

Understanding Political Participation in Media Discourse: A Social Representations Approach

TERRI MANNARINI¹, LUKE J. BUHAGIAR², ALESSIA ROCHIRA¹, EVRINOMY AVDI³, IFIGENEIA KOUTRI³, ANNA MYLONA³, GORDON SAMMUT² & SERGIO SALVATORE⁴

¹Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy

²University of Malta, Msida, Malta

³Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

⁴Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Various forms of political participation are found in democratic societies, and these are diversifying at a steady pace. Scholarly literature presents us with an array of typologies of participation, some of which were conceived theoretically, and others derived from empirical research. This paper studies how political participation surfaces in media discourse in Italy and Greece. Specifically, it seeks to understand the social representations of political participation in both countries between 2000 and 2015, and to see which typologies of political participation are reflected in such representations. A media analysis was carried out on a sizeable corpus of newspaper articles in both countries. Data were analysed using a combination of correspondence and cluster analysis. The results indicate higher internal differentiation and gradualness characterising the social representations of political participation in the Italian corpus. In Greece, there was the presence of more radical ideological alternatives to electoral participation. Moreover, results indicate temporal stability in the themes pertaining to political participation over the years. The main

contribution of this paper lies in showing that content pertaining to various typologies of political participation (e.g., relating to influence, in/formality and protest) features in the social representations of political participation in newspaper media. Findings are discussed in view of the temporal distribution of representational content, and by comparing country-specific typologies (for Italy and Greece) with those present in the literature.

Keywords: political participation; social representations; Southern Europe; media analysis; populism

In recent years, political happenings across the globe have highlighted the importance of studying the manifold manifestations of political participation and decision-making in present-day democracies (Font, Wojcieszak & Navarro, 2015; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018). In particular, “the current socio-political climate is rendering increasingly important the tension between citizen demands for more participatory opportunities and international shifts towards more technocratic decision-making processes” (Font et al., 2015, p. 168). Given the dynamic character of political participation, its definition must be addressed, as it impacts how important notions like citizenship are constructed (Haste, 2004). For instance, in Western democracies, conceptualisations of citizenship, and by implication, of participation, have been largely based on meta-theoretical orientations emphasising individual cognition. This basis potentially ignores the power of sociocultural contexts (cf. Sammut & Buhagiar, 2017) on values, identities and political participation, by attributing stability and persistence to what instead are dynamic co-constructed phenomena (Haste, 2004).

‘Political participation’ and ‘political involvement’ share similarities but they are not interchangeable terms (Montero, Westholm & van Deth, 2007, p. 432). Indeed, there are overlaps and meaningful relationships between the two notions (see Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Martín & van Deth, 2007, p. 322). However, while political *involvement* refers to “people’s *interest in politics and the importance they attribute to politics in their lives*” (Martín & van Deth, 2007, p. 303; emphasis in original), political *participation* has more active connotations. Political participation is defined as “action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes” (Brady, 1999, p. 737). Teorell, Torcal and Montero (2007, p. 336) note that this definition highlights four important points: (a) observable action, (b) that is done by non-elites, (c) is intended to bring about change, (d) and has outcomes of a political nature. Several typologies and taxonomies have emerged in the literature, seeking to classify different forms of political participation by type, dimension and target (see Theocharis & van Deth,

2018). On the one hand, this emphasis on classification seems to belie the sociocultural component of participation and its “continuous expansion” (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018, p. 7) in recent years. On the other hand, such typologies may be useful in understanding the different processes leading to different forms of participation within specific contexts and domains, for example, youth participation (Pachi, Chrysanthaki & Barrett, 2014, p. 309). Given its emphasis on power relations (Howarth, Andreouli & Kessi, 2014) and sociocultural contexts (Sammut & Buhagiar, 2017), social representations theory (SRT) is introduced in the next section, before proceeding to present literature on typologies of political participation. In this paper, we present an empirical study involving a comprehensive analysis of newspaper articles from Greek and Italian newspapers covering the political spectrum. The goal is to examine social representations (SR) of political participation in both countries, and to discover which of the typologies are reflected in the SR of political participation in Italy and Greece. Results highlight the content and semantic structures of the SR of political participation. Findings are discussed in view of the temporal distribution of representational content, and by comparing country-specific typologies with those present in the literature.

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

One of the chief concerns of SRT is the diversity of views circulating in the public sphere, making it apt for studying political participation and democratic processes (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017). In exploring the meanings tied to varying forms of participation, SRT necessarily considers the perspectives of different categories of people (cf. Rochira et al., 2019). Fundamentally, SR are systems of social influence serving a constitutive role in the shared realities of different social groups (Sammut & Howarth, 2014). Being “ways of acting upon the world”, they enable majorities and minorities to promote their respective worldviews (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017) and political projects (cf. Bauer & Gaskell, 2008; Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020). Thus, individuals position themselves according to the SR of objects in the contexts around them, and advance arguments for desired political outcomes based on such representations (Billig, 1987; Buhagiar et al., 2018; Sammut et al., 2018). Forms of political participation are linked to the representations that promote them; in turn, these representations are sustained by such participatory practices. Indeed, Howarth et al. (2014) specifically define political participation as “*the power to construct and convey particular representations over others*” (p. 20; emphasis in original). Participation thus “refers to the symbolic power to construct legitimate social knowledge, norms and identities, as well as to disregard, marginalise

or silence alternative ways of knowing and being” (Howarth et al., 2014, p. 20). Certain groups in society are powerful partly because they have better means of constructing and promoting self-serving SR, articulating social realities according to their needs (see Howarth et al., 2014, p. 26). These considerations of power relations lead to a view of political participation that relies heavily on how different groups contrastingly represent social objects (e.g., objects of concern to participatory citizens), in order to promote their own interests over those of rivals.

Many studies within SRT show that the social elaboration of complex objects – such as biotechnology (Veltri, 2012), climate change (Caillaud, Kalampalakis & Flick, 2012), and genetically modified organisms (Castro & Gomes, 2005) – is significantly shaped by media discourse. Media analysis can thus be a powerful tool for analysing dominant discourses that manage to capitalise from added exposure through different media channels, whether because adherents mobilise their own resources or else because salient political notions get covered by mainstream media. Studying media content directly enriches an understanding of representations in the general population, by shedding light on the more dominant representations and how these frame responses to political issues (cf. Joffe & Haarhoff, 2002). Different forms of media provide a space where SR “are both reconstructed and reflected and therefore their analysis becomes relevant” (Caillaud et al., 2012, p. 366).

Regarding political participation more specifically, Rochira et al. (2019) recently looked at the relationship between sense of community and SR of political participation. Participants with a high sense of community were more likely to align themselves with conceptions of formal political participation. Contrastingly, participants with a low sense of community preferred activities such as volunteering and demonstrating (Rochira et al., 2019). Another recent study also looked specifically at SR of citizenship, touching upon participation through an analysis of online comments (see below; Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017). Nonetheless, to the best of our knowledge, there seems to be a paucity of research concerning the SR of political participation. This study thus seeks to advance this research topic. In particular, the concept of ‘semantic structures’ can be useful for this purpose. Semantic structures are dichotomous notions underlying and informing the content of SR, whereby representations are configured by the different semantic structures that sustain them. For example, the social representation of “political participation as beneficial” could be a consequence of the dichotomous semantic

structure “benefit-harm”, among others (Salvatore, 2016).¹ The principal goal of this study is to study the content of, and semantic structures (Mannarini, Veltri & Salvatore, in press; e.g., Buhagiar et al., 2020) underlying, the SR of political participation in newspaper media in Italy and Greece.

TYOLOGIES OF PARTICIPATION

Contrary to SRT, typologies of political or civic participation have been very influential in the study of political participation. The following typologies carry diverse implications. Yet, Brady’s (1999, p. 737) definition of political participation cited above – concerning non-elite citizens directing political goals – permeates the typologies below by virtue of its inclusiveness.

Firstly, Teorell et al. (2007, p. 341) conceptualise modes of political participation along two dimensions: (a) channel of expression; and (b) mechanism of influence. The first dimension relates to whether participation follows a representational or an extra-representational route. Here, efforts at influencing previously elected politicians or even civil servants also constitute actions of a representational nature, alongside elections. Contrastingly, extra-representational modes of participation (e.g., consumer participation) have different primary targets in mind (e.g., mass communication, public opinion; cf. della Porta, 2006, p. 85), which are external to the representational process (Teorell et al., 2007, p. 341). The second dimension (mechanism of influence) refers to the ways by which one aims to reach political ends. More specifically, following Hirschman (1970), Teorell et al. (2007, p. 341-342) distinguish between “exit-based” mechanisms of influence, which allow for the possibility of quitting or radically changing a system (e.g., voting), and “voice-based” mechanisms of influence, which focus more on internal change and reform (e.g., party activity). Exit-based and voice-based mechanisms differ in three fundamental aspects: (a) the former are usually impersonal, whereas the latter work by making publicly manifest claims and calls for action; (b) exit-based mechanisms send out relatively ambiguous messages, whereas voice-based mechanisms are usually more exact; and (c) exit-based mechanisms are usually more “self-regulatory” whereas voice-based mechanisms rely on the “intensity” of public claims (Teorell et al., 2007, p. 342). Furthermore, voice-based modes of participation can either be targeted towards particular entities (e.g., people in power), or else non-targeted (Teorell et al., 2007, p. 343). In Teorell et al.’s (2007, p. 355) study, whilst the

¹ There are notable similarities between the concept of “semantic structures” and that of “organisational principles” (Doise, Clémence & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993).

degrees of political participation varied considerably, this typology held across several European countries.

Ekman and Amnå (2012) adopt a different approach. They distinguish between “manifest” and “latent” political participation, putting “formal political participation” (e.g., voting, contacting, etc.) and “activism (extra-parliamentary participation)” (both legal and illegal) in the manifest dimension, and involvement and civic engagement (e.g., interest in politics, voluntary work) in the latent dimension (Ekman & Amnå, 2012, p. 292). We will focus on the manifest dimension, as opposed to involvement. Ekman and Amnå (2012) incorporate a simple yet crucial distinction between individual and collective manifest participation. For example, formal political participation can be actuated through individual voting or else collective membership in a trade union. Similarly, activist practices (both legal and illegal) can either be individual (e.g., spraying graffiti) or collective (e.g., demonstrating, squatting). Notably, this typology has informed the development of the Participatory Behaviors Scale (Talò & Mannarini, 2015). Other classificatory endeavours also have a more fine-grained focus. For example, Sampson, McAdam, McIndoe and Weffer-Elizondo (2005) focus on activities of a collective nature, constructing a tripartite typology incorporating civic, hybrid and protest activities. This is based on the degree to which political demands are either latent (e.g., in civic activities, such as parades) or explicit (e.g., in protest activities). Importantly, whereas many contemporary forms of participation constitute elaborations on older themes such as protest, such typologies are continually expanding, particularly because of “digitally networked forms of participation” (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018, p. 18).

Social Representation and Typologies

Here, it serves to clarify what SRT can contribute to a typological approach. Beyond the above typologies lie specific socio-political contexts, ideologies and narratives subject to different articulations (cf. Billig, 1987) and points of view (Sammut & Gaskell, 2010). For instance, there are potentially oppositional distinctions between preferences for representative, participatory or expert-based modes of political decision-making (Font et al., 2015). Nevertheless, some social groups may simultaneously favour two ostensibly incompatible forms of decision-making (e.g., participatory and representative), for instance when the third alternative is rejected outright (e.g., an expert-based technocracy; see Font et al., 2015). The resulting synergies point

towards the benefits of using SRT, as SR can incorporate contrasting elements whilst not losing their appeal in lay sense-making (Buhagiar et al., 2018; Fraser, 1994). Beyond analysing the SR of political participation, this study aims at taking a data-driven approach to study which, if any, of the above typologies are present in such representations. A more nuanced understanding of the interplay between representations and typologies can be gained by comparing two sociocultural contexts – Italy and Greece – rather than one context in isolation. We thus briefly review research conducted on political participation in both countries. By focusing on research within SRT and typological research, we contextualise the goals of the present study.

REPRESENTATIONS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ITALY AND GREECE

Italy and Greece share meaningful similarities, beyond their proximity in Southern Europe, that legitimate a focus on them. Both countries recently had prime ministers who gained power through the promise of enacting solutions to crises, rather than by being directly elected (Font et al., 2015; McDonnell & Valbruzzi, 2014), revealing “tensions in citizen process preferences” (Font et al., 2015, p. 154). Secondly, whereas French citizens highlighted *financial* weaknesses as probable causes of the recent global financial crisis, Italian and Greek citizens tended to highlight shortcomings in their *political* systems (Papastamou et al., 2018), indicating the salience of political discourse in attributions for socio-economic failure. As in Italy, the media in Greece is frequently accused of perpetuating clientelism, whereby representations beneficial to specific political/economic groups are promoted at the expense of balanced reporting (Touri & Kostarella, 2017). Before the financial crisis, Italy and Greece were also among the nations having “a culture of active participation, including protest, and a high level of engagement in general” (Haste, 2004).

There are also specificities in the two contexts. Tarchi (2008) describes Italy as “a country of many populisms” (p. 84), with different kinds of populist causes and parties gaining traction over recent decades (Tarchi, 2008). Simultaneously, many of the present concerns of Italian populist movements are similar to those of the rest of Europe: immigration, cultural change and questions concerning the EU (Tarchi, 2008, p. 99). Relevantly, empirical research in Italy following the crisis showed that younger cohorts were increasingly engaging in extra-representational political participation, whereas more conventional forms of political participation are found amongst older cohorts (Quaranta, 2016). This shift might indicate a cohort effect that is potentially reflected in newspaper media. Moreover, in Italy, core components of the SR of political participation revolve around electoral participation for those

with a higher sense of community, and around bottom-up activism for those with a low sense of community. More radical conceptions of political participation (e.g., revolutionary activity) occupy a peripheral role (Rochira et al., 2019).

In Greece, Kadianaki and Andreouli (2017) showed that essentialised representations of citizenship in Greece are contrastingly used to either exclude or include migrants in community life. Touri & Kostarella (2017) note that political blogging is growing at a fast rate in Greece, offering opportunities for discussing political topics within frames not usually present in mainstream media. This relates to Theocharis and van Deth's (2018) comment concerning expanding forms of participation. Relevantly, Theocharis (2011) also found that postmaterialist values contribute towards extra-institutional political participation, both offline and online. "In the case of Greece [...] dissatisfaction with politics and social discontent lead directly to intense collective action" (Theocharis, 2011, p. 216). Together with the recent rise of both far right (Ellinas, 2013) and far left populist parties (Katsambekis, 2016; Tsakatika & Eleftheriou, 2013) in Greece, this might indicate the salience of more radical representations of political participation in the country.

The Present Study

The present study seeks to address the research lacuna concerning SR of political participation in press discourse, by using correspondence and cluster analysis. In so doing, we seek to achieve the following goals: (a) an understanding of the SR of political participation promoted by the national press in Italy and Greece within the period 2000-2015; (b) a detection of the emergence of salient issues in specific time periods (connected to influential social events); and (c) an understanding of which, if any, of the reviewed typologies are reflected in the SR of political participation in Italy and Greece.

METHOD

By utilising a combination of cluster analysis and correspondence analysis, representational content and the organisation of such content around latent semantic structures were mapped (Mannarini et al., in press). Given their bivalence, semantic structures can be modelled as polarities where making one pole salient implies negating/downplaying the other. This section details the hypotheses postulated, data collection and data analysis.

Hypotheses

To address the goals detailed above, the following hypotheses were made. Firstly, given that SR are context-dependent, representational content was expected to vary across Italy and Greece. Based on the reviewed research, it was hypothesised that:

H1: SR of political participation in Greece have less content pertaining to formal/representational participation than those in Italy.

Contrarily, based on the shared sociocultural contexts between Italy and Greece, it was hypothesised that:

H2: There are substantial similarities in the semantic structures underlying SR of political participation in Italy and Greece.

Thirdly, following 2008, both countries faced the global financial crisis, and dealt with serious socio-political and economic difficulties. Given these drastic effects and the potential cohort shifts in both countries towards more extra-institutional/non-conventional forms of participation (e.g., Rochira et al., 2019; Theocharis, 2011), it was hypothesised that:

H3: Extra-representational and activist forms of participation are more salient in the 2008-2009 period and subsequently.

Finally, given the general nature of political typologies, it was expected that:

H4: The SR of political participation in Italy and Greece include content pertaining to representational/extra-representational, exit-based/voice-based (Teorell et al., 2007), formal/activist, collective/individual (Ekman & Amnå, 2012), and civic/hybrid/protest (Sampson et al., 2015) forms of political participation.

Dataset

The dataset comprised 1,824 articles, published between 2000 and 2015 in a pool of Italian and Greek newspapers. Both local and national newspapers were included. Local newspapers were selected based on *geographical coverage*, covering almost all the national territory in both countries. National newspapers were selected based on *political coverage* (left-right orientation). The selection of newspapers also depended on the *accessibility* of online archives and the possibility of downloading full-text articles. The criteria of geographical and political

coverage were meant to ensure sufficient variation in the manifestation of the phenomenon under study (see Salvatore, 2016).

A list of the keywords used in extracting newspaper articles was defined by two national research teams (one for each country) and based on a preliminary analysis looking at the effectiveness of keywords in terms of article extraction. The final list was translated into Italian and Greek, and consisted of the following keywords: “political participation”; “civic participation”; “citizen participation”; “democratic participation”; “active citizenship”; “political disengagement”; “electoral abstention”; “nonvoting AND elections”; “participation AND democracy”; and “participation AND politics”. Data collection lasted from January 10th to March 31st, 2017. Following extraction, articles were sampled as follows: (a) the whole time span (2000-2015) was segmented into two-year periods (2000-2001; 2004-2005; 2008-2009; 2011-2012; and 2014-2015); and (b) for each period, an average of 10 articles for each local newspaper, and an average of 37 articles for each national newspaper, were randomly selected from those extracted. This ratio of articles per time period reflected actual proportions, and facilitated longitudinal analysis. The segmentation of the time span (into smaller time periods that were alternately sampled or left out) was conducted to cover a broad time span whilst keeping sampling costs consistent with our resource constraints. Accordingly, two-year periods were chosen to allow for this. Moreover, the span of 2000-2015 was chosen so that if there were representational changes following the 2008 financial crisis, the data would be able to detect it (by having sufficient newspaper articles both before, and after, the crisis). The selected articles were manually checked for consistency and length, and off-topic articles or articles shorter than 10 lines were removed and randomly replaced. The new articles were checked again until a full dataset composed of articles suitable for empirical inquiry was obtained.

The final Italian dataset consisted of 1,067 articles, of which 609 articles were drawn from 4 national newspapers and 458 articles from 15 local newspapers. The final Greek dataset included 757 articles, of which 617 articles were drawn from 4 national newspapers, and 140 articles from 8 local newspapers. The national newspapers in consideration consisted of 4 left-wing newspapers (*La Repubblica*, and *Unità*, in Italy; and *To Vima* and *Rizospastis*, in Greece), and 4 right-wing newspapers (*La Stampa*, and *Liberò*, in Italy; and *Kathimerini* and *Ethnos*, in Greece; see Table 1).

Table 1 - Articles from national newspapers in Italy and Greece.

Political orientation	Italy		Greece	
	Newspaper	Articles	Newspaper	Articles
Left	<i>Unità</i>	174	<i>Rizospastis</i>	185
Center-left	<i>La Repubblica</i>	161	<i>To Vima</i>	185
Center-right	<i>La Stampa</i>	186	<i>Ethnos</i>	62
Right	<i>Libero</i>	88	<i>Kathimerini</i>	185
	Total	609	Total	617

Note. This table classifies a total of 8 national newspapers by political orientation, indicating the number of articles extracted from each newspaper. Article extraction depended on accessibility and the possibility of downloading.

Analyses

Before running the analyses, all Greek articles were merged into one single corpus, and all Italian articles were merged into a separate corpus. These corpora were automatically lemmatised by the software according to Italian and Greek built-in dictionaries. The lemmatisation process modified the text such that (a) words with the same meaning were merged; (b) empty words (i.e., pronouns, articles, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions) were removed; (c) verbs, nouns and adjectives were, to the extent possible, reduced to their common lexical root; and (d) homographs were disambiguated. The corpus was then automatically divided into portions of text for successive analyses. These portions – never longer than 400 characters – were automatically detected on the basis of punctuation, and constitute *elementary context* units (ECUs). Analyses were then run separately for the two corpora (see Table 2), following which the interpretations of the clusters and the factorial polarities were pursued (see below).

Table 2 - Characteristics of textual corpora under analysis.

	Italian corpus	Greek corpus
Articles	1,067	757
Lemmas	40,962	53,992
Occurrences	664,444	633,847
ECUs	5,225	9,232

Note. This table provides details on the number of articles per corpus, the number of lemmas (i.e. words following the lemmatisation process [type]), the number of occurrences (token), and the number of elementary context units (ECUs) per corpus.

Two parallel, identical procedures of analysis were thus carried out, one for each national dataset. Each procedure was based on a combination of cluster and correspondence analysis.

A) Cluster analysis was used to understand representational content. More specifically, an ascending cluster analysis (Hierarchical K-means method) was applied on the ECUs * lemmas matrix (with each ij-th cell holding the presence/absence value of the j-th lemma in the i-th segment). The cluster analysis extrapolates sets of lexemes that tend to co-occur within the same segments of text: each cluster aggregates a set of segments of text that tend to be similar to each other because they are composed of similar lexemes. Accordingly, each cluster of co-occurring lexemes (and of the segments where the co-occurrences were found) was interpreted as the marker of specific semantic content of the SR. The final clusters were the result of a process aimed at obtaining the highest number of clusters whilst avoiding further segmentation that would (a) fail to increase the Inter-class inertia/Total inertia ratio greatly, and/or (b) generate clusters with low face validity (i.e., clusters low in consistency).

B) Simple correspondence analysis was performed to uncover the latent semantic structures organising representational content. Simple correspondence analysis was applied on the lemmas*cluster matrix (which emerged in the previous cluster analysis), with each ij-th cell indicating the frequency of the j-th lemma in the i-th cluster. This analysis maps the relations among the clusters in the terms of a multidimensional structure of opposed factorial polarities. Each polarity is characterized by a set of lexemes that tend to co-occur. Accordingly, this polar structure can be interpreted as the operationalisation of the semantic structures of the SR.

Newspaper type, newspaper political orientation, and two-year periods were entered as illustrative variables in the analyses, i.e., variables that do not define the multidimensional space, but that may be associated with specific clusters. The analyses were carried out using T-Lab (version 16-Plus).

RESULTS

We present the representational content (cluster descriptions) found in Italian and Greek newspapers first, followed by the factorial dimensions indicating latent semantic structures. H1 was supported, as the SR of political participation in Greece had less content pertaining to formal/representational participation than those in Italy. This can be seen from the following cluster descriptions.

Contents of Representations in Italian Newspapers (Cluster Descriptions)

The analysis of Italian newspaper articles resulted in six clusters. Cluster 3 (*protest*) and Cluster 6 (*participatory democracy – referendum*) were the clusters with the highest number of representative ECUs (25.44% and 25.05% of all ECUs in the Italian corpus respectively; see Table 3). Table 4 displays the most significant words (according to chi-square metrics) characterising each cluster. We also present the most significant article excerpt per cluster (i.e., an ECU and its chi-square value, $p < 0.05$). Illustrative variables that were significantly associated with specific clusters are also noted ($p < 0.05$, for such chi-square values). All excerpts presented below were translated to English.

Table 3 - Elementary context units per cluster in the Italian corpus.

Cluster	ECUs	%
Civil society versus institutional politics (Cluster 1)	394	10.43
Participatory democracy – primaries (Cluster 2)	481	12.73
Protest (Cluster 3)	961	25.44
Direct participation (Cluster 4)	354	9.37
Bottom-up civic participation (Cluster 5)	641	16.97
Participatory democracy – referendum (Cluster 6)	946	25.05

Note. ECUs = Elementary context units.

Table 4 - Words and associated chi-square statistics per cluster in the Italian corpus.

Cluster 1. Civil Society vs Institutional Politics		Cluster 2. Participatory Democracy - Primaries		Cluster 3. Protest		Cluster 4. Direct Participation		Cluster 5. Bottom-up Civic Participation		Cluster 6. Participatory Democracy - Referendum	
<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2
democracy	370.2	to candidate	2,112.3	square	2,448.4	Grillo (5SM leader)	972.5	social	655.4	referendum	1,443.8
power	320.5	candidate	2,016.6	student	2,350.0	Stars	781.8	volunteerism	314.5	to vote	1,439.2
society	297.2	primaries	1,766.3	parade	1,874.0	movement	687.3	job	306.1	vote	1,215.2
politics	236.5	democratic party	1,517.7	demonstration	1,212.4	town councillor	537.9	rights	244.7	ballot	725.2
form	192.0	party	927.6	street	510.1	5SM (5 Star Movement)	421.6	citizenship	238.9	voters	555.3
representative	151.5	to start	676.7	protest	489.0	major	359.6	sector	207.2	abstention	499.1
democratic	145.8	center-left	603.3	Rome	474.0	town council	341.2	association	196.9	electoral	417.1
constitution	133.3	Bersani (DP leader)	373.7	banner	473.8	municipal	293.2	services	166.1	low turnout	416.8
crisis	122.7	Prodi (PM)	330.0	COBAS (trade union)	405.4	district	264.7	youth	157.5	election	415.4
political	117.1	Renzi (PM)	291.3	demonstrate	403.2	Assessore	237.3	community	149.7	question	364.6

Note. This table displays the ten most frequent lemmas per cluster in the Italian corpus (English translation), as indicated by the chi-square statistic (χ^2). Information about certain words can be found in brackets. PM = Prime Minister. $p < 0.05$, for all chi-square values.

Cluster 1: Civil Society versus Institutional Politics

This cluster summarized the debate that contrasts society at large with institutional politics, highlighting the clash/distance between citizens and politicians, the emergence of negative feelings towards the latter, and the need to reconcile civil society with the political class:

The crossroads of politics, the assault on civil society. Civil society is decomposing, since everyone is speaking in its name. There is no political or social document that does not refer to civil society in emphatic terms. Everyone claims to be the true representative of civil society. The main indicator is antagonism: against the party system, against the caste of politicians, against the whole institutional apparatus, and of course, government policy. ($\chi^2 = 4,789.8$)

Cluster 2: Participatory Democracy – Primaries

This cluster revolved around electoral participation, and specifically around primaries, which were considered as having the potential to reinvigorate democracy, whilst also having certain limitations:

There was the need to invent something that could bring citizens closer to the parties, something that appeared as a form of involvement and participation of the people. Here's how we got to primaries [...] It remains a fact that primaries are an admission of the lack of democracy in parties. ($\chi^2 = 76,542.2$)

Cluster 3: Protest

The third cluster exemplified oppositional, extra-institutional forms of participation, namely parades, marches, and street demonstrations. Articles presenting these contents were mostly descriptive:

Parades, signs, slogans and colanders on their heads. The irony of students. It is a highly tense Saturday. Students wear colanders instead of helmets. Female students lead the “snake” with a banner “Beat me, I am a woman”. High school and college students scream: “We are twenty thousand” ... A group of Palestinians join the snake, waving flags... At 4 pm, even the extreme right Casa Pound followers paraded: “Against the

destruction of public schools” and “Against crisis and austerity, we’re taking the city back.” ($\chi^2 = 27,410.1$)

Cluster 4: Direct Participation

The fourth cluster addressed the rhetoric of direct citizen participation, as used by 5 Star Movement (5SM) activists and their leader Beppe Grillo. Given this rhetoric, which proposes digital technology as a panacea for democracy, the risks of anti-politics and populism emerged:

“We are in the middle of a great cultural, social and technological revolution, and when we are in the middle of change we cannot perceive its true significance. The Meetup Friends of Beppe Grillo are workshops for sharing ideas and values consistent with the contents of Beppe Grillo’s blog. Their purpose is to create a culture of participation in public life. But on their own, they are not the Movement. On the contrary, Meetup and the Movement are two aspects of the same project of direct democracy that can only be achieved through a real cultural revolution.” ($\chi^2 = 8,683.0$)

Cluster 5: Bottom-up Civic Participation

This cluster contained examples of civic, bottom-up participation, based on voluntary associations and forums, and mostly active on issues related to social rights and citizenship.

On November 10, at least three thousand people will meet in the Assembly of European Social Movements, where the political agenda for next year and the petition for a European day against war will be presented [...] It will be the first time after twenty years that Europe will gather all together, on the same day, in the squares. The agenda of social movements will be a collectively written product. There is a very simple introduction, which recalls the experiences of the social movements in Porto Alegre, and the commitment to support a network of people in Europe against neoliberalism, war, racism, and for the advancement of social rights and citizenship. ($\chi^2 = 6,562.1$)

Cluster 6: Participatory Democracy – Referendum

This cluster, which was associated with *La Stampa*, a moderately conservative newspaper ($\chi^2 = 217.7$), exemplified the debate on the virtues and vices of referendums, designed as tools for

consulting citizens and for implementing shares of participatory democracy within political representative systems, yet being increasingly deserted by citizens.

From consultations on divorce and abortion, to the “yes” victory on the four issues. This is an upswing of participation, but it still fails to reach a quorum: the analysis of the vote in Naples shows a constantly decreasing turnout over the years. Experts: “Citizens are exhausted and disillusioned.” ($\chi^2 = 51,083.9$)

Contents of Representations in Greek Newspapers (Cluster Descriptions)

The analysis of Greek newspaper articles resulted in four clusters. Cluster 1 (*conflict*) and Cluster 3 (*party crisis*) had the highest number of representative ECUs (31.20% and 32.76% respectively; see Table 5). Table 6 displays the most significant words characterising each cluster, together with their chi-square values. We also present the most significant article excerpt per cluster (i.e., an ECU, together with its chi-square value, $p < 0.05$). Illustrative variables that were significantly associated with given clusters are also noted ($p < 0.05$, for such chi-square values). All excerpts presented below were translated to English.

Table 5 - Elementary context units per cluster in the Greek corpus.

Cluster	ECUs	%
Conflict (Cluster 1)	2,295	31.20
Electoral participation (Cluster 2)	1,183	16.08
Party crisis (Cluster 3)	2,410	32.76
Bottom-up civic participation (Cluster 4)	1,468	19.96

Note. ECUs = Elementary context units.

Table 6 - Words and associated chi-square statistics per cluster in the Greek corpus.

Cluster 1. Conflict		Cluster 2. Electoral Participation		Cluster 3. Party Crisis		Cluster 4. Bottom-up Civic Participation	
<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2	<i>Words</i>	χ^2
class	1,618.6	election	3,089.1	to say	703.4	social	1,003.5
labour	1,467.8	electoral	1,757.2	minister	607.5	society	512.1
middle class/ bourgeois	1,157.8	party	1,588.2	Papandreou (PM)	606.6	citizen	421.5
popular	1,104.8	abstention	1,368.6	council	357.9	state	346.1
struggle	843.9	vote	1,197.5	commission	338.8	market	280.7
war	693.5	percentage	1,100.7	theme	320.2	democracy	261.5
movement	655.9	vote	765.5	chairman	276.4	economy	213.1
Laden (Bin Laden)	566.7	seat	625.2	to ask for	225.7	woman	202.4
relating to class	543.7	ballot box	613.4	PASOK (socialist party)	218.5	development	198.7
capitalistic	528.2	to vote	586.1	discuss	194.1	concept	186.2

Note. This table displays the ten most frequent lemmas per cluster in the Greek corpus (English translation), as indicated by the chi-square statistic (χ^2). Information about certain words can be found in brackets. PM = Prime Minister: $p < 0.05$, for all chi-square value

Cluster 1: Conflict

This cluster revolved around class struggle and Marxism, emphasising exploitation, injustice, conflict, participation in worker mobilisations and trade unions, and social change attained through revolution. This cluster was associated with *Rizospastis*, the official organ of the Communist Party of Greece ($\chi^2 = 1,489.6$).

Social consciousness in class society, in capitalism, is shaped by the dominant class, its ideology and its politics, these being in conflict with the ideology and policy of the working class and the KKE [communist party]. But the field of this conflict is class struggle. Participation, not only in workers' mobilisations, but also participation in the trade union, in the organisation of struggles, in their preparation, in the conflicts with capitalists in the workplace, where the opposition between the interests of different classes and the need for class struggle can be made visible, in order to shape the necessity of political choice by the workers, to choose not the bourgeois or opportunist parties, but their own party. ($\chi^2 = 38,178.8$)

Cluster 2: Electoral Participation

This cluster addressed issues related to voting, featuring reports and comments on results of local/national elections. Non-voting/blank votes were interpreted as (a) potentially weakening the electoral representative system, and (b) a public demand for change and a message for politicians to renew politics and support democracy.

[...] Saramago wishes for it to happen in all countries. He admits that his view is provocative, but he is convinced that a blank vote is equivalent to a bomb in the democratic system, not in order to destroy it, but to reform and renew it. The day, he says, when the majority of voters in any country in the world vote blank, questions would be immediately asked. And what will the politicians do then? ($\chi^2 = 30,698.7$)

Cluster 3: Party Crisis

This cluster addressed the crisis of one of the major national political forces, PASOK, the Greek social-democratic party, which governed Greece for many years, headed by George Papandreou, who succeeded his father (Andreas Papandreou) and grandfather (George

Papandreou senior). Internal debates, and struggles for renewal and increasing electoral consensus all surfaced.

PASOK cannot be given as a gift, cannot be split into parts, cannot be inherited. And today there is no inheritance in PASOK. There is only democratic election. George Papandreou was democratically elected at the PASOK party conference. And we were the first to come out and support him and assign to him the role he has, and we demanded that he commits himself to lead PASOK as a whole in a new course of creation, renewal and victory. ($\chi^2 = 7,244.7$)

Cluster 4: Bottom-up Civic Participation

This cluster revolved around citizenship and the active contribution of civil society towards enlivening democracy and social development. Participation was represented in a variety of forms and in a very broad manner.

Citizens are not only consumers if they want to participate actively, albeit on a small scale, in political affairs. They must have cognitive control over the subject matter. Participatory democracy is a novel and much-discussed notion today and it will certainly continue to be so after the end of the electoral race. Like the notions of civil society and open society, it is a notion adopted by a large number of politicians and opinion leaders in political issues, even though a few years ago these concepts were almost unknown. ($\chi^2 = 9,643.1$)

Semantic Structures of the Social Representations in Italy and Greece (Factor Descriptions)

Interpretations focused on the first two factors extracted by the simple correspondence analysis, which together explained a great portion of the total inertia. In the Italian corpus, Factor 1 and Factor 2 explained 54.67% of the total inertia (29.06% and 25.61% respectively). In the Greek corpus, Factor 1 and Factor 2 explained 75.82% of the total inertia (40.29% and 35.53% respectively).

There were important similarities between the semantic structures underlying SR of political participation in both countries, partly supporting H2. Simultaneously, the contrasts

were particularly revealing (see below). Tables 7 and 8 report the words with the higher test values for the negative and positive poles of the first two factors extracted for both corpora.

In the Italian corpus (see Table 7), Factor 1 juxtaposed *representation/electoral participation* (on the negative pole, with words like “candidate”, “primaries”, “vote”, “polling station”) with *non-electoral civic participation* (on the positive pole, with words like “social”, “parade”, “square”, “rights”, “demonstration”, “volunteerism”, “association”, “cultural”). Figure 1 displays this polarity on the X-axis. Factor 2 contrasted *direct action* (on the negative pole: “demonstration”, “protest”, “police”, “law enforcement”, “strike”) with issues concerning *constitutional democracy/institutional power* (on the positive pole: “power”, “political”, “democratic”, “institution”, “representative”, “Constitution”, “majority”, “opposition”). Figure 1 displays this polarity on the Y-axis.

Table 7 - Correspondence analysis: factor loadings and test values for the Italian corpus.

Factor 1				Factor 2			
<i>Pole (-)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (+)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (-)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (+)</i>	<i>Test values</i>
to candidate	-38.0	social	17.4	square	-45.3	power	10.2
candidate	-37.1	student	14.0	student	-44.1	political	9.7
primaries	-34.2	school	12.0	parade	-39.5	civil	7.9
Democratic Party (DP)	-32.5	parade	11.9	demonstration	-31.2	country	7.9
party	-26.9	square	11.8	street	-21.1	social	7.7
to start	-23.7	rights	11.8	Rome	-20.9	form	7.3
center-left	-22.3	job	10.1	protest	-20.1	democratic	7.1
to vote	-21.9	demonstration	10.1	manifestation	-18.1	crisis	6.9
vote	-20.4	volunteerism	9.6	police	-17.6	institution	6.9
voter	-18.9	youth	9.3	law enforcement	-16.0	representative	6.9

Note. This table displays the first ten factor loadings for the Italian corpus. The positive and negative poles in each factor constitute the poles of the semantic structures underlying representational content. Information about certain words can be found in brackets. PM = Prime Minister.

In the Greek corpus (see Table 8), Factor 1 contrasted *representation/electoral participation* (on the negative pole: “electoral”, “abstention”, “percentage”, “ballot box”) with

class struggle/anti-capitalism (on the positive pole: “class”, “struggle”, “power”, “war”, “worker”, “global”, “capitalistic”). Figure 2 displays this polarity on the X-axis. Factor 2 contrasted *social reform* (on the negative pole: “citizen”, “social”, “European”, “market”, “economic”, “public sector”, “institution”, “education”, “environment”) with *radical politics* (on the positive pole: “class”, “hard-working”, “popular”, “struggle”, “war”, “capitalistic”, “imperialistic”, “revolution”, “radical”, “communist”). Figure 2 displays this polarity on the Y-axis.

Table 8 - Correspondence analysis: factor loadings and test values for the Greek corpus.

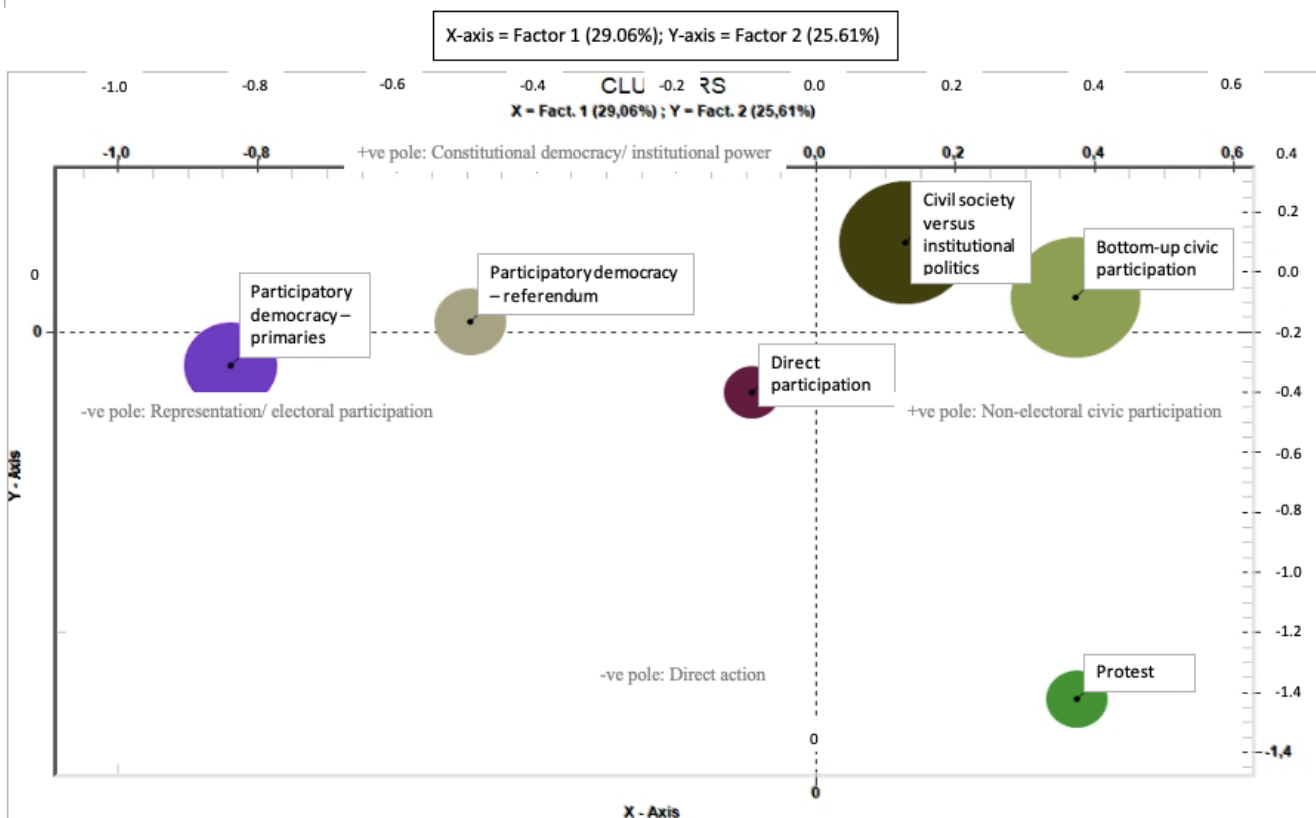
Factor 1				Factor 2			
<i>Pole (-)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (+)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (-)</i>	<i>Test values</i>	<i>Pole (+)</i>	<i>Test values</i>
election	-49.5	social	20.2	citizen	-15.9	class	36.3
electoral	-35.8	class	16.9	social	-15.7	hard-working	36.0
Party	-33.2	society	15.3	European	-11.1	popular	32.0
abstention	-31.7	State	14.6	society	-10.6	middle class	31.1
Vote	-29.3	middle class	13.5	to say	-10.2	struggle	26.3
percentage	-28.0	labour	13.2	topic	-9.4	KKE (communist party)	25.7
voter	-23.7	development	12.9	public	-9.2	war	24.4
PASOK (socialist party)	-22.2	struggle	11.6	minister	-9.0	movement	23.4
Seat	-21.6	power	10.9	market	-8.6	Laden (Bin Laden)	23.1
SYRIZA (left-wing party)	-21.6	market	10.8	economic	-8.4	related to class	21.1

Note. This table displays the first ten factor loadings for the Greek corpus. The positive and negative poles in each factor constitute the poles of the semantic structures underlying representational content. Information about certain words can be found in brackets.

These factors, which represented the latent semantic structures organising representational content, accounted for the positions of clusters in factorial space. Cluster 2 (*participatory democracy – primaries*) and Cluster 6 (*participatory democracy – referendum*) of the Italian corpus were both positioned towards *representation/electoral participation* (negative pole of Factor 1, on the X-axis). Cluster 1 (*civil society versus institutional politics*), Cluster 3 (*protest*) and Cluster 5 (*bottom-up civic participation*) were placed towards *non-*

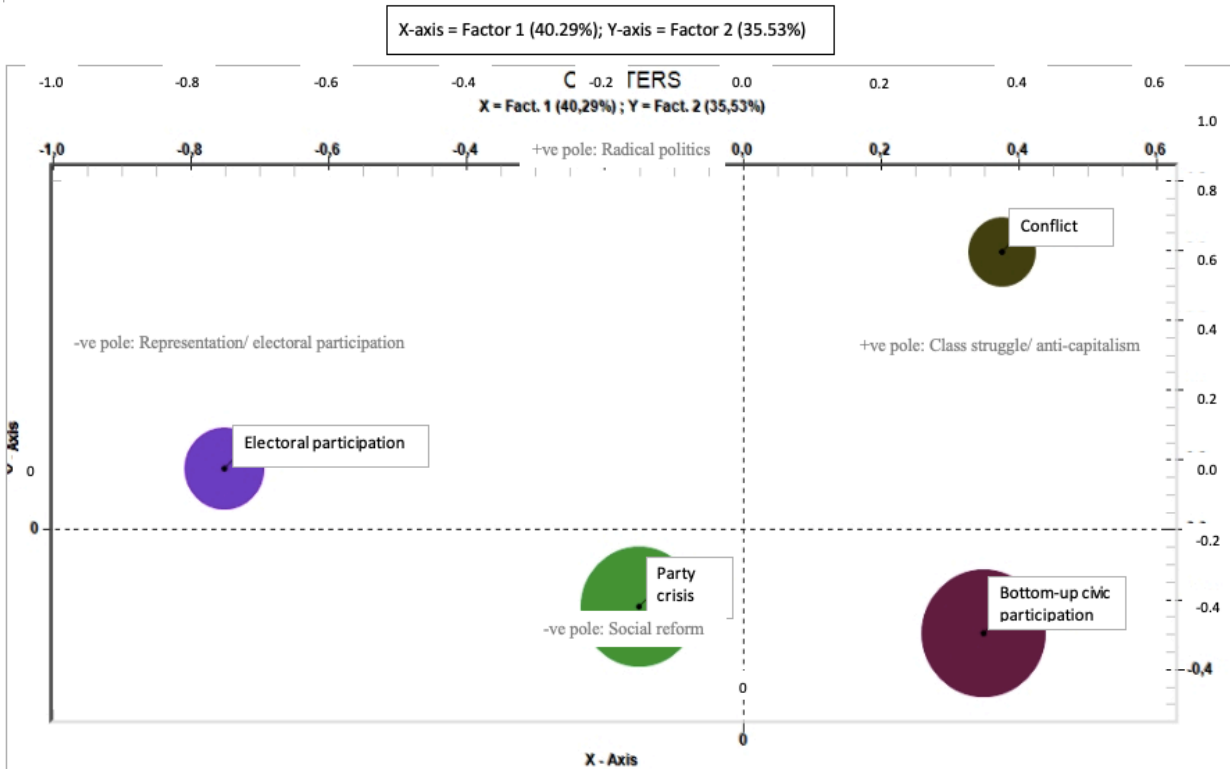
electoral civic participation (positive pole of Factor 1, on the X-axis). Cluster 3 (*protest*) was the only cluster positioned close to *direct action* (negative pole of Factor 2, on the Y-axis); all the other clusters were almost half-way or else located towards *constitutional democracy/institutional power* (positive pole of Factor 2, on the Y-axis). Cluster 4 (*direct participation*) occupied a unique position, almost in the centre (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Clusters in factorial space for the Italian corpus



In the Greek corpus, Cluster 2 (*electoral participation*) and Cluster 3 (*party crisis*) were placed towards *representation/electoral participation* (negative pole of Factor 1, on the X-axis). Contrarily, Cluster 1 (*conflict*) and Cluster 4 (*bottom-up civic participation*) were located towards *class struggle/anti-capitalism* (positive pole of Factor 1, on the X-axis). Cluster 4 (*bottom-up civic participation*) came closest to *social reform* (negative pole of Factor 2, on the Y-axis). Cluster 2 (*conflict*) came closest to *radical politics* (positive pole of Factor 2, on the Y-axis; see Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Clusters in factorial space for the Greek corpus



Temporal Distribution and Typological Content

Contrary to H3, extra-representational and activist forms of participation were neither more salient in the 2008-2009 period nor in the following years. No specific content was associated with any two-year period; all themes were diffused across time. However, support was provided for H4, which stated that the SR of political participation in both countries include content pertaining to representational/extra-representational, exit-based/voice-based (Teorell et al., 2007), formal/activist, collective/individual (Ekman & Amnå, 2012), and civic/hybrid/protest (Sampson et al., 2015) forms of political participation. The specific typologies were found in separate clusters in different degrees (see Table 9).

Table 9 - Typologies of political participation per cluster in both corpora.

Corpus	Cluster	Typology				
		Representational/ extra-representational (Teorell et al., 2007)	Exit-based/ voice- based (Teorell et al., 2007)	Formal/ activist (Ekman & Amnå, 2012)	Collective/ individual (Ekman & Amnå, 2012)	Civic/ hybrid/ protest (Sampson et al., 2015)
Italy	Civil society versus institutional politics (Cluster 1)	R + ER	EB + VB	F + A	C	H
	Participatory democracy – primaries (Cluster 2)	R	EB	F	I	/
	Protest (Cluster 3)	ER	VB	A	C	P
	Direct participation (Cluster 4)	R + ER	EB + VB	F + A	C	H
	Bottom-up civic participation (Cluster 5)	ER	VB	A	C	H
	Participatory democracy – referendum (Cluster 6)	R	EB	F	I	/
Greece	Conflict (Cluster 1)	ER	VB	A	C	P
	Electoral participation (Cluster 2)	R	EB	F	I	/
	Party crisis (Cluster 3)	/	/	/	/	/
	Bottom-up civic participation (Cluster 4)	ER	VB	F + A	C + I	Civ + H

Note. This table displays which of the typologies are present in which of the cluster descriptions. When a typology features in a cluster description, the modality is indicated. R = representational; ER = extra-representational; EB = exit-based; VB = voice-based; F = formal; A = activist; C = collective; I = individual; Civ = civic; H = hybrid; P = protest.

DISCUSSION

This paper presented the content and latent semantic structures of the SR of political participation in media discourse in Italy and Greece. Here, we discuss (a) the SR of political participation in newspapers in Italy and Greece within the period 2000-2015; (b) the temporal distribution of the contents of such representations; and (c) the typologies reflected in such representations.

Our findings showed that SR of political participations converge around 6 thematic clusters in Italy, presented here according to the extent to which they emphasise representation/electoral participation, in descending order: *participatory democracy – primaries*; *participatory democracy – referendum*; *direct participation*; *civil society versus institutional politics*; *bottom-up civic participation*; and *protest*. In factorial space, the clusters from the Italian corpus were positioned along *Representation/electoral participation versus Non-electoral civic participation* (Factor 1) and *Direct action versus Constitutional democracy/institutional power* (Factor 2). In Greece, 4 thematic clusters featured: *electoral participation*, *party crisis*, *bottom-up civic participation*, and *conflict*. In factorial space, these clusters were positioned along *Representation/electoral participation versus Class struggle/anti-capitalism* (Factor 1) and *Social reform versus Radical politics* (Factor 2).

The first goal of this study was to understand the social representations of political participation in newspapers in Italy and Greece (2000-2015). H1 stated that SR in Greece have less content pertaining to formal/representational participation than those in Italy. This hypothesis was supported. Both corpora had a significant amount of content dedicated to representative democracy: Cluster 2 (*participatory democracy – primaries*) and Cluster 6 (*participatory democracy – referendum*) in Italy, and Cluster 2 (*electoral participation*) in Greece. However, representational content differed across corpora in terms of: (i) internal differentiation, and (ii) the alternatives to representation/electoral participation. Concerning internal differentiation, there was a higher number of clusters in Italy, and more gradualness characterising such clusters (e.g., Cluster 2 and Cluster 6 both concerned participatory democracy in Italy). This possibly indicates a more polarised participatory landscape in Greece. Concerning the second point, the alternatives to representation/electoral participation in Greece were more radical and overtly ideological than those in Italy. For instance, the cluster in the Italian corpus that is most far removed from representative participatory goals – Cluster 3 (*protest*) – mostly featured descriptive content, indicating that this participatory form is not

strongly tied to specific movements. Contrastingly, in Greece, Cluster 1 (*conflict*) signifies content that is decidedly radical and normative. These local specificities are in accordance with the emphasis placed on localised meaning-making within SRT.

H2 posited substantial similarities between the semantic structures in both countries. This was partly supported. In noteworthy respects, the latent semantic structures organising SR (the two factors) were very similar, both within and across corpora. Both factors contrasted representational/formal/institutional/reformist participation with extra-representational/informal/extra-institutional/radical participation, at high levels of generality (cf. Teorell et al., 2007; cf. Ekman & Amnå, 2012). What differed concerned the alternatives to representational/institutional participation. Whereas in Italy *Non-electoral civic participation* (Factor 1) and *Direct action* (Factor 2) opposed their representational/electoral and institutional/reformist counterparts respectively, in Greece this role was fulfilled by *Class struggle/anti-capitalism* (Factor 1) and *Radical politics* (Factor 2). *Class struggle/anti-capitalism* took a more revolutionary turn in Greece, whereas in Italy *Non-electoral civic participation* (i.e., civic or hybrid activities; Sampson et al., 2005) were extracted. Factor 2 echoed this tension outside the electoral domain. Despite clear similarities between *Direct action* (Italy) and *Radical politics* (Greece), the latter carries more revolutionary connotations. Importantly, despite the ostensible similarities between the keywords used and the factor analysis results, the same topic of political participation was represented differently in both countries, as indicated by the results. Thus, the keywords did not determine the output but simply narrowed the focus of analysis.

Our second goal concerned the temporal distribution of the contents of SR in Italy and Greece. H3 postulated that extra-representational and activist forms of participation would be more salient in the 2008-2009 period and subsequently. This hypothesis was not supported. Our findings demonstrated temporal diffusion across the two-year periods. Temporal diffusion of themes might indicate stability in terms of discourse and salient issues. Similarly, the relevance of content across newspaper type and political orientation was mostly homogenous. Political orientation was only significantly associated with representational content in two cases: *La Stampa*, (centre-right) was associated with Cluster 6 (*participatory democracy – referendum*) in Italy, and *Rizospastis* (left-wing) was associated with Cluster 1 (*conflict*) in Greece. Other representational content traversed newspapers. This homogeneity possibly indicates media consensus over the topics of discussion. Alternatively, it can be a limitation of the two-year segmentations. Another limitation concerns the analyses employed: media analysis does not

offer insight into fine-grained “lay explanations of social phenomena” (Zeromskyte & Wagner, 2017). Future research may complement this study using methods like in-depth interviews/focus groups.

Our third goal concerned the typologies reflected in SR in both countries. H4 was supported. By showing how different typologies were present in different SR of political participation, the contribution of SRT was illustrated. This is because the findings show the synergistic effects of SR. That is, the SR of political participation had various influences in promoting different, and sometimes potentially contrasting, typological content, in the service of the same political aim. The SR of political participation reflected differences in channels of expression and mechanisms of influence (Teorell et al., 2007), encompassed formal political participation and activism on both collective and individual levels (Ekman & Amnå, 2012), and concerned civic, hybrid and protest activities (Sampson et al., 2005) to different degrees. Interestingly, clusters which incorporated collective forms of participation (cf. Ekman & Amnå, 2012) were in the majority, and also tended towards hybrid forms of collective participation (Sampson et al., 2015; see Table 9). *Bottom-up civic participation* (Greece: Cluster 4) was the only cluster signifying collective civic participation (cf. Ekman & Amnå, 2012; cf. Sampson et al., 2015). Moreover, when civil society was contrasted with political elites (Italy: Cluster 1 – *civil society versus institutional politics*) and when populist discourse featured more explicitly (Italy: Cluster 4 – *direct participation*), the following modalities were observed together: representational and extra-representational participation, exit-based and voice-based participation (Teorell et al., 2007), and formal and activist participation (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; see Table 9). This indicates that potentially contrasting strategies can be used by political movements so long as they serve their political projects (see Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study advanced the study of political participation, highlighting the contribution of SRT. By mapping representational differences, we shed light on political participation in different sociocultural contexts. Our findings provide evidence for different representational clusters at an aggregate level. This shows which political projects are consolidated enough “*to construct and convey particular representations over others*” (Howarth et al., 2014, p. 20; emphasis in original). These SR provide points of orientation (cf.

Sammut et al., 2018) for individuals engaging in different political pursuits. Future research is advised to study the distributions of typological modalities across other European countries.

FUNDING

This research was conducted as part of a project entitled “Between the Representation of the Crisis and the Crisis of Representation” [Re.Cri.Re], funded by the EU’s Horizon 2020 program (Grant no. 649436), which investigated social identity change in Europe as a function of the socioeconomic and migration crises of recent years (www.recrire.eu).

REFERENCES

- Bauer, M.W., & Gaskell, G. (2008). Social representations theory: A progressive research programme for social psychology. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 38(4), 335-353.
- Billig, M. (1987). *Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Brady, H. (1999). Political Participation. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of political attitudes* (pp. 737–801). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Buhagiar, L. J., & Sammut, G. (2020). ‘Social re-presentation for...’: An action-oriented formula for intergroup relations research. *Frontiers in Psychology. Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 11, 352. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00352
- Buhagiar, L. J., Sammut, G., Avdi, E., Koutri, I., Mylona, A., Pop, A., ... Santarpia, A. (2020). Islam. In T. Mannarini, G. A. Veltri, & S. Salvatore (Eds.), *Media and social representations of otherness: Psycho-social-cultural implications* (pp. 61-81). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Buhagiar, L. J., Sammut, G., Rochira, A., & Salvatore, S. (2018). There’s no such thing as a good Arab: Cultural essentialism and its functions concerning the integration of Arabs in Europe. *Culture & Psychology*, 24(4), 560-576.
- Caillaud, S., Kalampalikis, N., & Flick, U. (2012). The social representations of the Bali climate conference in the French and German media. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 22(4), 363-378.
- Castro, P., & Gomes, I. (2005). Genetically modified organisms in the Portuguese press: Thematisation and anchoring. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 35(1), 1-17.

- della Porta, D. (2006). From corporatist unions to protest unions? On the (difficult) relations between organized labour and new social movements. In C. Crouch & W. Streeck (Eds.), *The diversity of democracy: corporatism, social order and political conflict* (pp. 71-96). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Doise, W., Clémence, A., & Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (1993). *European monographs in social psychology. The quantitative analysis of social representations* (J. Kaneko, Trans.). Hertfordshire, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Ekman, J., & Amnå, E. (2012). Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology. *Human Affairs*, 22(3), 283–300.
- Ellinas, A. A. (2013). The rise of Golden Dawn: The new face of the far right in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(4), 543-565.
- Font, J., Wojcieszak, M., & Navarro, C. J. (2015). Participation, representation and expertise: Citizen preferences for political decision-making processes. *Political Studies*, 63(Suppl. 1), 153-172.
- Fraser, C. (1994). Attitudes, social representations and widespread beliefs. *Papers on Social Representations*, 3, 13-25.
- Haste, H. (2004). Constructing the citizen. *Political Psychology*, 25(3), 413-439.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Howarth, C., Andreouli, E., & Kessi, S. (2014). Social representations and the politics of participation. In K. Kinnvall, T. Capelos, H. Dekker, & P. Nesbitt-Larking (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of global political psychology* (pp. 19-38). London, UK: Palgrave.
- Joffe, H., & Haarhoff, G. (2002). Representations of far-flung illnesses: The case of Ebola in Britain. *Social science & medicine*, 54(6), 955-969.
- Kadianaki, I., & Andreouli, E. (2017). Essentialism in social representations of citizenship: An analysis of Greeks' and migrants' discourse. *Political Psychology*, 38(5), 833-848.
- Katsambekis, G. (2016). Radical left populism in contemporary Greece: Syriza's trajectory from minoritarian opposition to power. *Constellations*, 23(3), 391-403.
- Mannarini, T., Veltri, G. A., & Salvatore, S. (Eds.). (in press). *Media and social representations of Otherness: Psycho-social-cultural implications*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Martín, I., & van Deth, J. W. (2007). Political involvement. In J. W. van Deth, J. R. Montero, & A. Westholm (Eds.), *Citizenship and involvement in European democracies: A*

- comparative analysis* (pp. 303-333). London, UK: Routledge.
- McDonnell, D., & Valbruzzi, M. (2014). Defining and classifying technocrat-led and technocratic governments. *European Journal of Political Research*, 53(4), 654-671.
- Montero, J. R., Westholm, A., & van Deth, J. W. (2007). Conclusion: the realisation of democratic citizenship in Europe. In J. W. van Deth, J. R. Montero, & A. Westholm (Eds.), *Citizenship and involvement in European democracies: A comparative analysis* (pp. 415-438). London, UK: Routledge.
- Pachi, D., Chrysanthaki, T., & Barrett, M. (2014). Political and civic participation among ethnic majority and minority youth. In K. Kinnvall, T. Capelos, H. Dekker, & P. Nesbitt-Larking (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of global political psychology* (pp. 297-315). London, UK: Palgrave.
- Papastamou, S., Chrysochoou, X., Pavlopoulos, V., Prodromitis, G., Poeschl, G., Mari, S., ... Ratinaud, P. (2018). Attributing and managing the crisis: Lay representations in three European countries. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 31(1).
<https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.18>
- Quaranta, M. (2016). An apathetic generation? Cohorts' patterns of political participation in Italy. *Social Indicators Research*, 125(3), 793-812.
- Rochira, A., De Simone, E., Mannarini, T., & Salvatore, S. (2019). What do we talk about when we talk about participation? Sense of community and social representations of participation. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 15(2), 312-328.
- Salvatore S. (2016). *Psychology in black and white: The project of a theory-driven science*. Charlotte, NC: InfoAge Publishing.
- Sammut, G., & Buhagiar, L. J. (2017). The sociocultural determination of planned behaviour. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 51(1), 164-170.
- Sammut, G., & Gaskell, G. (2010). Points of view, social positioning and intercultural relations. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 40(1), 47-64.
- Sammut, G., & Howarth, C. (2014). Social representations. In T. Teo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of critical psychology* (pp. 1799-1802). New York, NY: Springer.
- Sammut, G., Jovchelovitch, S., Buhagiar, L. J., Veltri, G. A., Redd, R., & Salvatore, S. (2018). Arabs in Europe: Arguments for and against integration. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24(4), 398-406. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000271>
- Sampson, R. J., McAdam, D., MacIndoe, H., & Weffer-Elizondo, S. (2005). Civil society reconsidered: The durable nature and community structure of collective civic action.

American Journal of Sociology, 111(3), 673-714.

- Talò, C., & Mannarini, T. (2015). Measuring participation: development and validation the participatory behaviors scale. *Social Indicators Research*, 123(3), 799-816.
- Tarchi, M. (2008). Italy: A country of many populisms. In D. Albertazzi & D. McDonnell (Eds.), *Twenty-first century populism: The spectre of Western European democracy* (pp. 84-99). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Teorell, J., Torcal, M., & Montero, J. R. (2007). Political Participation: Mapping the Terrain. In J. W. van Deth, J. R. Montero, & A. Westholm (Eds.), *Citizenship and involvement in European democracies: A comparative analysis* (pp. 334-357). London, UK: Routledge.
- Theocharis, Y. (2011). Young people, political participation and online postmaterialism in Greece. *New Media & Society*, 13(2), 203-223.
- Theocharis, Y., & van Deth, J. W. (2018). The continuous expansion of citizen participation: A new taxonomy. *European Political Science Review*, 10(1), 139-163.
- Touri, M., & Kostarella, I. (2017). News blogs versus mainstream media: Measuring the gap through a frame analysis of Greek blogs. *Journalism*, 18(9), 1206-1224.
- Tsakatika, M., & Eleftheriou, C. (2013). The radical left's turn towards civil society in Greece: one strategy, two paths. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(1), 81-99.
- Veltri, G. A. (2012). Viva la Nano-Revolución! A Semantic Analysis of the Spanish National Press. *Science Communication*, 35(2), 143-167.
- Zeromskyte, R., & Wagner, W. (2017). When a majority becomes a minority: Essentialist intergroup stereotyping in an inverted power differential. *Culture & Psychology*, 23(1), 88-107.

TERRI MANNARINI is full professor in social psychology at the University of Salento, Lecce, Italy, and editor-in-chief of the international journal *Community Psychology in Global Perspective*. Her research interests cover political, social, and community psychology, and focus specifically on sense of community, community participation, collective action, and acculturation processes. Email: terri.mannarini@unisalento.it

LUKE JOSEPH BUHAGIAR is a PhD student in social psychology at the University of Malta. His research interests concern methodology, argumentation, social representations theory and coalitional psychology. Specifically, his main interest lies in developing better methods for studying intergroup polarisation. His PhD work focuses on the social representations of the integration of Arabs in Malta. Email: luke.buhagiar@um.edu.mt

ALESSIA ROCHIRA is assistant researcher in social psychology at the University of Salento – Lecce, Department of History, Society and Human Studies. Her research interests cover several topics at the crossroads between social and community psychology, such as interethnic relations, acculturation, sense of community, community resilience, social representations, common sense justice and legal compliance. Email: alessia.rochira@unisalento.it

EVRINOMY AVDI is associate professor in clinical psychology at the School of Psychology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She is a clinical psychologist, psychodynamic psychotherapist and dramatherapist. Her research interests lie in applying discursive and narrative research to the study of the process of psychotherapy, as well as the experience of serious illness. She is particularly interested in exploring the links between deconstructive research and actual clinical practice. Email: avdie@psy.auth.gr

IFIGENEIA KOUTRI holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her main scientific interests are narrative psychology, meaning making, illness narratives, narrative identity, understanding experiences of illness, trauma and other disruptive life events, and social identity change in time of crisis in Europe. Email: ifikoutri@yahoo.gr

ANNA MYLONA is a clinical psychologist. She holds a degree in psychology and a master's degree in social clinical psychology both from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She is PhD candidate of Psychology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki-School of Psychology. Her main research interests concern the study of psychotherapy change processes through qualitative method. She has worked as a research associate in two European funded research projects (“Relational Mind in events of change in multi-actor therapeutic dialogues” and “ReCriRe-Between the representation of the crisis and crisis of representation”). Currently, she is working as a clinical psychologist in private practice in Thessaloniki, Greece. Email:

annamylona@psy.auth.gr

GORDON SAMMUT is associate professor in social psychology at the University of Malta and visiting fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His interests concern intercultural and intergroup relations, the theory of social representations, modalities of social influence and issues relating to divergent perspectives in social relations. He is chief-editor of *Cultural Encounters and Social Solidarity* (special issue: *Papers on Social Representations*), *The Cambridge Handbook of Social Representations* (Cambridge University Press), *Understanding Self and Others: Explorations in Intersubjectivity and Interobjectivity* (Routledge) and *Methods of Psychological Intervention: Yearbook of Idiographic Science Vol. VII* (Information Age Publishing). Email: gordon.sammuto@um.edu.mt

SERGIO SALVATORE is full professor in dynamic psychology at “La Sapienza” University of Rome. President of the *European Institute of Cultural Analysis for Policy* (EICAP). His scientific interests regard the psychodynamic and semiotic theorization of mental phenomena and the methodology of analysis of psychological processes as field dependent dynamics. He is also interested in the theory and analysis of psychological intervention in the clinical, educational, organisational, and social fields. On these issues he has designed and managed various scientific projects (e.g., Re.Cri.Re.) and published about 250 works. Email: sergio.salvatore@uniroma1.it