ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΑ ΙΙ

Η συλλογική δράση των «αγανακτισμένων πολιτών» στην Ελλάδα
αίτια, περιεχόμενο, ενέργειες, και συμπεράσματα για φορείς χάραξης πολιτικής

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1 δημοσίευση

Analysing parliamentary discourse in Greece between three memorandums: A populist appeal

In recent years the concept of populism has been occupying an extensive theoretical debate. Here populism is defined by following Mudde's (2007) approach who underlines the formal structure of populist claims. In this sense, populism considers society to be ultimately separated into two groups: the pure people versus the corrupt elite. In informed by recent developments in theory on populism and improved techniques of analysis this presentation is derived from a research project which was sparked by the parliamentary memorandum debates in Greece during the 'crisis' period. It examines whether the nature of debate on populism has altered in the years between the first, second and third memorandum by tracking parliamentary discourse in the area. By means of Computer Assisted Content Analysis (CATA) it analyses the content of arguments presented in parliamentary debates which relate to populism including those of individual political leaders. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate how populism appeals to political discourse across the left-right spectrum and measure populism despite any conceptual ambiguity.

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Methodological approaches

As texts are one of the means used to examine the identity of political parties, the focus of the part of this section will analyse the level of populism in the parliamentary debate of the three memorandums. This project uses content analysis in order to isolate and measure the populist rhetoric by means of parties and party leaders.

Using the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) as a guide, a comparison of the changes regarding the level of populism over time is undertaken in order to compare both differences in terms of parties and time. The project uses HAMLET II software along with NVivo software to conduct the content analysis, and R language for mathematical computation and graphics. As Bara, Weale and Bicquelet (2007) underline in their work focussing on the analysis of parliamentary debate with computer assistance, a 'semi-automated' CATA, like the one HAMLET II offers, is an efficient approach of examining and measuring assumptions on among others policies and political behaviours (2007:580).

The HAMLET II software was developed by Dr. Alan Brier of Southampton University and Bruno Hopp, of the Central Archive for Empirical Social Research in Cologne. Its main purpose is to search a text file for words in a given vocabulary list, and to count joint frequencies within any specified context unit, representing a given span of words. In other words, it counts individual and joint word frequencies in which the resulting similarities matrix can be analysed using different methods (cluster analysis, multi-dimensional scaling, Jaccard co-efficient). The main analytical procedure is used to search for 'inter-connections between a number of key words that occur in a text and explore word and category associations' (HAMLET II software manual 2013:4). The programme offers the opportunity to compare lists of words common across several texts. It is also useful in generating lists, including synonyms, for use in comparing a number of texts thus providing a means of viewing, editing and annotating the various files including graphics.

HAMLET II offers a variety of possible tools, individual word frequencies (f_i), joint frequencies analysis (f_{ij}) for pairs of words (i,j), both expressed in terms of the chosen unit of context, and the corresponding standardised joint frequencies $s_{ij} = (f_{ij}) / (f_i + f_j - f_{ij})$ are displayed in a similarities matrix, which can be submitted to a simple cluster analysis and multi-dimensional scaling if required.

For Tashakkori and Teddie (2010) the use of computer software helps the scholar to 'subdivide' the textual material in individual 'hermeneutic' units; in these units' words, phrases or expressions are being identified (2010:383). The units of analysis for this project contains words and phrases identified in the text and reflect back to the established categories. The texts are not divided into smaller divisions but are examined as a whole. As Bara, Weale and Bicquelet (2007) underline in their work focussing on the analysis of parliamentary debate on abortion, a 'semi-automated' CATA, like the one HAMLET II offers, is an efficient approach of examining and measuring assumptions on among others policies and political behaviours (2007:580). The 'semi-automated' characterisation refers to the HAMLET II requirement of a preparation of a general vocabulary (see Technical Appendix) of key words and terminology on which the analysis will be conducted.

Content analysis has been recently used in order to examine populism (see Rooduijn, 2011; Pauwels, 2011). Nevertheless, as Pauwels (2011) underlines, since populism has not been included in the coding scheme of CMP or other expert surveys conducted, a prior to any analysis, populism need to be defined.

The central concept of populism is that we should place our trust in the common sense of the ordinary people to find solutions to complicated problems. Mudde (2007) explains populism as 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the pure people versus the corrupt elite, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volente general (general will) of the people' (2004:543), while for Betz (1998) and Eatwell (2000) the main belief behind populism is the idea of measuring social value in relation to individual social contribution. Populism rejects the established system and supports the idea of the many (people).

Similar to Pauwels (2011) and Rooduijn (2011)for the purposes of this paper, populism is identified less as a thin ideology and more as a rhetoric style. In this sense the society is being divided between the 'people' ('citizens', 'society', 'country' 'we' as the 'people') and the 'establishment ('corrupt', 'capitul', 'propaganda', 'clientele'). For further clarification, 'establishment' is separated in two major categories 'internal' representing the national political scene and 'external' in order to define the international/European scene. Having said that, the Hamlet categories have been designated as such: people, internal establishment and external establishment, representing the different aspects of the debate and the initial selection of the input terms. Collectively these comprised some 87 inputs. The expectation is to prove a correlation between the established categories.

Results

We first considered the results for the party leader speeches in the three memorandum debates in terms of the proportions of the different dimensions present and consider differences between the speakers in terms of their individual emphasis on the three aspects. Finally we will look at the use of the dictionary in all three of the debates under investigation.

Given that the debates are concerned with the establishment of a new framework to manage the economic 'crisis' it is expected that the most prominent category is the 'internal establishment', evidence of the anti-establishment sentiment towards those 'responsible' for the situation in the country. Additionally it is expected that after 2012 the aspect of 'external establishment' has risen.
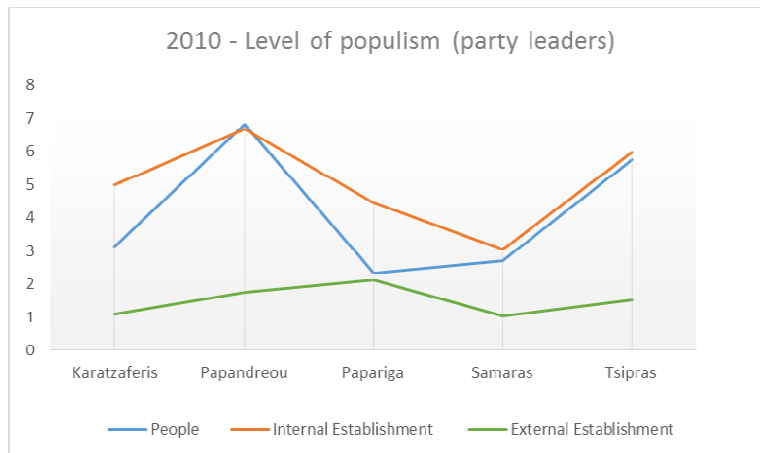
Figure 1

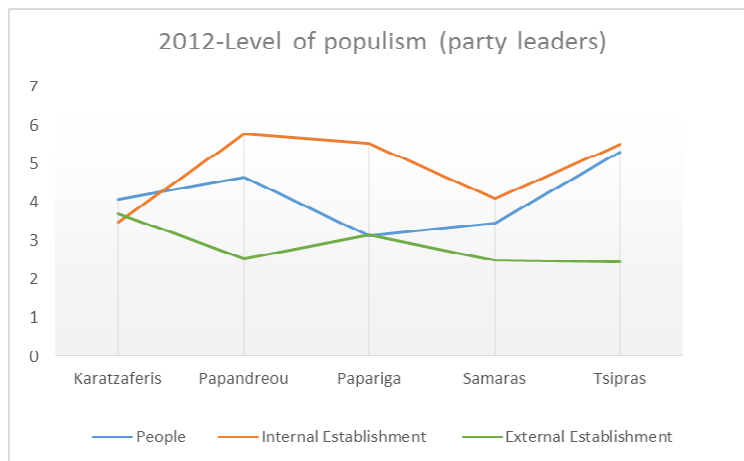2010 - Level of populism (party leaders)

Figure 2

2012-Level of populism (party leaders)

Figure 3

2015-Level of populism (party leaders)
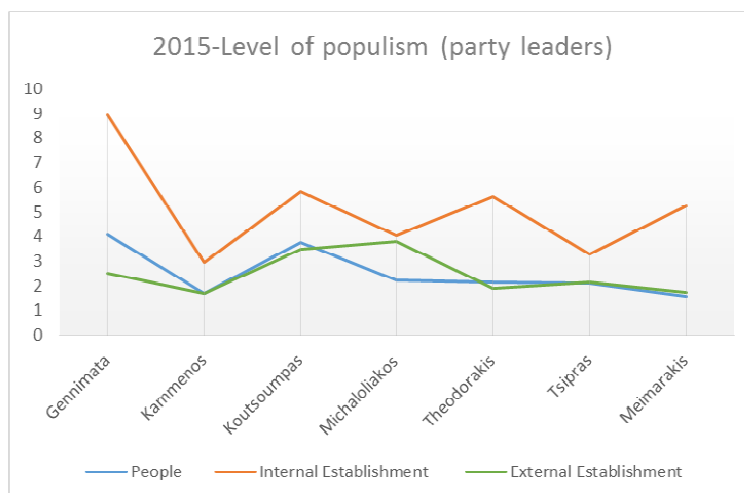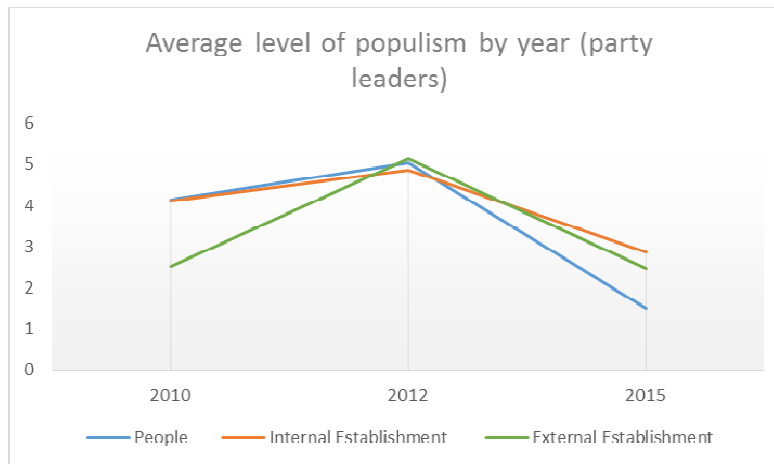
Figure 4

Average level of populism by year (party leaders)

Anticipated results

Weak correlation between 'people' and 'internal establishment'

Rising of 'external establishment' after 2012

Higher percentages in radical parties e.g. Syriza, Laos

Differences between years with peakin 2012