

Bachelor Thesis:

Two Case studies of the extent to which the economic situation of a region can predict confidence in democratic institutions.

**Owen Duijvendak
s2245876
Human Geography and Spatial Planning
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Supervisor: Prof. Dimitris Ballas**

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Owen Duijvendak



Abstract

Over the last years the politics of discontentment have reared their head once more. This time a sense of misrepresentation is said to be at the root of the issue. This thesis aims to weigh the determinants of confidence in democratic institutions as experienced within two countries in Europe. Through a mixed methods approach targeting The Netherlands and Greece this research tries to compare the effect of place-based effects with interpersonal factors. These factors are: personal contentment, financial situation, gender, age and political affiliation. Place-based effects here are operationalised by modifying a question from the Eurobarometer 90.1 into a self-assessment of whether the respondent perceives him or her self as living in a centre of urban growth. In order not to make undue assumptions the discussion about Greece is supplemented with excerpts of a subject matter expert. In the end the research must conclude that within the two countries selected no correlation between perceived periphery and confidence in democratic systems can be found. Instead the interpersonal factors of life satisfaction, financial situation, age and political leaning have some effect on the degree to which people trust their public representation is in good hands.

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Introduction

When things don't work we work to change them. Democratically held elections are one of the widely accepted avenues of change. And over the last years changed it has, As Robert Putnam(2002) writes; "we have seen reductions in confidence in democratic institutions throughout the western world since the seventies. Especially over the last decade the world has seen a big shift towards populism and populist campaigning." The explanations for this are wide ranging. It has been explained through an increase in interpersonal Inequality(Picketty, 2014), and also through various historical approaches. One of the other explanations and seminal texts within contemporary Human Geography lays the reasons behind the increase in politics of discontent at the feet of not only interpersonal inequality but rather a neglect of addressing territorial inequality(Rodríguez-Pose 2018). He argues that in a climate of continued socio-economic divergence between regions(Rosès & Wolf 2018) a certain group was left behind: the rural upper and middle class. It are those who are personally advantaged but living in disadvantaged surroundings that exhibit reactionary political stances. Consequently Rodríguez-Pose concludes that it was place-based effects that caused the political uproar of the last few years. Being careful not to deny the role that interpersonal inequalities plays. He phrases it in the following way: "*This is not to say that interpersonal in-equality does not matter, but that the challenge to the system has come from a neglected source of inequality: territorial and not interpersonal, as was generally expected. As indicated by Gordon (2018), policies do not only operate in a spaceless individual world, but in one where political and economic geographies are driven by strong, place-based effects.*"

As can be seen in the maps in Appendix C this same phenomenon might be at play in these countries as well. Between the Netherlands and Greece we can see that even in two vastly different situations; geographic differences can be seen among regions when it concerns voter confidence. These maps display the percentage of yes answers to the question whether the respondent believes their voice counts in national elections. While differences between countries requires the maps to differ in scales clear differences in voter confidence seem to occur on the basis of place-based effects. As populism itself is a fraught and academically unwieldy subject (Abts & Rummens, 2016) this thesis will instead work to better understand the dissatisfaction at the root of the politics of discontent. Mainly the determinants of the discontent itself. This type of politics is said to be built out of economic uproot and societal alienation. This paper aims to find a common patterns in two regions at opposite ends of Europe. And so, this paper aims to assess to what extent a lack of confidence in institutions can be explained spatially rather than interpersonally. It will achieve that through answering the following question: To what extent is the periphery of the region a predictor for confidence in democratic institutions? In order to answer that question three sub questions have been assembled. Those being: To what extent do personal characteristics predict confidence in democratic institutions? To what degree do territorial characteristics predict confidence in institutions? And to what extent do place of residence and personal life satisfaction correlate?

The first section of the thesis will examine existing theories in the field of Political and Institutional confidence. A second one will outline, explain and defend the methods chosen. The ensuing section will go over the results. After which the paper will close on a discussion of the findings and possible next steps.

Theoretical framework

This chapter will go over the theoretical underpinnings as they relate to confidence in democratic systems. Through constructing this framework the paper will

Who

A lack of confidence in democratic institutions can be hugely problematic. Not just because it drives down engagement and aides the establishment of “the effectiveness of authoritative decision-making within that system are thought to be imperilled by the widespread discontent among citizens. (Craig & Maggionto, 1984) These problems don’t just present themselves individually, but is to a high degree spatial in nature. As the introduction has outlined it are the rural places where faith in the system is the lowest. Andrés Rodríguez-Pose (2018) words it in the following way: ‘It has been thus the places that don’t matter, not the “people that don’t matter”, that have reacted. In these areas it has been very often the relatively well-off, those in well paid jobs or with pensions that heeded the call of populism”. This dichotomy is interesting, the better off tend to be more politically powerful through disposable income and better organising(Novak, 2018). Which means these movements might prove to be structurally more powerful than historical populist movements.

What

Over time the understanding of what influences the collective confidence in democratic institutions has changed and grown. As illustration Arthur Miller(1974) argued that the levels of confidence in institutions as measured by the American National Election Studies(NES) have been subject to the political culture at large. But are simultaneously influenced by the assessment the general population has made of how their perceived problems have been addressed. Whereas Jack Citrin(1974) argues that the levels of confidence as measured by the American National Election Studies reflect little more than that the respondent’s agreement with the current incumbent. In this explanation any answers to the question on the confidence in political institution carry a high level of political motivation. This duality between the level of institutional confidence as an objective assessment or mere political animosity has remained to this day. This will need to be accounted for in the model. But explanations can be differentiated along other axes as well. For one Robert Lawrence (1997) dismisses the effects of the nation’s economic outlook outright. Reasoning how the economic fortune of the United States during the late sixties was not at all reflected in the poor scores on confidence in institutions. Lawrence instead posed that one-of events, controversy and scandal are the primary drivers of public confidence. In this case these specifically refer to the Vietnam War and Watergate. Moy & Pfau (2000) however correctly note that the chronology of Watergate and the reduction of citizen confidence in institutions was empirically backwards. Which axes the notion that controversy and scandal are the sole influencers on public confidence.

A wholly different take is offered by Derek Bok. Bok(1997) remarks how the confidence in institutions is not in fact a question regarding the performance of government institutions, but rather a question about the expectations of a nation’s inhabitants. And so he concludes a reduction in the level of confidence in institutions can be brought about by an increase in expectations of a nation’s citizens vis a vis their government. Confidence rises and falls as a self-regulating variable.

This reflects the assertions made by Philip Converse. Education leads to a greater awareness of shortcomings, including shortcomings in governmental organisations, or so argued Converse(1971). Thus, he went on, a higher level of education would stand as a predictor of less confidence in institutions. However he nor anybody else has been able to conclusively prove this with data so far. In fact both positive and negative relations have been found between level of education and confidence in institutions. And in either case this relationship was weak.(Moy & Pfau, 2000). Even in research where a significant correlation could be found, the level of education has not been shown as being a particularly strong predictor of trust in institutions.

A similar lack of a conclusive relation can be found in the relation of age and confidence in institutions. Past survey have documented both positive as well as negative relations between age and faith in political systems(Norris 2011). She phrases this in the following way: "(...)age were only weakly related to European patterns of political trust and institutional confidence" This inconsistency however might point towards a relation between confidence and age cohorts rather than a relation to confidence and current age of the respondent. Where each age cohort would have a collective outlook on institutions that is connected to their formative years rather than to their current phase of life.

Where

The distinction Rodríguez-Pose(2018) makes is one between primary cities and their urban and rural hinterland. When he writes about the places left behind Rodríguez-Pose creates a distinction that is differs from the classical rural hinterland versus big city dialectic. In this reading it is not just the villages and small towns that suffer the fate of the new periphery. The article specifically includes the old manufacturing centre of Liverpool in the places left behind. This is how the socio-geographic divergence of today has been widely understood. Phillipe Pierre-Combes et al (2012) specifically name the agglomeration advantages of larger cities as the primary driver of economic success. These agglomeration effects are not present in neither the classical rural nor the small and mid-size towns. Hence this is the distinction that matters to us in the rest of the paper.

This however is not the sole scalar level that is thought on. The centre periphery distinction is also frequently made on the national level. Because where the centre periphery relations used to primarily be a localised or regionalised affair, that has changed. The large strides made in transportation methods over the last centuries has increased the effect of global exchanges(Hauswedell, Körner, & Tiedau, 2019). Consequently a country's position within the global marketplace can have far reaching impacts on the fairings of its citizens. Thus a separate distinction can and should be made of a centre periphery relation on the international level. This disparity however will not be the primary focus of this paper.

Methodology

In order to achieve answers to the outlined questions a couple of decisions needed to be made. Within this thesis a combination of secondary quantitative data and primary interview data will be used. In the following paragraphs these choices will be discussed after which the process by which the quantitative method will be explained.

Initial Choices.

The primary focus of the thesis will be answered through the quantitative method. Very early on in the process a choice was made to work with secondary quantitative data. This choice allowed the research to achieve a goal that was deemed crucial. To properly construct a research that includes place-based effects spatial diversity is key. To say anything of meaning about rurality demands that rural areas are properly represented. The spatial diversity of the secondary data would never be matched by a singular researcher. As the research progressed some problems were found in the sampling strategy of the secondary data. More on that can be found near the end of the discussion. Because the central research question pertains the extent to which several factors affect a single phenomenon the choice for a Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis was straightforward. Seeing how the main research question is one of correlation rather than strict causal relation. The choice to include an interview as part of this thesis is underpinned by two considerations. The primary consideration was that the prospective quantitative methods would only prove correlation. Any conclusions about causal relations would need qualitative support. Secondly and perhaps more importantly the collected political science theories were largely based in the Anglo-Saxon political culture. In order to more confidently deduce from the amassed data and draw conclusions upon the analysis readouts questions needed to be asked to someone capable of describing the Greek political culture in an academic context.

Choice of Data.

Two data sets were considered during the preparatory stage: the European Value Survey (EVS) and the Eurobarometer. These two are considered to be the most authoritative comparative attitudinal datasets at this scalar level. In order to use the method of regression analysis, as is explained later on in this chapter, it is of great importance that questions asked in the Netherlands match those asked in Greece. These two series of data sets are carried out in profoundly different fashion. The Eurobarometer can be considered a constantly running iterative form of data collection. Barring a few reports most of their publishing happens on a monthly basis. As the subject of this thesis is considered a very current issue care was taken to select a recent set of data. The European Value Surveys on the other hand are designed as large scale data gathering efforts. Over the last 38 years it has produced 5 datasets of high sample size extensive data. The most recent wave of data gathering was performed in 2017 and slated to be released within the time-frame of this research. However this most recent wave does not include Greece (Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, 2017), so any EVS data use would have to be performed with data gathered in 2008. Thus the Eurobarometer has been chosen as the most appropriate dataset. The Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften in collaboration with Kantar Public collects a more steady stream of data with their Eurobarometer in comparison to their EVS. For the most recent

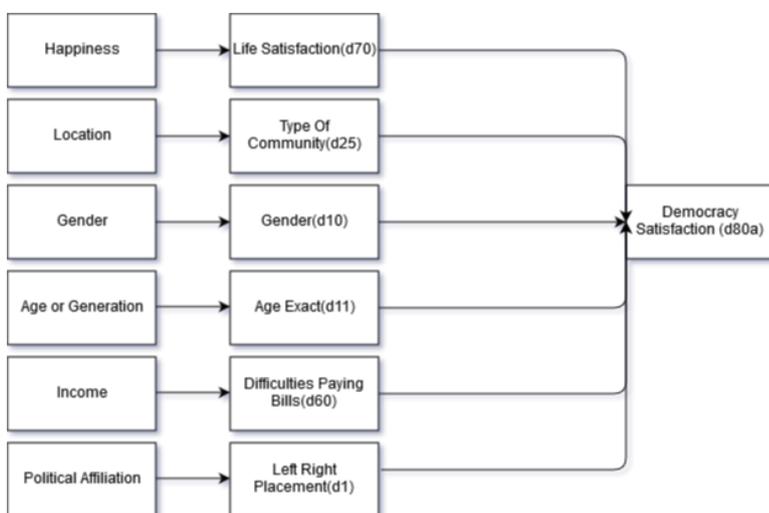
Eurobarometer publication Kantar Public has in turn delegated data collection to their subsidiary TNS NIPO for the Netherlands, and delegated to Taylor Nelson Sofres Market Research for Greece. Their questionnaires typically contain three modules, or four if one counts the general demographic questions. The most recently released set of data during the preparatory phase of the thesis was Eurobarometer 90.1 (Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, 2018). This set included a set politically oriented attitudinal questions dubbed the 'Parlemeter'. Beyond these two mainstays the questionnaires tend to incorporate cycling sets of questions that gauge opinions on a certain subject. As an example Eurobarometer 90.1 contains a couple dozen questions pertaining to attitudes toward antimicrobial resistance, and conveniently another dozen questions concerning attitudes towards and self-assessed behaviour around democracy and elections. For each determinant as discussed in the theoretical framework a corresponding variable in this dataset could be found. This allowed the use of this dataset, which was moderately recent at the start of the research process. Eurobarometer 90.1, features data gathered during the month of November 2018. The sampling strategy used was a multi stage random sample. The organisation aims to use sampling points in each NUTS 2 region to establish a geographically representative sample of the national population. In both countries the NUTS 2 scalar level coincides with a domestically used administrative unit. From both countries a random sample of roughly 1000 participants is drawn that reflects the geographic spread of the population. This strategy comes closest to what tends to be called stratified random sampling (Moore & McCabe, 2005).

Interview Rationale

As was previously mentioned much of the literature used in the theoretical framework is authored by Anglo-Saxon researchers with data taken from primarily American or British research populations. Most of the papers use examples solely based around an American reading of history or specifically base themselves on historical occurrences within American or British History. A clear distinction can be drawn between the continental and Anglo-Saxon political tradition. Two important distinctions can be found. The oppositional two party systems of the English speaking world, is entirely unlike the historically conciliatory and coalition building systems of the European mainland (Hague et al, 2016). In addition the degree to which local and national governments have adopted New Public Management differs. (Celik, 2017) And thus it remains to be seen whether the understandings as outlined in the Theoretical Framework will effectively translate to both the cases contained in this study. The inclusion of qualitative interview will help guide this translation into different political culture. There were a lot of important considerations while choosing the format, target and scope of the interviews. Due to time and access restraints while in Greece the scope of the interviews was decided to be small. Robyn Lonhurst notes how it is of vital importance to select participants based on their experience with the research topic. (Clifford et al., 2010) And so these interviews are best undertaken with experts. Rather than asking emotionally fraught questions to people the researcher has little report with and getting 'socially acceptable' answers in return the results from the interview will be much more elucidating when coming someone with a firm grasp on the political and cultural reality. To make the most of the time available the interview will be semi-structured. With questions built around the theory and opportunities for follow up questions in order not to railroad the expert. Thirteen separate questions were assembled based around 4 themes. These four themes being the concept of low/high societal trust concept as published by Francis Fukuyama, the economic disparities among regions, the perception of trend or aberration, demographic characteristics as they pertain to Greece.

Selecting the corresponding variables

The determinants as discussed in the Theoretical Framework all have a corresponding in the dataset. The variables that lie at the heart of this thesis are contentment, and trust in Government. For the variable that would reflect Trust in the Democratic system multiple options were considered such as Satisfaction with EU Democracy – Free Fair Elections(qb8_1), European Parliament - Image(qa1), My voice counts in(our country) (d72_2) and Trust Political parties(d81). The variables labelled (qa1) and (qb8_1) were both deemed unusable as they would unquestionably include attitudes towards the European Union itself in its responses. Which would open up the research to a Hidden Variable problem. Using this variable would sway the research in a different direction than intended. The other two variables labelled (d72_2) and (d81) do not have this issue. They are either general in their scope or specify the country of residence. But both these variables only measure a segments of the actual intended dependent value. The research is about more than just trust in political parties or extent to which people believe their voice is heard in civil and political matters. Instead Democracy Satisfaction – Country(d80a) was chosen, which should provide a more holistic unit of measurement. The question in full was this “On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (your country)?” Respondents were provided a four point scale with the option for a non-response open.



Respondents were provided a four point scale with the option for a non-response open.

The life satisfaction of the respondent as determinant of his trust confidence in democratic systems has been specifically championed by Arthur Miller(1974) and Craig & Maggiotto(1984), although most consecutive thinkers didn't so much disagree with their findings as they added on to them. Rodríguez-Pose(2018) argued that Individual and Geographic

contentment should be viewed as separate from each other. Those with fulfilling lives in less successful areas could still be less content or less satisfied with the direction of the country. To account for these determinants concerning contentment three variables were chosen. Namely 'Life Satisfaction' and 'Difficulties paying Bills' as two individual determinants. The latter to measure the degree of economic fortune or misfortune, the former to measure a more generalist contentment. In addition 'Type of Community' was chosen as the best geographic variable. These variables all require some extra attention. Starting with the latter, the variable type of community contains 4 possible answers. The respondent is asked to judge for his or herself whether their current place of residence is part of a rural or suburban environment, a small or medium town environment, or a large town environment of a metropolis or choose not to answer. This makes the variable somewhat subjective, the research-designer chose not to define the terms and rather have the respondent be the judge of the degree of rurality they lived in. This results in an observation that has more bearing on how the respondent experiences his direct surroundings instead of a measurement of the level of access the respondent has to higher level facilities and job prospects. This research design fits the aims of this thesis well, as the way the subject experiences their place of residence is exactly the concern of our research question.

The variable of 'Life satisfaction' is also not strictly defined by the research team, but rather elegantly measured on a four point scale from 'Very Satisfied' to 'Not At All Satisfied' with an option for the respondent not to answer. Here too because this is an inherently subjective experience it creates no further problems for the analysis. For the purposes of this paper the variable can be considered ordinal as long as the non-response is filtered out. The variable 'Difficulty Paying Bills' is one of the questionnaire's sole economic questions. The questionnaire does not contain any income group questions. In full the question reads: "During the last twelve months, how often have you had difficulties in paying your bills at the end of the month?" The three possible answers are: Most of the time, Occasionally, and Almost Never/Never. For this question the respondent is not given a clear out if he or she feels uncomfortable answering, which showcases the cultural awareness of the research design as being aware that this might be a topic some European cultures would systematically prefer not to answer. Yet within the interview guide refusal to answer is included as an option if the respondent doesn't accept any of the presented answers.

The best representation of political opinions within the dataset is the variable of political left-right alignment. Herein the respondent can place themselves on the political spectrum with one being the furthest left and ten being the furthest right. This variable corresponds with the ideas of Jack Citrin(1974) that confidence in the democratic system is but a proxy for partisanship. In this reading the respondent trusts the office or parliament as long as it is occupied by or contains a majority of representatives that he or she agrees with. As with most questions within this questionnaire this variable is a subjective self assessment by the respondent as well. It notably is not an objective assessment of the respondents leanings on a subject by subject basis. Even if it were, a single axis representation of political leanings can not function as an exhaustive image of political preferences. The 10 point scale means that it does register a lot of detail. Which gives respondents sufficient room to differentiate themselves from radical leanings or dead centre. It however will act as a passable approximation of political leanings. For the purposes of this analysis the variable can be assumed to be ordinal. The gender variable is simplified by having the interviewer assess gender visually rather than having the respondent themselves specify. Thus limiting the outcome to two categories, forgoing a 'Wouldn't say' or 'Other' category. This makes it a binary variable. Gender is not only an often used control variable. But according to Norris (2011) can also be a determinant around which public expectations can fluctuate. This same case Norris made for Age. The Eurobarometer 90.1 contains an Exact Age variable measured in years. This makes this the sole ratio independent variable in the model. Further control variables that were considered were education, ethnicity, and interpersonal trust. However for the sake of limiting the scale of the model and the research they were omitted.

Factor	Corresponding variable in the Model	Values
Confidence in Institution	Democratic satisfaction - country(d80a_r1)	(Between 1-4) With low values meaning 'Very satisfied' and high values meaning 'Not at all Satisfied'.
Happiness	Life Satisfaction (d70_r1)	(Between 1-4) With low values meaning 'Very Satisfied' and high values meaning 'Not at all Satisfied'.
Location	Type of Community (d25_r2)	(Between 0-1) With 0 being 'Periphery' and 1 being 'Urban Centre'
Gender	Gender(d10_r1)	(Between 0-1) With 0 indicating 'Male' and 1 indicating 'Female'
Political alignment	Left-Right Placement(d1_r1)	(Between 1-10) With 1 indicating furthest left and 10 indicating furthest right
Income	Difficulties Paying Bills(d60_r1)	(Between 1-3) With 1 indicating 'Most of the Time' and 3 Indicating 'Never' or 'Almost Never'
Age	Age Exact(d11)	(Between 15-99) With 15 being the youngest and 99 indicating everyone who is 99 or older

Preparing the Data for Analysis

Some of the data is recoded either because the application of a linear model requires it, or to better reflect the intended research question. Where possible the data is used without loss of detail. The first change was the elimination of non-responses in the following variables: Democratic Satisfaction – country, Life satisfaction, Difficulty paying bills, and Left Right Placement. These responses needed to be filtered out to allow for inclusion in a linear regression model. By relabelling these Don't know/Wouldn't say responses as missing they aren't misconstrued as legitimate scores by the regression model. The Gender variable originally was scored as a one(1) and a two(2). For clarity this has been recoded into a binary variable between zero and one. In all following data outcomes of zero can be understood to mean male while one outcomes can be understood to mean female.

In order for the data to reflect the theory as much as possible as it went into the model an additional recoding was performed. The Type of Community was measured through a self assessment of the respondent with three options given. Those being Rural-Area, Towns and suburbs/ small urban area, or Cities/ Large urban area. By truncating the first two groups the data better reflects the distinction as Rodríguez-Pose(2018) makes it in his paper. All but the largest towns are to be the twenty-first century's hinterland. Our data will reflect this categorisation. After this recoding the Type of Community variable can be understood as Centre and Periphery, where outcomes of zero(0) mean Periphery and outcomes of one(1) mean Centre. This recoding makes this variable into a binary variable.

The Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction the intention of this thesis is to compare the degree to which interpersonal and territorial characteristics have effect on a respondent's confidence in the democratic process. For this singular goal a multivariate linear regression will fit well. In order to use this statistical method several assumptions need to be met. First of all the relationship between the dependent and collection of independent variables must be understood as linear. All independent variables can be understood as normally distributed in relation to the dependant variable. This should be no problem considering the sample size. It is fair to predict that the Region of residence could interrelate with the Personal Life satisfaction of the respondent (Diener, 2000), as could Difficulty Paying bills. To safeguard the soundness of the model during execution extra care must be paid to the covariance of these predictor variables. If all goes well and the model shows significance The statistic of interest will be the Standardised Coefficient. As units of measurement vary wildly between the variables.

Results

Using the standard of a 95% confidence interval, the results of the regression analysis show a significance of the model in both case study countries(Sig: 0.000). The predictive power of this model is marginally higher for Greece with 9.8% against 8.4% respectively. Surprisingly however not all theory-based variables can be deemed significant within this dataset. Unsurprisingly Life Satisfaction seems to be an excellent predictor of Democratic Satisfaction in both cases. Interestingly enough the significance of the predictors differs between the two cases. Let us dissect these two cases individually.

Starting with Greece one sees Life satisfaction as a significant factor(Sig: 0.000). Moreover it is the de facto highest value among the standardised coefficients. Life Satisfaction can thus be regarded as the most valuable predictor. Another significant factor is the Left-Right Placement(Sig: 0.002). This tells us that within the population we can expect a significant amount of correlation between political leaning and satisfaction with the country's democratic system. It tells us that self described right aligned Greeks are less likely to have a positive opinion about the democratic system as it is currently. Another significant factor is whether a respondent has difficulties paying bills. This however works rather straightforward. The more trouble a respondent has in paying his or her bills the more likely they are to feel their democratic system failed them. Based on what the standardised coefficients tell us this effect is in actuality less severe than those of the other two significant factors.

Greece	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	2.399	.181		13.2324	.000
Life Satisfaction (recoded)	.236	.041	.227	5.793	.000
Type of Community (recoded)	-.073	.056	-.047	-1.294	.196
Gender (recoded)	-.049	.054	-.032	-.910	.363
Left-Right Placement(recoded)	.041	.013	.112	3.131	.002
Difficulties paying bills (recoded)	-0.91	.045	-.081	-2.045	.041
Age Exact	-.002	.002	-.051	-1.426	.154

a. Dependant Variable: Democracy Satisfaction – Country (recoded)

On the whole the analysis showcases three predictors that seem to work in Greece if one is meaning to predict satisfaction regarding their democratic system. Those being financial hardship, political alienation and general well-being. Notably whether a respondent lives in a large city or not does not correlate sufficiently to be used as a predictor.

Taking a look at the Netherlands a few notable differences can be found. However the effect of Life Satisfaction is not one of them. In the Netherlands this factor is both significant and the model's strongest indicator as well. Although it is important to note that its predictive value isn't as strong as it was within the Greek model, in this case the standardised coefficient is only 0.168, a fair step down from the sway the variable holds in the Greek model. Another difference can be found in the Left-Right Placement, which in the Dutch model does not achieve significance. Difficulties paying bills however does fall within the threshold of statistical significance. Moreover in The Netherlands economic hardship seemingly has more predictive value. The unstandardised coefficient of minus .220 means that those who have trouble paying their bills from time to time will rate their democratic system about a fifth of a tier lower than those who almost never have trouble paying their bills. A last difference is that unlike the Greek model the Dutch model does show a correlation with Age. The relation here is one where with age a respondent will be more likely to foster a poorer or less favourable opinion of the Dutch Democratic system.

The Netherlands	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	1.909	.201		9.501	.000
Life Satisfaction (recoded)	.194	.036	.168	5.379	.000
Type of Community (recoded)	.027	.056	.015	.480	.632
Gender (recoded)	.080	.043	.058	1.884	.060
Left-Right Placement(recoded)	.012	.011	.032	1.040	.298
Difficulties paying bills (recoded)	-.220	.054	-.127	-4.042	.000
Age Exact	.007	.001	.150	4.873	.000

a. Dependant Variable: Democracy Satisfaction – Country (recoded)

Through uniting the outcomes of these regression models and looking at the collinearity within our model we can attempt to answer our first sub question. Surprisingly the model shows us no strong multicollinearity outcomes for the 'type of community' variable. Instead the highest collinearity can be found in the variables of 'Life satisfaction' and 'Difficulties paying bills', with variance inflation factors of 1.251 and 1.294 in Greece and 1.069 and 1.068 for The Netherlands. None of these outcomes comes close to the threshold of 10, which would indicate some chance of multicollinearity. That means there is not enough to cast doubts on the individual importance of these variables within the model. We can however glean that in Greece a person's life satisfaction is currently more correlated with his or her financial situation than a that of a citizen in the Netherlands.

Discussion

Two differences can be noted between the countries. The first being the difference in predictive value of age. As Norris(2011) noted age tends to generally only have a benign and inconsistent effects on trust. The result in the analysis here does only partially fit that expectation. That is to say the Netherlands doesn't conform at all. Older people in the Netherlands seem resoundingly less confident in institutions. The notion that in Greece Age isn't even within the significance threshold does reflect the inconsistency of Age as a predictor however. The other big difference is the predictive value of political affiliation. Yannis Psycharis, Professor at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and interview participant, showed a possible explanation for this difference. He argued that through the hardships of recent years the Greek political system has moved away from the centre. He describes how "during extreme periods maybe the polarisation goes to the extremes."

One of the important takeaways is that neither of the models is capable of predicting even 10% of the cases. This signals that there are one or multiple important factors that this research has failed to take into account. What we can infer is that within the selected two countries Gender seems to have no bearing on the trust a respondent has in their government.

The financial stressor within the model has a considerable effect in both countries. This is in line with the majority of the theories discussed. Most theories had at least some room for personal finances within their theory of the case. Notable here is that the correlation is much stronger in The Netherlands than in Greece. This could be explained as an indication of the poor state of the Greek economy. But if combined with the stronger correlation between Life Satisfaction and Confidence in Institutions it might also be seen as an indication of a difference in life priorities. A third explanation could be a difference in public policy. In this explanation a specific public policy causes a group or multiple groups to lose their trust in their democratic representation.

Prof. Psycharis offers an explanation for why region isn't a factor in Greece. His primary argument is economic in nature. He argues how: "All regions [Ed. referring to the 13 Greek administrative units] have been converged, because all regions have lost a vast part of income. And have the same low level of economic development. So they have converged in the low.". This apparent downward economic convergence can function as an explanation of the lack of a significant correlation between region of residence and a displeasure with the democratic system. Considering a decline in economic prospects is a dire reality in Greece regardless of region of residence. And so any distress from being left behind is extended to highly urbanised regions. This however is only part of Professor Psycharis's explanation. As he describes the same pattern Rodríguez-Pose(2018) ascribed to the New Economic Geography as well. But rather than keeping the terms nebulous by referring to larger towns the interviewee is more specific. He words it the following way: "However we can see that the only exception is Attica. Attica is the region that holds Athens. And it seems that Attica starts higher, Attica has lost a certain part of its production capacity. However has been, and stayed, on a relatively higher level than the other regions. As a result the inequalities between Attica and the rest

of the regions have increased.”

The most effective predictor of satisfaction with the political system in either country is the variable of life satisfaction. Prof. Psycharis had the following to say about that: “Why is this an important problem. If there is economic anxiety, it is not only, it is not only that you lack the basic resources. This also affects the self esteem and feeling of belonging. If you don't work, gradually, you are driven out of the functions of the society. And this is more important than the lack of the basic financial resources that are vital for everyday life.” While Psycharis built the argument out of an example about economic anxiety the extent of the argument reaches much further than that. The sense of belonging and pleasure derived from life form an integral part in your position in and attitude towards society as a whole. While various cynical political scientists, some of whom have been discussed on this paper have tried to find different explanations for distrust in the political system, one factor seems to stand above the others. It is when citizens are pleased with their lives that they rate their political system the highest.

In summation place-based effects show no strong correlative relation to Confidence in the democratic system in neither Greece nor in the Netherlands. In these two European countries the interpersonal factors prove the better predictors. This is not to say that place based factors might not lie at the root of these interpersonal determinants. But currently

However this piece of research has several limitations. An important limitation of this research is the absence of data from the regions of Ionia Nisia, Notio Aigaio and Voreio Aigaio. These three Greek archipelagos are among the smallest regions in the country. The seven Ionian islands of Ionia Nisia house around 201.000(2017) permanent inhabitants, the island group of Notio Aigaio is populated by 338.000(2017) and the Voreio Aigaio archipelago weighs in at a scant 192.000(2017). As a result the inclusion on the same basis of proportional research populations as the other regions would not have made for a sufficient sample size, and the spatial separation of the islands is an impediment to the performance of any population based research. The risk of introducing convenience bias by performing the entire effort from a single island is substantial. These are however but attempts to explain away the failure to include these regions. As inland low population regions are accounted for, Dytiki Makedonia for example with its 268.000 inhabitants is represented in the dataset by 16 respondents. Consequently this omission of a very specific subset of the Greek population forms a huge problem for the conclusions of this paper. The inherent connectivity deficit of these islands is a form of rurality(McKee & Tisdell, 1990). And so the exclusion of the island regions inadvertently downplays a subset of rural inhabitants within Greece. While there are still plenty of rural regions in the dataset there is a risk this exclusion might have skewed results.

Another limitation is the aspect of time. Time is decidedly not a geographer's domain. Yet might prove vital in building a more dependable and better predictive model. An older Dutch proverb goes like this: Trust comes on foot but leaves on horseback..In summation trust builds slowly and slips away quickly. Opinions rarely change overnight and what we experience today has an effect on our attitude tomorrow. Taking in more historical data might help build out the predictive strength of a model.

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Appendix A1: Regression Outcomes Greece

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.312 ^a	.098	.090	.730

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE EXACT, TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N), Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY), Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response), Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses), Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.350	6	7.058	13.254	.000 ^b
	Residual	391.418	735	.533		
	Total	433.768	741			

a. Dependent Variable: DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION - COUNTRY (RECODED EXCLUDING DK RESPONSE)

b. Predictors: (Constant), AGE EXACT, TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N), Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY), Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response), Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses), Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	2.399	.181	
	Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response)	.236	.041	.227	5.793	.000
	TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N)	-.073	.056	-.047	-1.294	.196
	Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY)	-.049	.054	-.032	-.910	.363
	Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses)	.041	.013	.112	3.131	.002
	Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal)	-.091	.045	-.081	-2.045	.041
	AGE EXACT	-.002	.002	-.051	-1.426	.154

a. Dependent Variable: DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION - COUNTRY (RECODED EXCLUDING DK RESPONSE)

Appendix A2: Regression Outcomes The Netherlands

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.291 ^a	.084	.079	.666

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE EXACT, Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY), Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal), Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses), TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N), Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.617	6	6.770	15.269	.000 ^b
	Residual	440.247	993	.443		
	Total	480.864	999			

a. Dependent Variable: DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION - COUNTRY (RECODED EXCLUDING DK RESPONSE)

b. Predictors: (Constant), AGE EXACT, Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY), Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal), Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses), TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N), Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	1.909	.201	
	Life satisfaction (recoded to exclude DK response)	.194	.036	.169	5.379	.000
	TYPE OF COMMUNITY(RECODED INTO LARGE TOWN Y/N)	.027	.056	.015	.480	.632
	Gender(RECODED AS DUMMY)	.080	.043	.058	1.884	.060
	Left Right placement (recoded to exclude non responses)	.012	.011	.032	1.040	.298
	Difficulties paying bills(Recoded to exclude refusal)	-.220	.054	-.127	-4.042	.000
	AGE EXACT	.007	.001	.150	4.873	.000

a. Dependent Variable: DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION - COUNTRY (RECODED EXCLUDING DK RESPONSE)

Appendix B: Interview Transcript

Q: Francis Fukuyama created the labels of high/low trust societies, intended to indicate higher or lower levels of interpersonal trust between citizens. Which label would you say best represents Greece?

A: I will say that people were very, I will say very.. Its a word it, we have a god of - for .. philoxeny. They behaved very friendly, especially in the islands. However this was another way of change. The composition of people, things like that.

Q: Alright, a second disruption if you will.

A: However I think it was not so much a problem. Although it created some tensions, it was not a problem. Comparing to what has happened in the other European countries the Greek had a very friendly behaviour to refugees. So this has not reduced the level of trust. Okay, there are some people that have some fears. However the majority of people has very positive behaviour towards migrants. I think the most damning influence was the economic crisis. Because the economic crisis reduced the level of economic prosperity, increased the poverty rate.

Q: Yes.

A: And as a result increased the tensions, and the poverty. So there were robberies, increased the violence, sometimes home intrusions and burglaries. So this has reduced the level of trust substantially. If I were to assess which factor, as reduced trust among people. I would say this factor has to do with the economic crisis, has to do with the increase of poverty and has to do with the increase of income inequality.

Q: And in that reading, the current status would be a trend rather than an anecdote or aberration?

A: You mean that, you mean that you want me to predict whether the current situation will continue?

Q: Well, I mean I wouldn't want you to have to predict that, as doing so could be very hard. But in your view, is it likely to be a longer term problem. As naming economic factors suggest it would be.

A: Yeah, yeah, of course. If the recession continues, the level of social disturbance, and social unrest will be higher. And the level of trust, will be further reduced. Okay, this is an issue. This is a worrying issue, at the moment. The low level of trust, sometimes the fear. The lower level of interaction and trust to others. However, I think, if the economy recovers. If the employment, employment is a critical factor here. If I were to start from somewhere, I would start from the need to increase employment. Especially the employment of youth. Why is this an important problem. If there is economic anxiety, it is not only, it is not only that you lack the basic resources. This also affects the self esteem and feeling of belonging. If you don't work, gradually, you are driven out of the functions of the society. And this is more important than the lack of the basic financial resources that are vital for everyday life. So I think that the extreme behaviour, and the illegal behaviour is

to the largest extent attributed to the lack of jobs.

Q: You eh, earlier you mentioned that people from the same region eh relocate to the people from the same region. Is Greece a loose combination of regions in that way?

A: Is Athens? Is Athens? okay People from different places locate in the same area in Athens.

Q: I see, how would you characterise the economic growth within Greece? Would you say there is a trend of convergence or one of divergence.

A: According to the I have written some papers, and I continue to eh. have worked on we have the wrong convergence. The picture of The wrong convergence means that. All regions have been converged, because all regions have lost a vast part of income. And have the same low level of economic development. So they have converged in the low. This is something that is not good, because we would like to have convergence through development pro you not convergence through recessionary process. Today we have a convergence at a low level, this is not desirable. However we can see that the only exception is Attica. Attica is the region that holds Athens. And it seems that Attica starts higher, Attica has lost a certain part of its production capacity. However has been, and stayed, on a relatively higher level than the other regions. As a result the inequalities between Attica and the rest of the regions have increased. So we have three observations: All regions have seen a reduction in prosperity. The twelve regions have converged at a very low level of economic activity. Attica has also lost prosperity. However, Attica started at a higher level. So the inequalities within the country have increased between Attica and the rest of the regions. I would like to say here that now all Greek regions are below the European average. Such as it was not before the economic crisis. Now, even Attica is below the European Average. If I were to say, something for comparison I could say that today Greek Regions enjoy the level of economic development that equals that of 15, or 19 years ago, in the year 2000. So: the level of economic prosperity has gone back 2 decades. This in peacetime period, historically, is very unusual, and is very uncommon. So, it is something that we have to take very seriously into consideration. What has happened first. And how this issue can be restored. How it can be turned around.

A: Here I would like to also compliment something more. We see that Attica stays higher. But within Attica, the inequalities within Attica have also increased. Because in Athens, we have higher rates of income inequalities than in other areas of the country. This is where I and you can see that in Athens the visualisation of poverty is increased. You can see homelessness in Athens. Because poor people in villages still can afford something that is their own property. But in Athens it was, it was more severe. They were hurt more severe in Athens. We have higher poverty rates and higher rates of income inequality. And also we could see segregation, trends within Athens.

Q: But that.. (pause) does that have to do with different municipalities within Athens. Do these municipalities differ in terms of poverty-rate, or are there also distinct differences within these municipalities

Okay, we can give you some material on that. We have eh two or three papers.

Of course there are income inequalities within municipalities . Within Athens there are 66 municipalities. The level of income among municipalities is very different. There are municipalities that enjoy a relatively high or relatively high level of income. And the other municipalities show a lower level of economic development, economic prosperity.

Q: I see.

A: We could say, if we say look at the geography of income inequality in Athens. There are the northern suburbs, which are considered as high income suburbs. The suburbs, the municipalities that are close to the seaside, especially in the eastern part of the seaside. In Kefallinon, Vouliagmeni Glyfada. There is also an enclave in Psychikon and in the centre of Athens. The western part of the city, the western municipalities, the western part of the city. Some parts around the city centre, and some parts around Pareaus are considered as low income municipalities. So there are important differences, in terms of economic wealth among municipalities within Athens. If you go inside the municipalities, then okay the level of inequality isn't that high within the municipalities. For example the level of, maybe there is a U-turn here again, because the level of inequality in the high prosperous area is small because only rich people are there. And in a very poor area maybe the inequality is again small, because almost all people ... So maybe in the extremes, the differences are small. In the middle, maybe these inequalities are increased. But of course this is an important study subject. More research is needed, to provide empirical supported evidence regarding the structure of income inequality within municipalities.

Q: I see, I see. These answers are great. eh In the interest of time eh. I will skip a few questions. So rather than looking at economic considerations I would like to move to a different part eh. The left-right divide. I expect eh it is fair to say that Greece has had a leftist tradition at least. Is the left right divide particularly large in this moment in, eh, in recent political culture?

A: You mean about the voting patterns and the political attitudes?

Q: Yes

A: Economic Crisis, one of the impact of the economic crisis was the demolition of political parties that restored the political tradition that we knew as we knew, during the post dictatorial period. There were two basic parties. The Conservative party, the democracy party, and the socialist party.

Q: Ah Yes, this is one of the things Prof Ballas touched on.

A: There were two basic parties. The Conservative party, the democracy party, and the socialist party. I have also written about Pork Barrel politics.

Q: Ah yes, I read some of that

A: We have three papers on that, and we're preparing now writing a fourth paper on territory, politics and governance.

Q: I can't wait.

A: So we will see. So there were two dominant political parties within the post-dictatorial political arena in Greece. The conservative New Democracy Party and the socialist PASOC. So during the economic crisis there was a change in voting behaviour. As an example PASOC, the socialist party almost disappeared from the political map. And eh I could say that the position of PASOC was then replaced by Syriza, which was more radical. And I think that PASOC, from the time that we have had a democratic government. traditionally there was a conflict between the socialists and the conservatives. After the economic crisis there was a coalition government between conservatives and socialists. I think this was the reason for the socialists to lose. And then Syriza, okay, having a more radical approach to the issue attracted the socialist, and more critical voters of that period.

Q: And so the political spectrum expanded?

A: And the spectrum expanded and at the same time we could see some political parties at the extreme see as fascists like, at the very extreme, the extreme right. And also, also, in the extreme left there are some anarchists or some, okay, its not so concrete. The representation of the political setting. So, during the economic crisis the most important issue was the emergence of Syriza.

Q: And you say that a natural part when more parties arise the political spectrum moves further apart? That the left right distinction becomes more extreme.

A: Actually we again have two poles. Actually we work again with two poles. Although there are some other smaller political parties. eh. The political system is organised on two poles. Previously this was the conservatives and Pasoc, now it is the conservatives and Syriza. Because of the economic crisis the electorate moved, moved to more left. And it was logical in a way because of the anxiety, and because of the increase in unemployment, because the increase of poverty. People were very much disappointed in the political system, so they moved to more aggressive policies. Towards this eh. And today, we will see what the elections will say. Because currently it is the first time in the post-dictatorial period that there has not been an election in four years. Those other times we have had other elections within those four years. We have the local government elections or the European parliament elections

A: But these past few years we have had no test to test what the preferences of the electorate are. So this is the first time that there will be elections . Both the European elections and the local government elections this May. And we will see after four years. How the political system reorganises.

Q: What is currently the likely outcome?

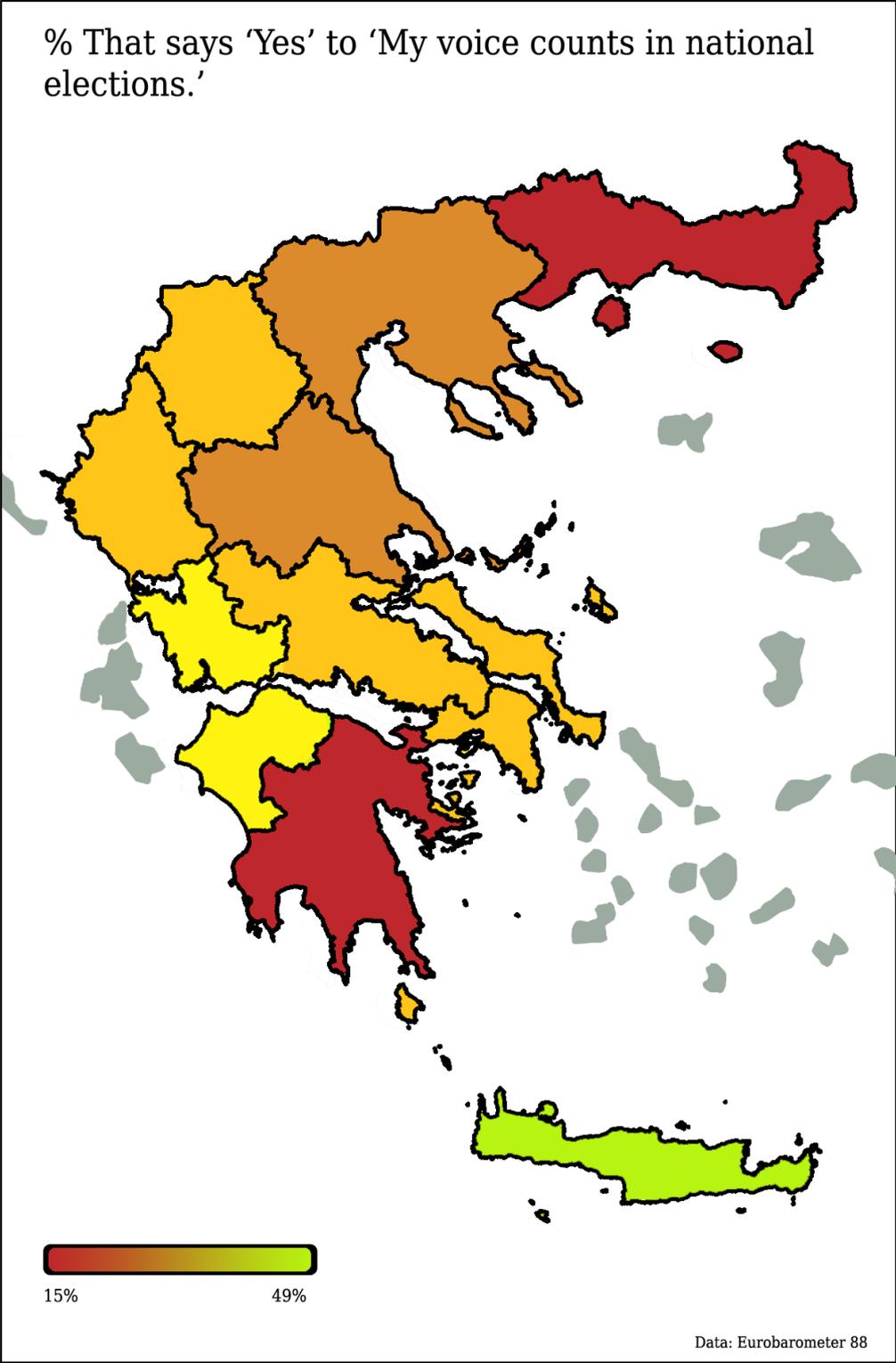
A: I expect the system to reorganise around two poles. Because if you see the Popper. Popper. Are you familiar with the book by Popper, the open society and its enemies. In it he writes how in modern democracies , it speaks of two political poles. Actually the political setting, is around two poles. And I think that this also explains what has happened in Greece. There are two dominant poles, however there are changes in the spectrum. In the political spectrum because we have movements towards the extremes. So in peace time or in wealth time periods maybe the polarisation is closer to the centre. But during extreme periods maybe the polarisation goes to the extremes.

Q: That is a wonderful answer, thank you. Jack Citrin argues that, and this will be the last question, confidence is more of a reflection of that person's personal political opinion than an honest answer. He makes this assertion based on the American political system., do you think this is also the case for the more stable Greek system?

A: Greek people trust democracy. However in recent years people have become more sceptical. And became so in a multiplicity of ways, they were reconsidering what has happened. Because as I told you what has happened is very serious. It is not something, it is a big accident. So they became sceptical. Which is logical, to become more sceptical. It has gone wrong, what went wrong? Does democracy work? Does the European Union work? Do policies take care of people's needs? I think today, first of all, people are very aggressive. Are very disappointed towards the previous political behaviour. They say, they believe that political leaders should have been more cautious, and more responsible. More responsible towards the internal policies and the European policies in this respect. However they don't want in my view to find solutions outside of democracy. They don't search for solutions outside of democracy. Although some people are against the parliament, are against politicians. And as you can see in the paper we have written with Andrés and Vasilis we also blame distributive politics. Distributive politics affect the effectiveness of public policy. But it is something that happens everywhere. If it was not a crisis, this is the same that happens in Sweden, this is the same that happens in France, and this is the same that happens in United States. Distributive policies plays a role. So the degree is what makes some people a bit sceptical. I think that the majority of people trust in democracy. They want to find new representatives and rebuild the trust. In internal politics they want to find a counterbalance to the insufficiencies of the past.

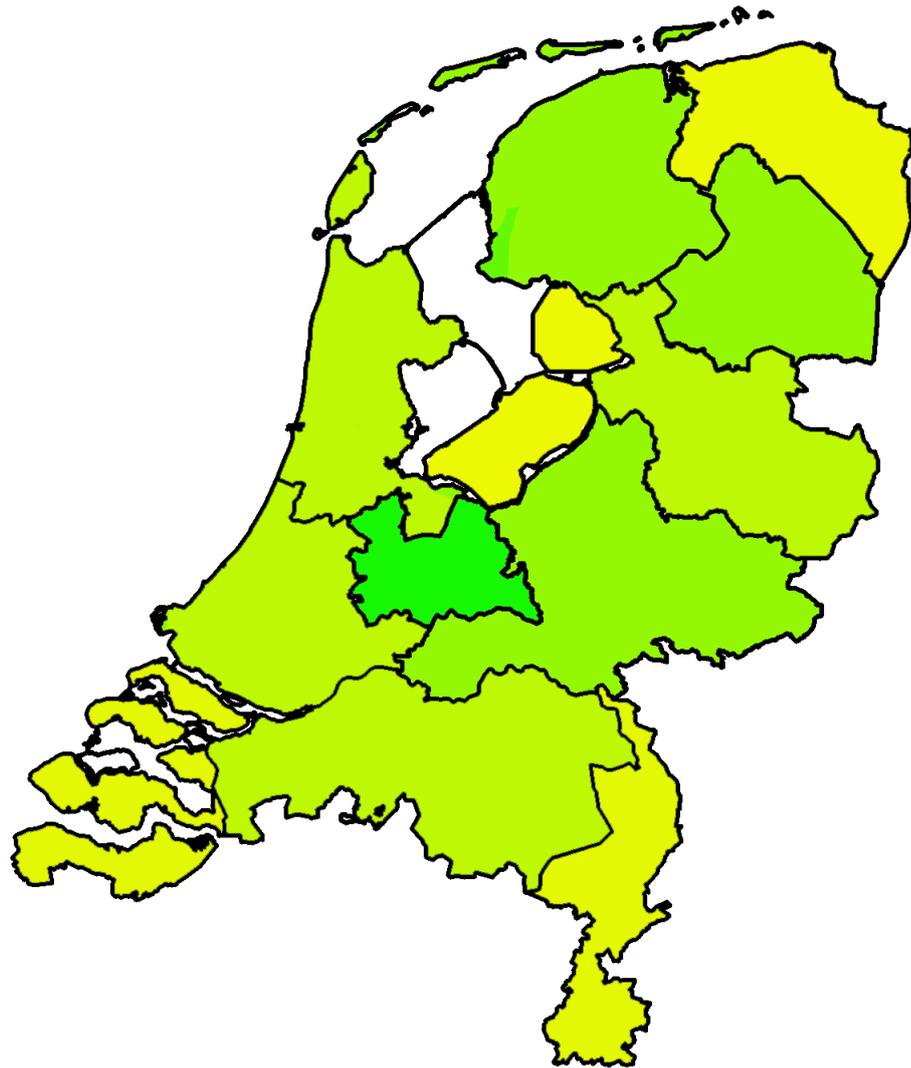
Appendix C: Maps

Greece



The Netherlands

% That says 'Yes' to 'My voice counts in national elections.'



Data: Eurobarometer 88