p. 385).

Although the reduction of multiple dimensions into this single one could be problematic, the left-right scale position reflects reasonably the citizens' views in the context of national political debate in most of the countries, shaping the party competition (Walgrave & Lefevere, 2013) and the vote choices of the electorate (Huber & Powell, 1994; van der Eijk, Schmitt, & Binder, 2005). The dominance of this dimension in shaping party competition in most democratic states encourages the comparison of the level and functioning of democratic representation among them (Costello et al., 2012). Many empirical studies have confirmed the importance of the left–right issue in European politics, determining voters' choices in national and European elections (Thomassen & van Ham, 2014; van der Eijk et al., 2005) while other studies report high level of agreement between voters and their representatives in this key dimension (Belchior, 2013; Costello et al., 2012; Dolný & Baboš, 2015; van der Eijk et al., 2005).

Other dimensions

However, the utilization of a left/right scale captures only specific aspects of congruence between voters and elites (Lutz, Kissau, & Rosset, 2012, p. 1), without covering attitudes, and policy positions on a variety of issue areas such as law and order, immigration or European integration (Costello et al., 2012; Hooghe, Marks, & Wilson, 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006). Hence, we should explore congruence beyond this dimension (Karyotis et al., 2014). Apart from the Left-Right dimension, there are also other dimensions that play a significant role on the electoral competitiveness and political representation. Even if not many studies have utilized other dimensions, issues and potential cleavages like the following have been explored in the available literature: redistribution, employment, defense, law and order, participation, foreign policy, attitudes towards borders and currency, post-materialism, environmental protection, traditional vs. authoritarian values, European integration, immigration, etc. (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017; Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006; Lutz et al., 2012; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1999; Valen & Narud, 2007).

Furthermore, Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) since 1999 has included more dimensions apart from the general L/R to position the political parties taking into account different ideological aspects. Economic L/R emphasizes on the economic issues. In this dimension Left stands for a more active role of government in the economy while right means privatization, lower taxes, less regulation, a leaner welfare state and in general a more reduced role of the government in the economy. GAL/TAN dimension is more related to social aspects, such as democratic freedoms and rights¹. In this dimension the discrimination is between “Libertarian” or “postmaterialist” and “Traditional” or “authoritarian” aspects. The first group is more in favor of expanded personal freedoms (i.e. access to abortion, active euthanasia, same-sex marriage, or greater democratic participation). On the other hand, “traditionalists” or “authoritarians” usually have more conservative stances towards these issues, being more in favor of law and order, tradition, and stability. They believe that the government should be a firm moral authority on social and cultural issues.

Relying on the fact that previous studies have found differences across policy areas with some issues generating more incongruence than others (Holmberg, 2000; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Miller & Stokes, 1963; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1999; Wessels, 1999), we believe that:

H2a The level of congruence between candidates and voters will not be the same in all the sub-dimensions of L/R.

Moreover, Andreadis and Stavrakakis (2019) using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) reported that the general Left/Right position of the party depends on the difference of the saliences of economic issues and libertarian/traditional issues in the party’s public stance. Relying on this evidence we assume

H2b. The level of congruence between candidates and voters will be higher in the issue dimension that the voters and/or the candidates find it more salient.

Data and Methods

In this paper we study congruence in Greece across time, conceptualizing it as a many-to-many relationship in line with Golder and Stramski (2010). More specifically we use data for Greece of the CCS (waves I and II) and the CSES projects (modules 3 and 4). The analysis consists of the studies of 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2019 (Andreadis, Chadjipadelis, & Teperoglou, 2014a; 2014b; 2016a; 2016b; Andreadis, 2016a; 2016b). The data of these studies are available from the website of the Hellenic National Election Studies (<http://www.elnes.gr>). More specifically, Table 1 describes the political parties that are included in each study that we analyze in this paper.

<<TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>>

¹ Green/Alternative/Libertarian (GAL) to Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist (TAN) dimension.

CCS is a joint multi-national project with the goal of collecting data on candidates running for national parliamentary elections in different countries using a common core questionnaire. In addition, CSES is an international project that relies on a post-electoral survey and reflects the opinions and attitudes of the electorates. These datasets include variables which enable us estimate congruence of the preferences of voters and candidates on the left/right dimension (L/R). Additionally, for the data of 2019 we can estimate congruence on economic L/R dimension and GAL/TAN, along with the importance that both voters and candidates give to specific issues related to these dimensions.

In order to estimate the position of the parties on the left-right scale we can use the average value of the answers given by CSES respondents when they are asked to position the most important political parties on the L/R scale. In addition, both in CSES and CCS there was a question asking respondents to self-position themselves on the L/R scale. This way we are able to measure the positions of both voters and candidates as individuals. Then we can use the position of the respondents in combination with their vote choice (or the party they have stood as a candidate) to calculate the average value of the voters (or candidates) of each party.

To measure congruence, we follow the methodological approach presented by Andreadis and Stavrakakis (2017). Since our data contain the same question: to place themselves on the L/R scale, which was answered by both the voters (CSES) and candidates (CCS) using the same answer scale; we can measure the congruence between the preferences of voters and candidate MPs. We measure congruence evaluating how similar the distribution of their preferences is on the left-right issue dimension. We use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test (Darling, 1957) to check the hypothesis that the samples are drawn from the same distribution. The higher the value of KS statistical test, the bigger the distance between candidates and voters. Hence, a zero value in the KS statistical test indicates null distance between candidates and voters, and as a result, the maximum possible voter-candidate congruence. In addition to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics, we visualize the empirical cumulative distributions of the data for both voters and candidates of a party on the same plots, highlighting this way the ‘many to many’ congruence.

The same approach applies also to measure congruence on economic L/R and GAL/TAN. The level of congruence among voters and their representatives may be influenced by the importance that some issues have for the electorate or the candidate MPs. To measure the importance of specific issues related to these dimensions, both candidates and voters, after placing themselves on the scales, they were asked how important the specific issues were to them, on a scale from 0 (not at all important) to 4 (extremely important). Then we calculate the mean value for the voters and candidates of each party, to check whether congruence is higher in the issue dimension that voters find it more important. To check the significance of the differences in the salience of the issues related to economic L/R and GAL/TAN, we use paired T-test.

Findings

Greece 2009 is a study with a remarkably high incongruence level. Nevertheless, the distance between candidates and voters gradually decreased in 2015; while the party-system polarization increased considerably, and new parties appear altering the partisan competition. In the study of 2009, we only have data of the two main parties of the country (PASOK and ND), but at the time these two parties were gathering approximately 77% of the vote share. This changed in 2012 where new parties gained power. The Greek party Nea Dimokratia (ND) exhibits high level of congruence in 2015 and 2012. In Greece in 2015 another party that has a high level of congruence is River, despite it is a new party in the Greek party system. On the other hand, we observe a large distance between SYRIZA voters and SYRIZA candidates on the L/R axis both in 2012 and 2015. In addition, the ECDFs of the candidates and voters of PASOK show a marked distance especially in 2009 and 2015. Also, a considerable distance is observed between the candidates and voters of DIMAR in 2012. Therefore, we can observe a higher incongruence between candidates and voters on the left right dimension in Greek left parties, where the candidates are more likely to adopt a more extreme position to the left of the scale than the voters.

Focusing on 2019, we still observe a significant distance between the candidates and the voters of SYRIZA and KINAL. Also, a considerable distance is observed between the candidates and voters of MERA25. The aforementioned observations support the evidence of the previous years that candidates of the left-wing parties place themselves more to the left in the L/R scale compared to their voters. Moreover, the level of congruence between the candidates and the voters of ND appears to be lower in 2019 than it was in 2012 or 2015. Finally, the party that exhibits a high level of congruence is EL, although it is a new party in the Greek party system.

In the economic L/R scale, we notice a considerable difference in KINAL, compared to the general L/R scale. As ECDF Diagram shows there is a remarkable increase in the level of congruence between the candidates and the voters of this party. An increase in congruence is also noticed between the candidates and voters of MERA25. The level of congruence between the candidates and the voters of EL remains high also in the economic L/R scale. A slight decrease in the distance between SYRIZA voters and SYRIZA candidates is observed in the economic L/R scale; however, the level of incongruence is still extremely high. On the other hand, the only party that displays an increase in the distance between candidates and voters in the economic L/R scale, is ND.

In the GAL/TAN scale, we observe a high level of congruence between candidates and voters of almost all the parties of the analysis. A considerable difference compared to economic L/R and general L/R in the distance between the candidates and the voters of ND, which decreases remarkably in the GAL/TAN scale. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the distance between the candidates and voters of KINAL also decreases considerably in the GAL/TAN scale, especially compared to the L/R scale but also to the economic L/R scale. The only party that still exhibits a high level of incongruence between the candidates and the voters is SYRIZA.

Moving forward in the analysis, an explanation about the differentiations of the distance between candidates and voters of the parties in the different dimensions could be found in the importance voters but also candidates give to the issues related to these dimensions. Table 2 shows that voters of the right-wing parties of the analysis (ND and EL) consider as more important the economic issues than the libertarian/traditional issues. On the other hand, the voters of the left-wing parties of the analysis find the libertarian/traditional issues more important. A significant statistical difference is noticed in the voters of MERA25 (-0.438) and SYRIZA (-0,406). Voters of MERA25 are the voters who consider the issues related to GAL/TAN dimension as the most salient ($m=3.5$), and then the voters of SYRIZA ($m=3.44$) and KINAL (3.4) follow. This finding could explain somehow the fact that there is a higher level of congruence between candidates and voters of MERA25, and maybe of KINAL in GAL/TAN scale, but there is not enough evidence to explain what happens to the other parties (i.e ND that exhibits a higher level of congruence in GAL/TAN).

For this reason, we also examine the importance that candidate MPs give to the same issues related to Economic L/R and GAL/TAN (Table 3). Like the observation about the voters, the candidate MPs of the left-wing-parties value as more salient the libertarian/traditional issues in their agenda. In addition, similar to the voters the candidates of EL consider as more important the economic issues. While there is not any difference, as far as the importance of the issues related to economic L/R and GAL/TAN, in the candidates of ND. This finding cannot shed light to somehow explain the increased level of congruence between candidates and voters of ND in GAL/TAN dimension. However, the statistically significant difference in the candidates of MERA25 and KINAL could support the aforementioned argument regarding the higher level of congruence in GAL/TAN scale. On the contrary, the statistically significant difference in the candidates of does not provide any additional evidence about congruence between candidates and voters of SYRIZA, since the level of congruence is relatively low in all the dimensions we examine in this paper.

Discussion

The first aim of this paper is to study the level of congruence between candidate MPs and voters in Greece during the last 10 years (2009-2019) After 2009 the Greek party system changed radically, traditional parties lost their parties and new parties appear. This caused many changes in the Greek political spectrum. The fluctuations of the level of congruence over the years is one of them. ND is one of the parties that we observed higher level of congruence between voters and candidates after 2009, in the L/R dimension. SYRIZA on the other hand presented a high level of incongruence throughout the years in general L/R dimension, but also in the economic L/R and GAL/TAN that we examined for 2019. A marked distance is also observed between candidates and voters of PASOK, especially in 2009 and 2015 and later in 2019 when it participated in the elections as KINAL, in the general L/R dimension. However, this distance became considerably smaller in the Economic L/R and GAL/TAN dimensions in 2019.

Furthermore, some of the new parties that emerged in the last 10 years, exhibit a high level of congruence, such as Potami in 2015 or EL in 2019. In fact, EL is the party that we observed the highest level of congruence among the parties of the analysis in 2019, in all the three dimensions, and especially in the economic L/R. On the other hand, DIMAR in 2012 and MERA25 in 2019 had a considerable distance between their voters and candidates in the general L/R dimension. However, the level of congruence between candidates and voters of MERA25 increased considerably in the GAL/TAN dimension, which the dimension with the most salient issues according to both voters and candidates of the party.

Moreover, there is evidence that in almost all the parties, the candidates adopt a more extreme position than voters. A very large proportion of voters place themselves in the centre of the left-right scale, while their representatives' preference distribution is more spread out and often two peaks emerge either to the left-of-centre or to the right-of-centre. We have observed that especially the left-wing parties have a significant distance between their candidates and voters, and the candidates place themselves more to the left of the axis, than the voters.

Adding more dimensions in the analysis seems to be helpful to study and understand congruence in Greece. However, economic L/R and GAL/TAN were not enough to explain congruence in SYRIZA or ND. Maybe other dimensions should be added in the analysis such as EU dimension or Populism. Maybe studying through these perspectives the distance between candidates and voters could help us understand better how congruence is developed between voters and candidates of the two major parties in Greece, providing additional evidence about what was in stake in the electoral competition in Greece.

Studying congruence in Greece, taking into account different dimensions of the electoral competition, could contribute to the comparative research on congruence in an integrated perspective in the future. Using Greece as a case and relying on data provided by international projects and collaborations this paper aspires to be seen as starting point to study congruence in a comparative perspective. Constituting an archive with common variables, coding and data of all the CCS and CSES studies is an important element also for other potential studies in the future. This effort will contribute significantly to a further development of the CCS project, enhancing the comparative analysis and the collaboration among countries, which is one of the main aims of the project. We hope that this work will encourage more researchers to examine further political representation and other issues related to political science.

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Datasets

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Tables

Table 1. Studies and Political parties of the analysis.

<i>Study</i>	<i>PARTY A</i>	<i>PARTY B</i>	<i>PARTY C</i>	<i>PARTY D</i>	<i>PARTY E</i>	<i>PARTY F</i>	<i>PARTY G</i>
GREECE 2009	PASOK	ND					
GREECE 2012	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	
GREECE 2015	SYRIZA	ND		RIVER		ANEL	PASOK
GREECE 2019	ND	SYRIZA	KINAL		EL	MERA25	

Table 2. Mean values of the relative salience of economic issues and libertarian/traditional issues for voters

<i>Party</i>	<i>ECONOMIC L/R</i>	<i>GAL/TAN</i>	<i>DIF.</i>
ND	3.18	3.14	0.033
SYRIZA	3.03	3.44	-0.406*
KINAL	3.22	3.40	-0.2
EL	3.13	2.61	0.522*
MERA25	3.05	3.5	-0.438*

Note: the asterisk () stands for the significant values (p-value < 0.05) after paired t-test*

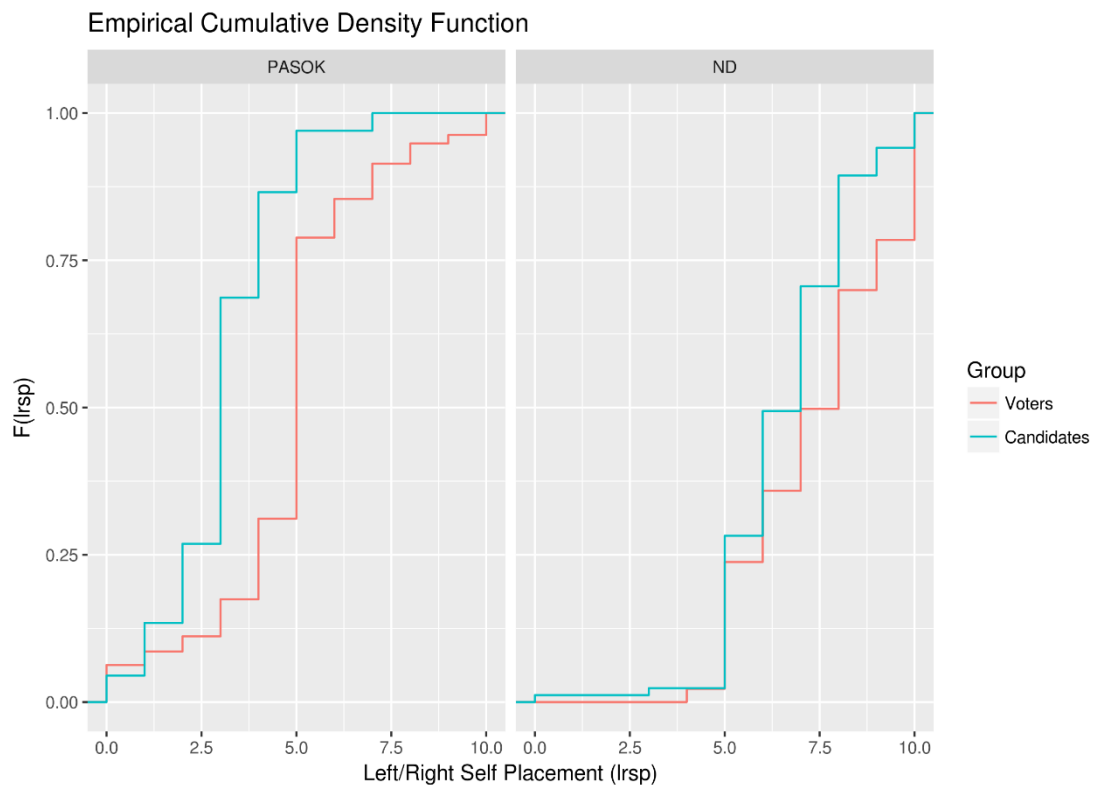
Table 3. Mean values of the relative salience of economic issues and libertarian/traditional issues for candidate MPs

<i>Party</i>	<i>ECONOMIC L/R</i>	<i>GAL/TAN</i>	<i>DIF.</i>
ND	2.96	2.98	-0.02
SYRIZA	2.9	3.55	-0.65*
KINAL	2.85	3.28	-0.424*
EL	3.17	3.06	0.188
MERA25	3.07	3.62	-0.552*

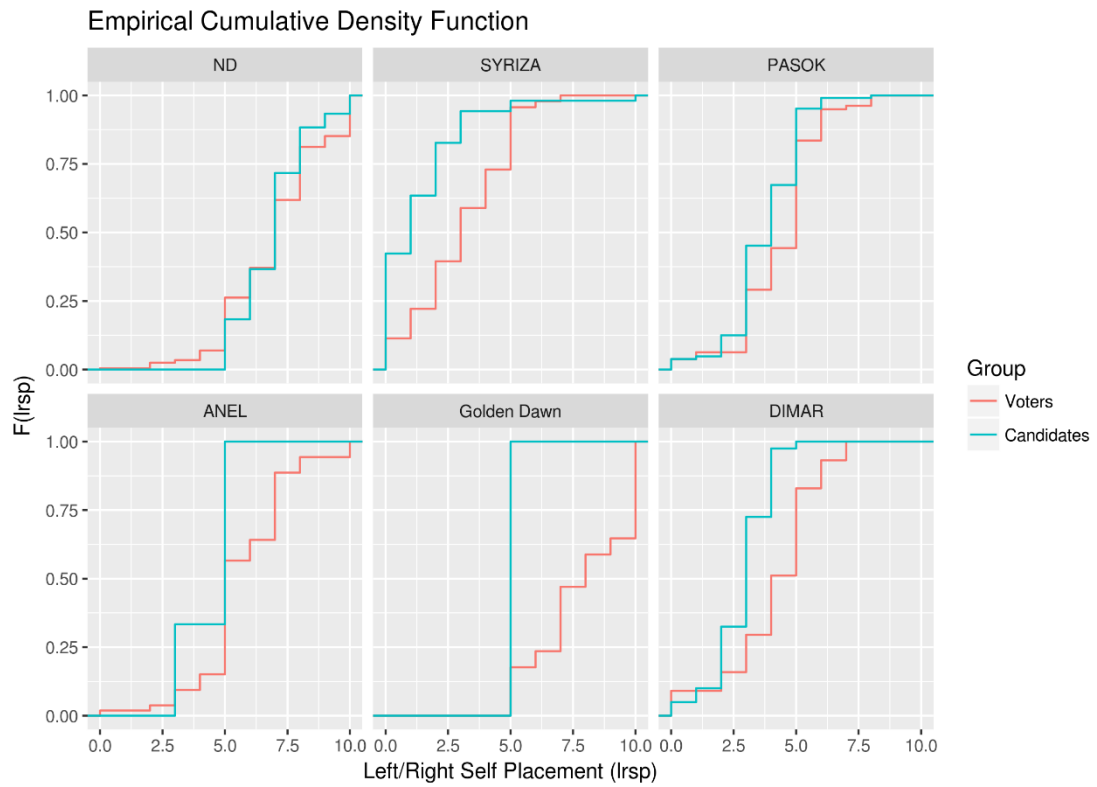
Note: the asterisk () stands for the significant values (p -value < 0.05) after paired t -test*

Diagrams

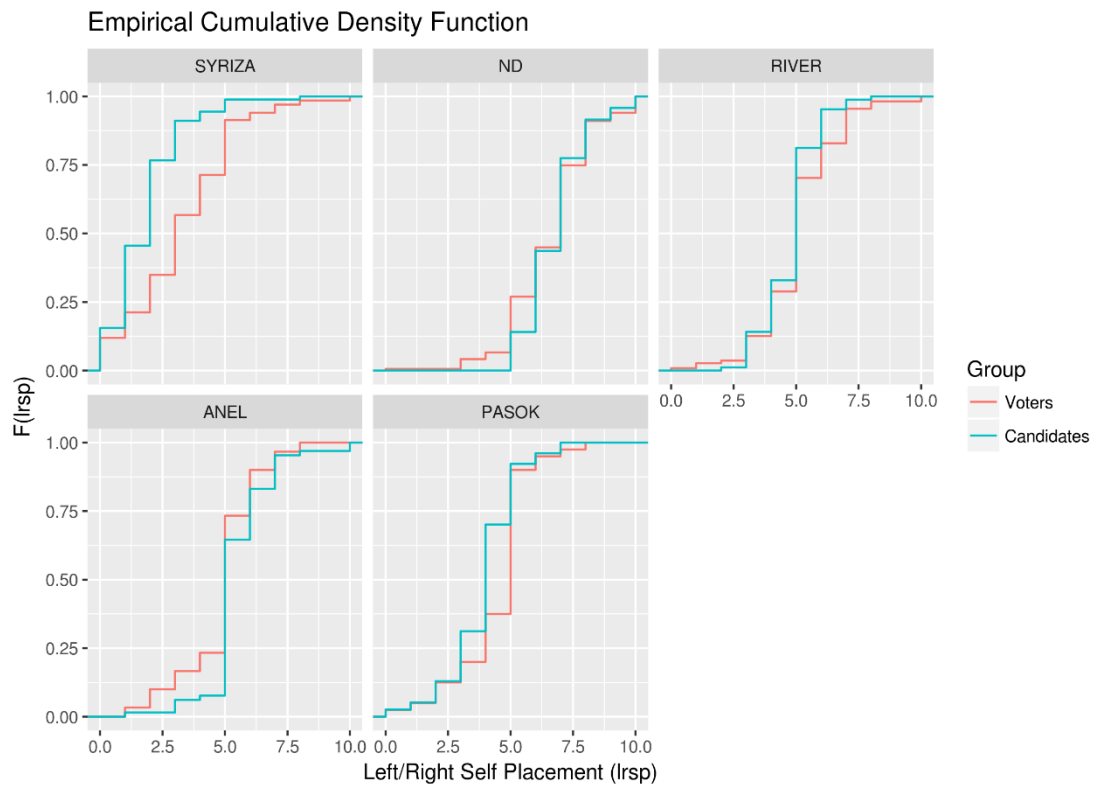
ECDFs: GREECE 2009



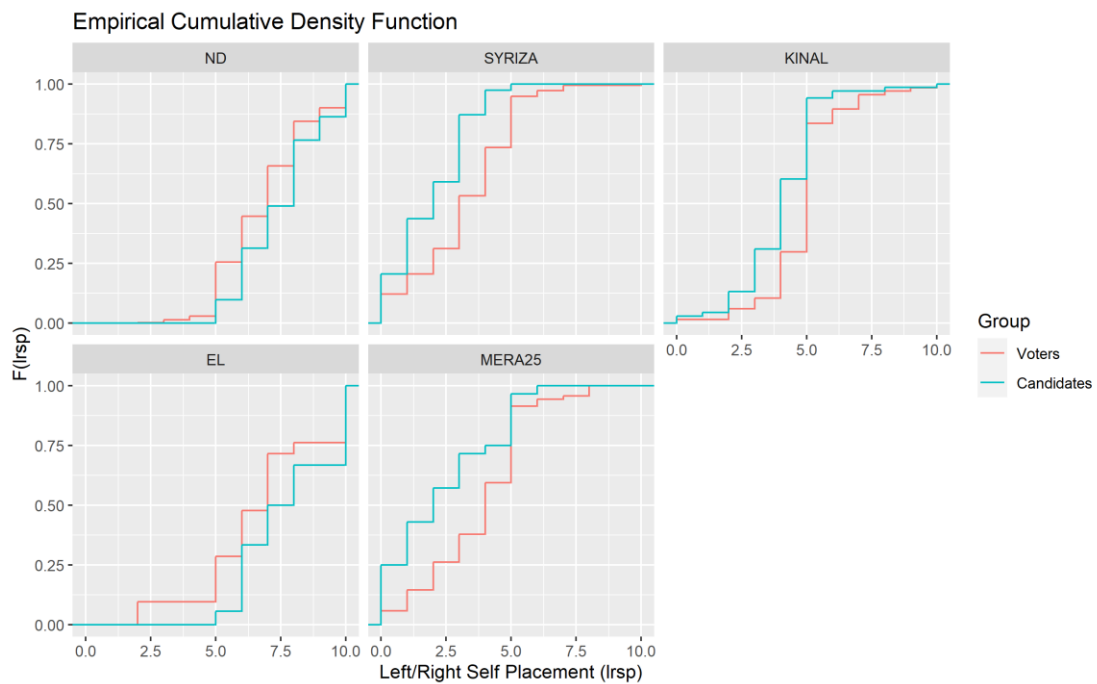
ECDFs: GREECE 2012



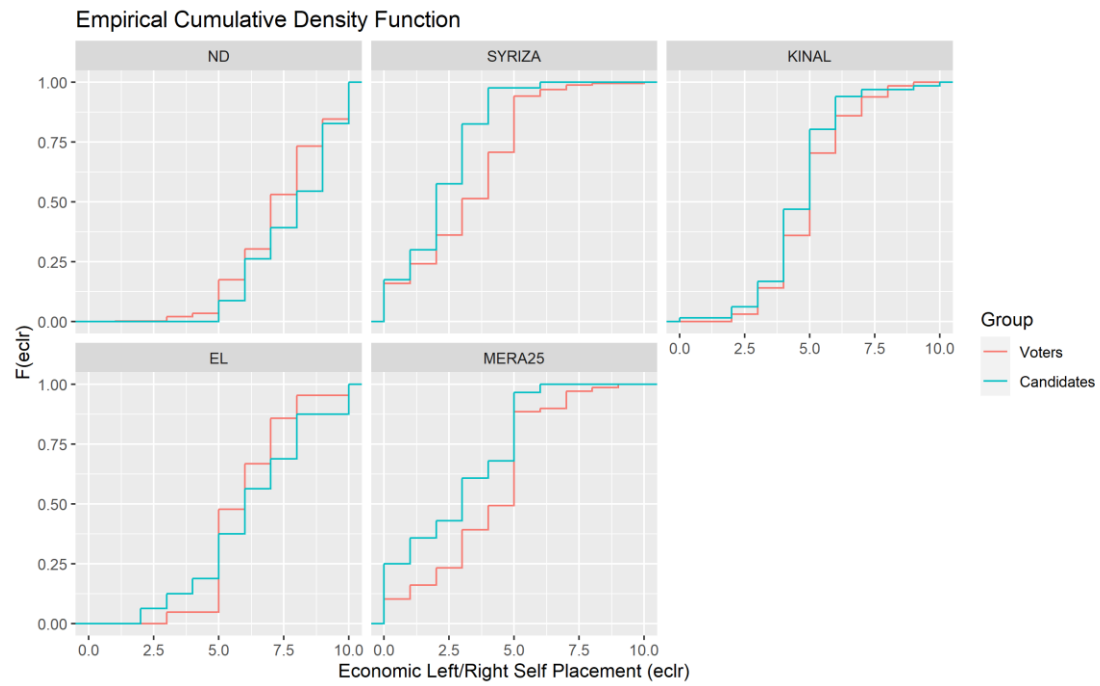
ECDFs: GREECE 2015



ECDFs: GREECE 2019a



ECDFs: GREECE 2019b



ECDFs: GREECE 2019c

