

Characteristics of Greek parliament candidates

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a survey conducted among candidates of the two major Greek political parties for the recent parliamentary elections held in Greece, in October 2007. Firstly we present their profile; their relationship with social and professional organisations, their participation in the organisation of their party and their experience in elective offices. Secondly, we deal with their campaigns. We present the most used campaign activities and advertising means. We explore how information technology has influenced campaign strategies and if Greek parliament candidates have adopted modern advertising means. We also present the factors which influence the outcome of the election, i.e. if the candidate is elected or not. Thirdly, we present candidates' opinions on issues and policies. Finally, we explore their positions about citizens' participation and democracy issues. We also compare and analyse candidate differences between the two major parties. The paper concludes with suggestions for further research.

Introduction

Greek Parliament consists of 300 members who are elected for a period of four consecutive years through direct, universal and secret ballot by the citizens. Twelve Members of Parliament are elected from nationwide party lists in proportion to the total electoral strength of each party throughout the Country. The rest 288 seats are allocated to 56 constituencies. The number of Members of Parliament elected in each constituency is specified according to the latest census population of each constituency.

In each constituency each party has its own ballot including a list with the party's candidates in this constituency. Voters are able to express their will about which individual candidate they would like to be elected to a seat if this seat is won by the candidate's party. The selection of individual candidates is done with a cross symbol next to their name on the party ballot. Constituency seats are distributed to parties according to their strength in each constituency. Once a constituency seat is distributed to a party the seat is won by the party's candidate who has collected the greater number of crosses.

With this system personal campaign is more than necessary to every candidate who wants to win a seat in the Greek Parliament despite of running in a multi-seat or single seat constituency. Even in the eight single-seat constituencies the major parties often use the maximum allowed number of candidates, i.e. 3. These personal campaigns sometimes take the form of war between candidates of the same party.

In the last 30 years there are two major political parties in Greece, the right wing (ND) and the socialist (PASOK), which compete for election win and government power.

This paper presents the findings of a survey conducted among candidates of these two major Greek political parties for the recent parliamentary elections held in Greece, in September 2007. In the following section we present the method we have used to collect data for these candidates. In the rest of the sections we present their profile, their campaigns, their opinions on issues and policies and their positions about citizens' participation and democracy issues.

Methodology

The results presented in this paper have been collected with the use of an international questionnaire for candidate surveys in the framework of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) project. National study directors of CCS project have developed a common core questionnaire which is used in the aftermath of the national elections. The core questionnaire specifically focuses at the issue of individualization of electoral campaigns.

The survey in Greece is conducted by the Laboratory of Applied Political Research, School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University Thessaloniki. The first wave of data, which is presented in this paper, has been collected online. A second wave that will use offline methods is on the way.

For data collection we have used our own web server, properly modified open source web-survey software and a list of about 700 candidates, including their email addresses, provided by the two major political parties in Greece. About one out of ten of these email addresses was associated with some form of error. Candidates were invited to participate to the survey with an email sent by us. We have also sent them seven reminders (one reminder every 2 weeks). This effort resulted in 163 responses.

Crawford et al (2001) have pointed out that nonresponse in Web surveys is associated with two different factors. The first is the usual nonresponse, the rejection to the invitation that also occurs with printed questionnaire. The second factor is associated with break-offs and the result is a semi-completed questionnaire with unanswered questions. Web surveys are impersonal, respondents are in front of a PC, and they do not communicate with a person. This makes it easier for them to abandon a survey they have started. There are some techniques that can help in reducing this behaviour, (i.e. interactive survey process, time indicator) but even after using these techniques, the result is far from total elimination of this problem. (Evans and Mathur 2005; Zhang 2000).

CCS questionnaire covers a lot of issues and its printed form consists of 12 pages. With such a long questionnaire we could not escape from the occurrence of some break offs. As a result in the following tables the number of respondents is different from table to table depending on the number of valid responses we have got for each question.

Who are they?

Candidates and organisations

Table 1 shows how many candidates participate in various social or professional groups. Most of the candidates are members of professional associations (67.5%) and cultural organisations (60.6%). Almost half of them are members of interest or citizen action groups and unions. About 4 out of ten candidates are members of social organisations. About 2 out of ten candidates are members of sports clubs and hobbies groups. Finally, only a small fraction of candidates (3.1%) are members of religious organisations and about three out of ten candidates are members of other organisations or associations.

Table 1 Candidates as members of organisations

	No		Yes	
	Count	%	Count	%
Unions	87	53,7%	75	46,3%
Professional associations	52	32,5%	108	67,5%
Interest groups, citizen action groups	85	53,1%	75	46,9%
Sports clubs	124	77,5%	36	22,5%
Cultural organisations	63	39,4%	97	60,6%
Religious organisations	155	96,9%	5	3,1%
Social organisations	97	60,6%	63	39,4%
Hobbies groups	126	78,8%	34	21,3%
Other	113	70,6%	47	29,4%

Candidates and parties

From 1967 to 1974 a series of military governments ruled Greece. The end of this dictatorship period and restitution of Greek democracy was associated with the foundation of both major parties ruling Greece since then. New Democracy (ND) ruled Greece from 1974 to 1981, from 1990 to 1993 and from 2004 until today. PASOK ruled Greece during the rest of the years. During the first period (1974-1981) 42.2% of ND and 50% of PASOK candidates joined their party. In both groups more than 6 out of ten candidates have joined their political party before 1990. This means that the majority of candidates in both groups are members of their political party for more than twenty years. On the other hand about 7% of candidates from both parties have not become a member of the party which included their name in its ballot list.

Table 2 Year candidates joined their political party

	Year joined the party	Political Party	
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)
	1974-1981	42,2%	50,0%
	1982-1989	20,0%	12,7%
	1990-1993	6,7%	5,1%
	1994-2004	15,6%	19,5%
	2005-2007	8,9%	5,9%
	Not joined	6,7%	6,8%

For most candidates there is a strong relationship with the organisation of their party. 91 (57.6 %) candidates have held a local party office, 46 (29.3 %) candidates have held a regional party office and 58 (37.4 %) candidates have played a role in party leadership in the national level. This participation on various level of party leadership has been offered on a volunteer basis. From 162 candidates who have answered a question about getting paid for their services in their party, only 3 (1.9%) have answered that they have worked as paid employees for their party. On the other hand, there are significantly more candidates who have been paid for other related services: more than two out of ten candidates have been employed in an office of a member of parliament or in a minister's office. Finally, there are 17 (10.4%) candidates who have been members of another part in the past.

As Table 3 indicates candidates who have been members of another party do not face negative attitudes from voters of their new party. About one out of five (21.2%) candidates has been elected from the group of candidates who have never been members of another party. This ratio of success is not significantly different from the success rate in the group of the candidates who have been members of another party in the past (17.6%). Thus, having been a member of another party in the past is not an important factor for electoral success or failure.

Table 3 Another party membership and election

		Elected 2007	
		No	Yes
Member of another party	No	78,8%	21,2%
	Yes	82,4%	17,6%
Total		79,1%	20,9%

The probability of electoral success is larger among candidates who have participated in national level party leadership. Table 4 shows that almost 4 out of 10 candidates who have held a national party office have been elected. On the other hand, less than one out of ten candidates, who have not held a national party office, have managed to enjoy electoral success. This relationship between participation in the national party leadership and electoral success is demonstrated by the results of chi-square test on these two variables: $X^2=22.38$ $p<0.001$

Table 4 Elected 2007 by held national party office

		Elected 2007	
		No	Yes
Held national party office	No	91,8%	8,2%
	Yes	60,3%	39,7%
Total		80,0%	20,0%

In Table 5 we present the distribution of candidates according to their prior experience in various elective offices. One out of three candidates has been a member of a regional government or assembly. This is explained by the close relation of the constituencies with regional authority districts in Greece. Excluding 7 constituencies (around capital of Greece - Athens - and the second biggest city in Greece – Thessaloniki) all other constituencies coincide with regional authority districts (prefectures). Thus, for many members of regional governments or assemblies, running for the parliamentary elections in their area (constituency/perfection) seems the reasonable next step on their political career.

Almost the same ratio of candidates (31.4%) have been members of local governments or assemblies and one out of five candidates have been elected as MP in the past. On the other hand there are very small fractions of candidates, who have been leaders of regional (3.85), local (3.2%) governments and members of European Parliament (1.3%).

Table 5 Candidates in elective offices

	No		Yes	
	Count	%	Count	%
Mayor	151	96,8%	5	3,2%
Member of a local government or assembly	107	68,6%	49	31,4%
Head of a regional government	150	96,2%	6	3,8%
Member of a regional government or assembly	104	66,7%	52	33,3%
Member of the national parliament	124	80,0%	31	20,0%
Member of the European Parliament	153	98,7%	2	1,3%

(Lancaster 1998, p.293) claims that incumbency strongly affects candidates' likelihood of winning a seat in Bundestag. As Table 6 shows a very strong and important predictor for the election or not of a Greek candidate is if this candidate was already a member of parliament at the time of election. Among incumbents 88.5% have managed to get re-elected. On the other hand only 8% of the non-incumbents were successful at their attempt to win the election race. The figures reported here are very close to the figures reported by Lancaster (incumbents 91%, non-incumbents 7.3%). The chi-square test results for independence indicate that there is a significant relationship between these two variables (Pearson $X^2=85.640$ $p<0.001$).

Table 6 Electoral performance and incumbency status

		Elected 2007	
		No	Yes
Incumbent	No	92,0%	8,0%
	Yes	11,5%	88,5%
Total		79,1%	20,9%

Electoral campaign

Campaign activities

Contemporary election campaigns include a diverse group of traditional and modern activities: canvassing, calling up voters on the phone, direct mailing, meeting party members, debating with competing candidates in public, providing information and communicating via the internet, newspaper radio and TV interviews, appointments with companies, associations and clubs, etc. Candidates can enhance their campaign with various advertising means: campaign posters, flyers, spots in radio and TV, ads in printed and electronic press etc.

Whatever the campaign activities and means used the time of candidates is always limited and they often can not follow as many campaign activities as they would like. The solution to this problem could be given if the campaign could start earlier. As Table 7 indicates more than 8 out of 10 candidates have started campaigning full-time within the last three months before the Election Day. As we will see later in this paper the length of the campaign plays an important role on the success or failure of the campaign.

Table 7 Time start campaigning full-time (months)

	Frequency	Percent
>12	4	3,4
9-12	3	2,5
6-9	3	2,5
3-6	11	9,2
<3	98	82,4
Total	119	100,0

The questionnaire includes a list of sixteen campaign activities. Candidates were asked to note down how many hours per week they have personally spent on these activities during the final month of their campaign. Table 8 indicates that candidates have spent more than 6 hours per week on three interpersonal communication activities, i.e. calling up voters on the phone, meeting local party members and canvassing and only one-way activity i.e. visiting national events in business, sports and culture. This inclination to interpersonal communication activities is fully justified in local races (Friedenberg 2007) and the race for a seat in Greek parliament is mostly local. It seems that Greek candidates know about the effectiveness of canvassing and interpersonal communication that has been demonstrated in previous research experiments (Gerber and Green 1999; Gerber and Green 2000; Gerber and Green 2001; Gerber and Green 2005; Green and Gerber 2005).

Table 8 Time spent on campaign activities

	Time spent on activities					Mean
	No time	1 - 5	5 – 10	10 - 20	>20	
calling up voters on the phone	9	62	30	16	22	7,8
visiting national events in business, sports and culture	10	55	35	24	14	7,6
meeting local party members	13	55	40	16	14	7,0
door-knocking, canvassing	18	60	30	15	16	6,7
organising and joining large rallies in the constituency	27	57	33	11	9	5,4
local and regional newspaper interviews	8	88	25	10	6	5,0
local and regional radio and TV interviews	10	82	33	6	6	4,9
meeting national party officials	50	50	22	7	8	4,1
appointments with associations and clubs in constituency	32	77	20	3	5	3,6
visiting local events in business, sports and culture	38	72	17	6	4	3,5
debating with competing candidates in public	53	56	17	6	6	3,5
providing information and communicating via the internet	48	62	16	8	4	3,5
direct mailing	75	40	9	10	5	3,0
national radio and TV interviews	56	64	10	4	3	2,6
national newspaper interviews	70	52	9	3	3	2,2
appointments with companies in constituency	80	45	6	2	4	2,0

Campaign means

In the next block of the questionnaire a list of campaign means was presented to candidate asking them if they have used any of the following means in their personal campaign: campaign posters, spots in radio, TV, personal website, ads in the local press, personal flyers, office hours and social gatherings. In case of positive answer they were also asked to indicate their importance in their campaign.

In Diagram 1 these campaign means are presented in descending order according to the percentage of candidates who consider these means as fairly or very important. A large percent of all candidates (84,7%) consider social gathering as fairly or very important and only a small percent (3,7%) have not used this type of campaigning. Office hours is also considered as a fairly or very important campaign mean for the

majority (57,7%) of candidates. On the other hand, campaign posters and spots in radio, TV and movie houses are presented at the bottom of this list with only a few of candidates considering these means as fairly or very important. The corresponding percentages are 13,9% and 15,3%

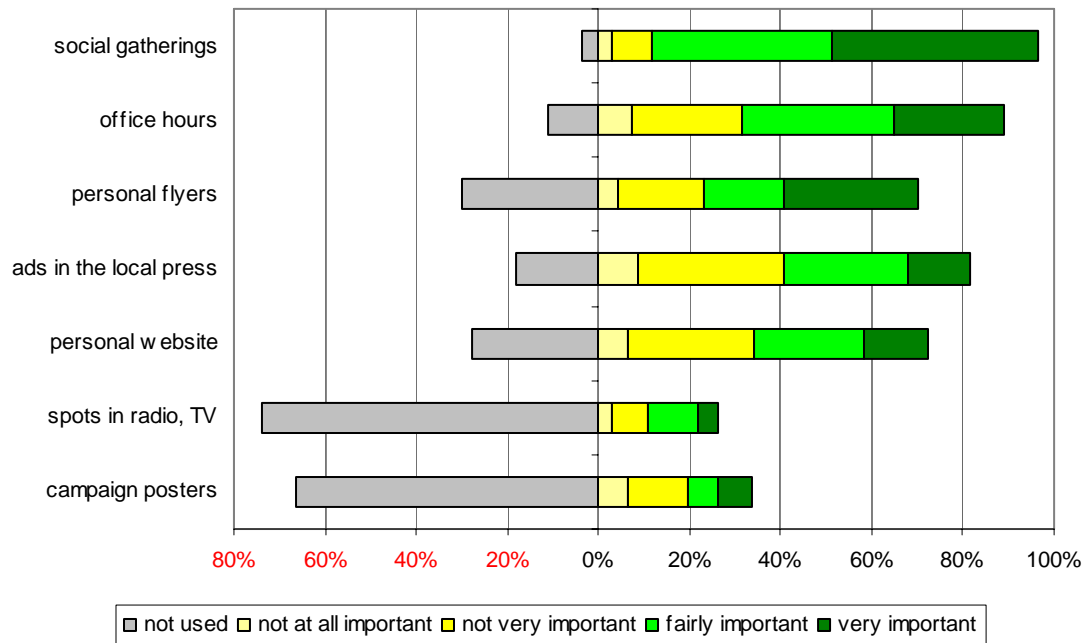


Diagram 1 Use and importance of campaign means

New media

The most modern ways to reach voters have been adopted due to the wide spread of Internet. Candidates are able to use email lists distribute information and organise activities, offer personal campaign spots on the web, conduct online chats with voters, create personal websites and blogs, etc. Information technology offers new tools that can be used in political campaigns. Kaid (2003) has found Internet as more effective than TV. Internet can be used for broadcasting or as an interactive medium (Jackson and Lilleker 2004). Greek candidates have started implementing some of these new tools but most of them only for broadcasting. Most of the candidates (63.2%) run their own webpage. In addition, 54.4% of all candidates have advertised their webpage and/or email address on their campaign literature and 38.2% of them have used email lists to distribute information and organise activities. A newer broadcasting opportunity has risen in the current decade with internet broadcasting services which enable everyone to broadcast themselves. Only one out of ten candidates has used a personal campaign spot on the web. This low ratio could probably be explained by the possible technical difficulties that candidates could deal with in the production and submission of a web campaign spot.

On the other hand, chatting or blogging are as easy as surfing and cannot be considered as technically challenging activities, but only 14% of Greek candidates have conducted online chats with voters and 12.5% have used a blog during their campaign. The low ratio of their use within Greek candidates does not show that they avoid voters' feedback. As we have seen above interpersonal political communication

is considered significant for Greek candidates, but it seems that they prefer physical instead of electronic contact for these activities

Successful campaign

Candidates would like to know the important factors that would help them to improve their probabilities to win the race and get elected. We have tried to deal with this question raised by the candidates. In this case we have a binary variable (Elected 2007 with two outcome elected=1 and non-elected=0) and we can use binary logistic regression to model the probability of getting elected. We have used a forward stepwise method which starts with a model that doesn't include any of the predictors. At each step the most important predictor is included in the model. We have tested various logistic regression models. The best model we have found is presented in Table 9. This model was completed after the inclusion of three predictor variables as they are presented in Table 10.

Table 9 Logistic regression model

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Elected 2004	6,342	1,427	19,763	1	,000	568,000
Start of campaign (contrast with <3 months)			11,502	4	,021	
>12 months	1,825	2,656	,472	1	,492	6,200
9-12 months	4,303	1,747	6,064	1	,014	73,887
6-9 months	5,689	1,747	10,602	1	,001	295,547
3-6 months	2,348	1,449	2,626	1	,105	10,465
Used a blog	2,993	1,388	4,649	1	,031	19,950
Constant	-4,996	1,246	16,074	1	,000	,007

The first variable entering the model (i.e. the most important predictor) is incumbency status, i.e. the variable that describes if the candidate was elected in the previous elections in 2004. In column Exp(B) we can find the predicted change in odds of getting elected for the candidates who have been MPs since the previous elections compared to the candidates who have not been elected. As we already know from Table 6 the probability of getting elected is dramatically increased for the candidates who have been MPs since 2004.

Table 10 Logistic regression step summary

Step	Improvement			Variable IN:
	Chi-square	df	Sig.	
1	41,211	1	,000	Elected 2004
2	13,091	4	,011	Start of campaign
3	5,426	1	,020	Used a blog

After accounting for the influence of the first predictor the second most important predictor is the time candidates started their campaign. This is a categorical variable with 5 categories and the coefficients presented in Table 9 have been calculated for each category except the category "less than 3 months" which serves as contrast category. It seems that candidates who start their campaign earlier are associated with greater probability of getting elected than those that start their campaign with the last three months before the Election Day. Significant changes in odds of getting elected

are observed for the candidates who start their campaigns 6-12 months before the Election Day.

After controlling for the effects of the first two predictors the third step of the logistic regression model offers a surprising result. Candidates who have used a blog for their campaign have improved the probability of getting elected. The last two predictors indicate that candidates who were not elected in previous elections should start their campaign early and use new media, internet and blogs to improve their chances getting elected. Finally, as Table 11 indicates the logistic regression model classifies correctly 95.6% of candidates who were not elected and 77.8% of candidates who were elected. The overall correct classification percentage is 92.6%.

Table 11 Classification Table

Observed		Predicted		
		Elected 2007		Percentage Correct
		No	Yes	No
Elected 2007	No	86	4	95,6
	Yes	4	14	77,8
Overall Percentage				92,6

Issues and policies

In Table 12 we present the distribution of candidates according to their level of agreement on various issues and policies. Almost all candidates agree on stronger measures for the protection of the environment and the importance of provisions for a stable network of social security. The majority of candidates agree or strongly agree with on a series of issues: freedom of decision about abortion, reform of Greek democracy, redistribution of wealth, benefits for Greek economy by the presence of immigrants, protection of prisoners' human rights and attribution of stiffer sentences to people who break the law. The majority disagrees or strongly disagrees with the absolute freedom of economy, military assistance to "the war on terror" and the preferential treatment of women when applying for jobs and promotions. Finally there is not an absolute majority on three issues: "Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law" is associated with a fraction of 41% of candidates who neither agree nor disagree, "Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Greece" is associated with a fraction of 37.6% of neutral positions and "Globalisation should be promoted" divides candidates into three groups with candidates who disagree forming the largest group (agreement 23.1%, neutral 34.2% and disagreement 42.7%).

Table 12 Level of agreement on issues and policies

	agree - strongly agree		neither agree nor disagree		disagree - strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Greece.	21	17,9%	44	37,6%	52	44,4%
Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy.	15	12,8%	9	7,7%	93	79,5%
Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment.	115	98,3%	2	1,7%		
Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.	21	17,9%	48	41,0%	48	41,0%
Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs and promotions.	17	14,5%	32	27,4%	68	58,1%
People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.	72	61,5%	29	24,8%	16	13,7%
Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government.	114	97,4%	2	1,7%	1	,9%
Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.	98	83,8%	14	12,0%	5	4,3%
Our democracy needs serious reform.	99	84,6%	11	9,4%	7	6,0%
Immigrants are good for Greek economy.	97	83,6%	15	12,9%	4	3,4%
Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.	103	88,0%	10	8,5%	4	3,4%
Greece should provide military assistance to "the war on terror".	22	18,8%	26	22,2%	69	59,0%
Torturing a prisoner is never justified, even if it might prevent a terrorist attack	86	73,5%	18	15,4%	13	11,1%
Globalisation should be promoted.	27	23,1%	40	34,2%	50	42,7%

The major political parties in Greece have different policies on various issues. Some of these differences are expressed from the different positions of their candidates. Table 13 shows a significant difference ($X^2=7.29$ $p=0.026$) between ND and PASOK candidates about immigrants and their customs. More than one out two PASOK candidates believe that immigrants should be free to maintain their customs. In ND group the corresponding percentage is 25%.

Table 13 Immigrants and customs of Greece by party

		Political Party		Total
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	New Democracy (ND)
Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Greece.	agree - strongly agree	28,1%	14,1%	17,9%
	neither agree nor disagree	46,9%	34,1%	37,6%
	disagree - strongly disagree	25,0%	51,8%	44,4%

Table 14 shows a significant difference ($X^2=11.64$ $p=0.003$) between ND and PASOK candidates about same-sex marriages. Only one out ten PASOK candidates believes that same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law. In ND group the corresponding percentage is 37.5%.

Table 14 Same-sex marriages by party

		Political Party		
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	Total
Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.	agree - strongly agree	37,5%	10,6%	17,9%
	neither agree nor disagree	34,4%	43,5%	41,0%
	disagree - strongly disagree	28,1%	45,9%	41,0%
	Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 15 shows a significant difference ($X^2=18.26$ $p<0.001$) between ND and PASOK candidates about military assistance to "the war on terror". About one out ten PASOK candidates believes that Greece should provide military assistance to "the war on terror". In ND group the corresponding percentage is 43.8%.

Table 15 Military assistance to "the war on terror" by party

		Political Party		
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	Total
Greece should provide military assistance to "the war on terror".	agree - strongly agree	43,8%	9,4%	18,8%
	neither agree nor disagree	18,8%	23,5%	22,2%
	disagree - strongly disagree	37,5%	67,1%	59,0%
	Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Democracy and Representation

There are different opinions about whom an elected member of parliament should primarily represent. Candidates were asked to rank a set of 6 options in decreasing importance. These options are as follows: Own voters in the constituency, Own party voters in the constituency, All citizens in the constituency, The party electorate at large, Members of a social group, and The Greek citizenry.

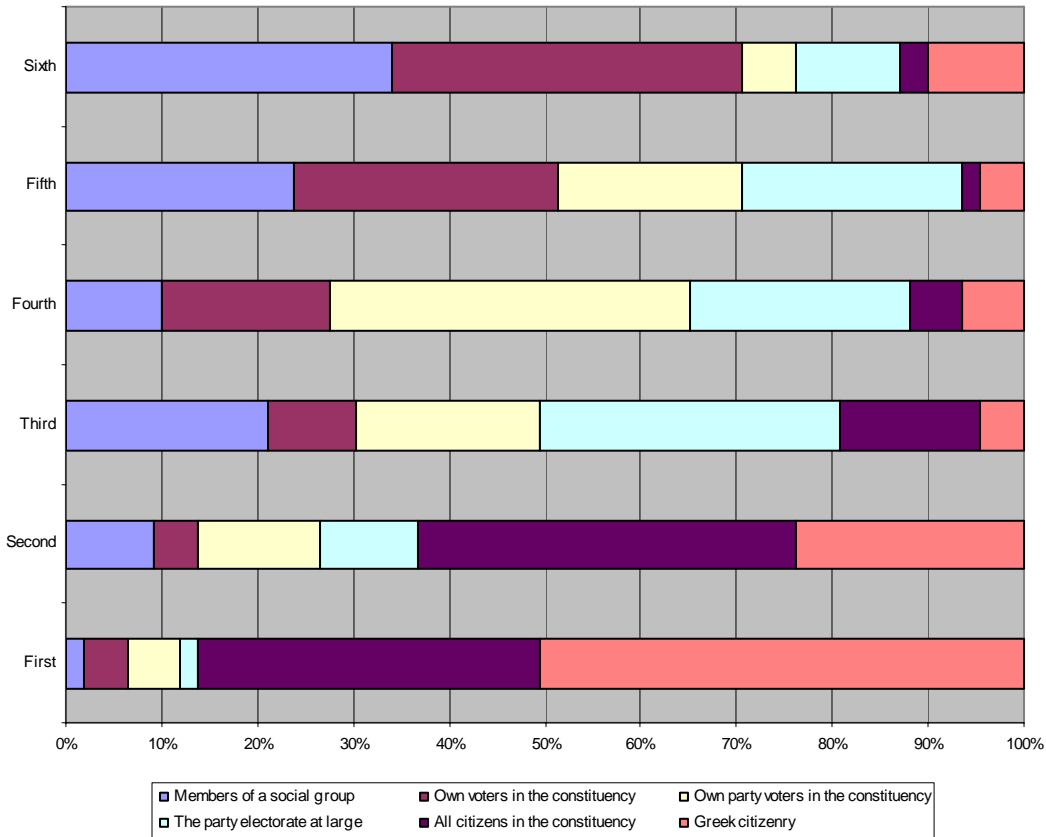


Diagram 2 shows the distribution of rankings. Most candidates believe that they should primarily represent the whole Greek citizenry. The category "All citizens in the constituency" dominates the second choice but there is also a significant fraction of candidates (35.8%) who rank this category as their first choice. The party electorate at large appears with greater frequency as a third choice. The category "Own party voters in the constituency" ranks fourth. The last two places are occupied by Own voters in the constituency and Members of a social group.

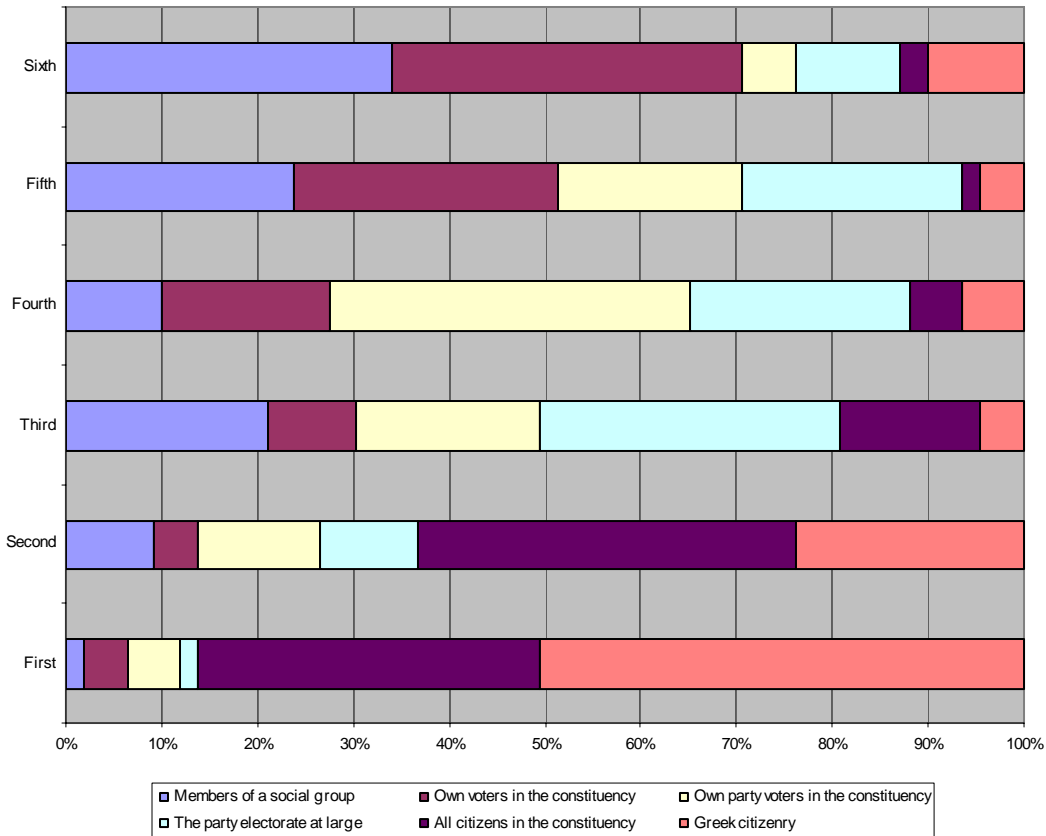


Diagram 2 Ranking of represented groups

Table 16 shows the level of agreement of candidates on issues about democracy and citizens' participation. The majority of candidates strongly support referendums as means to stimulate political interest and to attract politicians' attention. Only 7.5% of candidates believe that referendums are poorly thought out and make bad law; thus they support the initiation of referenda by a certain number of citizens. The majority also supports the role of political parties as essential links between citizens and the state. On the other hand candidates think that special interests have too much influence on law making and only 28% of candidates believe that legislation reflects the interests of the majority of citizens. As a result the majority is afraid that Greek democracy is about to loose the trust of the citizens. As far as their party organisation is concerned, candidates believe that decision-making is too top-down and the grassroots cannot make its voice heard and that pollsters and political strategists have too much influence over my party's decision making. On the other hand, less than one out of two candidates support that MPs should be able to vote independent of their party's policy positions

Table 16 Citizens' participation and democracy issues

	agree - strongly agree		neither agree nor disagree		disagree - strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Citizens have ample opportunity to participate in political decisions.	23	21,5%	19	17,8%	65	60,7%
Our democracy is about to loose the trust of the citizens.	79	73,8%	16	15,0%	12	11,2%
Legislation reflects the interests of the majority of citizens.	30	28,0%	38	35,5%	39	36,4%
Political parties are the essential link between citizens and the state.	81	75,7%	19	17,8%	7	6,5%
Special interests have too much influence on law making.	87	81,3%	13	12,1%	7	6,5%
The process of law making is too complicated.	68	63,6%	22	20,6%	17	15,9%
Parliament, not voters, should make final decisions on law and policy.	61	57,0%	27	25,2%	19	17,8%
A certain number of citizens should be able to initiate a referendum	86	80,4%	12	11,2%	9	8,4%
Referendums enable citizens to get politicians attention.	80	74,8%	18	16,8%	9	8,4%
Referendums are poorly thought out and make bad law.	8	7,5%	42	39,3%	57	53,3%
Referendums help to stimulate political interest.	94	87,9%	9	8,4%	4	3,7%
Decision-making in my party is too top-down; the grassroots cannot make its voice heard	76	71,0%	13	12,1%	18	16,8%
Individual members of Parliament should be able to vote independent of their party's policy positions	51	47,7%	24	22,4%	32	29,9%
The party leader is too powerful	54	50,5%	20	18,7%	33	30,8%
Pollsters and political strategists have too much influence over my party's decision making	69	64,5%	23	21,5%	15	14,0%

Table 17 shows a significant difference ($X^2=13.88$ $p=0.001$) between ND and PASOK candidates about legislation. Only one out ten ND candidates believes that legislation does not reflect the interests of the majority of citizens. In PASOK group the corresponding percentage is 46.8%. This difference could be attributed to the fact that ND rules Greece from 2004. It is possible that PASOK candidates, as members of the opposition, take advantage of the opportunity to criticise the policies of ND through their answers to this question.

Table 17 Legislation expresses the majority by party

		Political Party		Total
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	
Legislation reflects the interests of the majority of citizens.	agree - strongly agree	46,7%	20,8%	28,0%
	neither agree nor disagree	43,3%	32,5%	35,5%
	disagree - strongly disagree	10,0%	46,8%	36,4%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 18 shows a significant difference ($X^2=6.31$ $p=0.043$) between ND and PASOK candidates about the power of their leader. About 6 out of ten ND candidates believe that their party leader is too powerful. On the other hand PASOK candidates are divided. 46.8% of them agree and 37.7% of them disagree with the statement.

Table 18 Powerful part leader by party

		Political Party		
		New Democracy (ND)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	Total
The party leader is too powerful	agree - strongly agree	60,0%	46,8%	50,5%
	neither agree nor disagree	26,7%	15,6%	18,7%
	disagree - strongly disagree	13,3%	37,7%	30,8%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Discussion

In this paper we have dealt with the characteristics of Greek Parliament candidates. We have demonstrated that they are people who are members of professional associations and cultural organisations with a long story of party membership and active participation in party leadership. Their campaigns include interpersonal communication activities, they consider social gatherings as an important part of their campaign and they implement some of the campaign methods offered by new technologies. Finally, they support progressive ideas, the reform of Greek democracy and more active participation by citizens.

This paper also offers important implications for candidates that would like to have a successful run for the Greek parliament. Although we have demonstrated that being a member of parliament is the most important positive factor for a successful outcome in the following elections there are other important factors that candidates who are not MPs could follow. Starting the campaign early is a very important key for a winning election. Also, the use of blogs could also help balance the unequal struggle against the elected members who enjoy exposure on television and traditional media. Finally, although holding a national party office was not included in the logistic regression model (due to high collinearity with the first predictor of the model, i.e. candidates who participate in party leadership at national level are already elected) we have shown that it is an important positive factor for a successful electoral outcome.

The most important limitation of the results presented in this paper is the method of data collection. Web surveys are very practical and cost effective, but in Greece there are still a lot of people that are not used on this type of communication. This is the reason we are running a second wave of data collection using offline methods. We plan on collecting about 150 more completed questionnaires. One third of them will be completed with face to face interviews and printed questionnaires and the rest with telephone interviews. This extended dataset could be used for future research and the verification of the presented results. The most interesting part of future research will occur with opportunities for comparative studies when elections will take place in the rest of the countries participating in CCS project.

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