



THE SURVEY OF ISSP 2023: THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

The evolving changes due to globalization and immigration, are transforming the established ways nations define themselves and affect the traditional dynamic of societies. The study of these changes provides valuable knowledge of the impact they have on societies and citizens. To explore the importance of these issues in Greek politics and policy making, this study associates the International Social Survey Programme 2023 Module of National Identity and Citizenship on political attitudes. The International Social Survey Programme is a collaborative research programme that studies in general citizens' beliefs and attitudes towards social issues in many countries. The 2023 Module questionnaire includes questions about democracy, immigration, globalization and citizenship. The primary question of the survey is to study the electoral and voting behaviour of Greek citizens and explore its impact on their attitudes towards these issues. At the same time, the study focuses on correlating participants' party preferences to common attitudes related to specific political issues.

Keywords: ISSP, National Identity, Citizenship, Elections, Voting behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the factors that influence citizens' voting behavior is important for interpreting how democracy works in a country. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2023 National Identity and Citizenship Module offers a valuable opportunity to study the views of Greek citizens around these issues and their impact on voting behavior in Greece. Additionally, this module provides insights into the feelings of solidarity and cohesion within society, especially regarding immigrants. It highlights the necessity of fostering an inclusive environment where all members, regardless of their background, feel a sense of belonging and mutual support. This need for solidarity and cohesion is crucial for maintaining social stability and promoting the integration of immigrants into the broader societal fabric, ensuring that democracy functions effectively and inclusively for all.

Therefore, using items from the ISSP National Identity and Citizenship Module for Greece, in the framework of the DATIS (Data for Inclusive Societies) research project this paper aims to show how participants' party preferences influence their views on immigrants. The study explores how these political preferences impact on attitudes towards the integration of immigrants into Greek society.

The purpose of the study is to understand the differences in opinions based on the political beliefs and party preferences of the participants, offering valuable insights into the social and political dynamics that shape the public debate on immigration. By providing a detailed analysis of both survey data and social media content, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors that drive public opinion on one of the most pressing social issues in Greece today.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

National Identity

One of the greatest challenges that modern nations face is preserving their national identity in a world dominated by globalization (Norris & Inglehart, 2009). While, according to Hjerm (2001), nations continue to form the core of individuals' social identities, while supranational organizations such as the European Union are fostering transnational and regional identities. National identity refers to people's perception of belonging to a particular nation, with which they identify historically, culturally, linguistically and in terms of values. The population of this nation is characterised by internal cohesion and solidarity (McKeown, 2013) and its reinforced through symbols such as flags and anthems, that reflect shared values and heritage (Anderson, 2008). Thus, the ISSP 2023 questionnaire addresses two distinct facets of national identity: one aspect includes questions about the connection between citizens and their own nation, while the other focuses on the relationship between the citizens of a nation and "others," including minorities, immigrants, and refugees.

Citizenship

The concept of citizenship is multifaceted and continually evolving within the complexities of modern societies (Susen, 2010). It goes beyond legal definitions tied to the state, encompassing a broad spectrum of rights and duties that involve active engagement in both political and social realms, alongside adherence to legal norms and obligations (Scholz et al., 2017). Citizenship dictates behavioral norms that regulate how individuals interact with governmental institutions, including their participation in democratic processes like voting and their responsibilities such as military conscription (Schnaudt et al., 2024). The ISSP 2023 survey aims to capture citizens' perspectives on these roles, reflecting their views on civic duties and societal contributions.

The ISSP Project

The International Social Research Programme (ISSP) is a cross-national survey collaboration research programme focused on citizens' beliefs, attitudes, and behavior towards issues related to social sciences (Jutz et al., 2018) for over 30 years. The international collaboration of its members allows to approach the societal issues through a perspective that spans across different time periods and various nations, as the specific topics are repeated in regular time intervals (ISSP Research Group, 2015). Each year, a specific topic is chosen to be researched, while the final decisions on the content of each questionnaire are made by the annual General Assembly with a majority (Scholz et al., 2017). Once the final questionnaire is approved, it is translated into the languages of the ISSP countries. Each ISSP member country is responsible for preparing and documenting its national datasets according to ISSP standards. This documentation includes follow-up and description of the study, details about the creation of demographic variables, which are also common for all the participating countries (Scholz et al., 2017). National datasets and their documentation are submitted to GESIS (Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences). In collaboration with the Social Science Research Archive (ASEP), the datasets are checked and integrated into the ISSP international dataset (GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften). Moreover, it is worth mentioning that currently publications using ISSP data comprise over 9,000 publications.

The National Identity and Citizenship is the fourth module, as previous waves fielded in 1995, 2003, 2013. In general, the National Identity and Citizenship modules focus on nationality, identity and immigration issues, along with democracy and governance. The repeatedly modules offer the chance for monitoring social change before and after the financial crisis of 2008 and the immigration crisis of 2015 based on many items, which have a long history with National Identity and Citizenship. This module offers a chance to gain deeper insights into contemporary societies on a variety of issues: attitudes towards patriotism and nationalism, national pride and whether citizens feel proud of their country, immigration and multiculturalism and the

way they affect their sense of national identity and finally perceptions of shared values and social cohesion within the nation. The final release of the ISSP 2023 module will be available in 2026.

DATIS

Data for Inclusive Societies (DATIS): Foes and Friends of Inclusiveness in contemporary Greece is a research project that studies the factors that affect inclusiveness in Greek society through an innovative research design. The project focuses on political parties, elites and citizens to explore the causes and consequences of hostile attitudes towards different social groups focusing on the rise of populism and solidarity. The ISSP 2023 National Identity and Citizenship Module aligns with DATIS, as it provides valuable insights into public attitudes towards immigration and its impact on Greek society, shedding a light on political and social dynamics.

4. METHODOLOGY & IMPLEMENTATION

The questionnaire

The main object of the study is to estimate the impact of National Identity and Citizenship on Greek citizens voting and electoral behaviour. In order to achieve this, the ISSP 2023 questionnaire was used. Data collection of the ISSP 2023 “National Identity and Citizen” was based on the questionnaire of the 4th version of the Module regarding this issue. Although, National Identity and Citizenship has been a module for ISSP since 1995 and the Programme keeps collecting data for the topic almost every decade since then, 2023 was the first year Greece took part in the data collection for this module. The participation of Greece is considered to contribute in possible comparative studies with other countries participating in the survey in the ISSP network.

For the ISSP 2023 questionnaire, the creation of new thematic sections required the appropriate preparation, over a period of at least two years, of several draft questionnaires, which were designed in accordance with the decisions of the ISSP General Assembly and defined by the Programme's Rules of Procedure. The subject matter of this questionnaire was decided at the regular annual meeting of the ISSP General Assembly in 2019. The final questionnaire consists of 60 questions, 50 old and 10 new. In addition to the questions included in the main part of the questionnaire, the drafting team proposed 7 additional questions, which are optional. These items were about Regional Associations, such as the European Union and United States, so they applied only in participant countries that are members or potential members of these associations

Data Collection

In general, a web – survey model was used, leveraging the speed, the convenience for the respondent and the low cost of online surveys in social sciences research (Chen, 2011; Fang et al., 2014). First, a pilot survey was conducted with the students of the course “Political Web Surveys” of School of Political Sciences of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), who gave useful feedback in refining the language used in the translation of the questionnaire. Finally, before launching the survey to the general Greek public, it was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in order to verify that the research design is fully compatible with its principles and values.

A mobile-friendly web-based survey was used to collect the questionnaire data, meaning that all decisions regarding the appearance of the survey was made with the aim of improving the experience of completing the survey by mobile (smartphone) users (Andreadis, 2020). The online survey was preferred, as it allows quick and mainly low-cost surveys to be conducted and can "under certain conditions be a reliable alternative means for organizing and conducting social and political surveys" (Andreadis, 2010). At the same time, respondents are able to submit their answers themselves on their computer, thus contributing to the collection of data in a short period of time and avoiding possible errors during data entry by the researcher (Andreadis, 2010; Andreadis & Kartsounidou, 2020).

The invitations were sent as text messages (SMS) and the numbers that were invited to participate were randomly generated (Random Digit Dialing-RDD). In Greece it is possible to create a sample of mobile phone numbers based on probability: all mobile phone numbers start with 69 followed by a digit from [0,3:5,7:9] and seven other digits. After creating the random sample of mobile phone numbers and subsequently checking for the existence of these numbers, text messages (SMS) were sent to the sample mobile phone numbers (Andreadis, 2022). Firstly, a notification was sent, informing the randomly selected mobile phone owners that they have been selected to take part in a web survey organised by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and if they want any additional information, they can call at the phone number included in this message. At this point, the mobile phone owners could also express their desire to participate or not in the survey and the ones who did not want to take part, were removed from the list of the phone numbers. The second text message (SMS) they received contained an invitation with a short URL to participate in the survey. The mobile phone owners could either fill out the online questionnaire directly on the mobile phone receiving the message, or by copying the URL into a browser of another device (tablet/laptop/desktop). Subsequent text messages (SMS), if needed, were sent as reminders to participants. After the text messages (SMS) were sent, sample members who had not activated the link to the survey received a phone call asking them if they need any assistance or clarification and if they prefer to participate in the survey via telephone interview.

This method is preferable for data collection, since according to Mavletova & Couper, (2014, 2016) sending invitations as text messages instead of emails significantly increased the percentage of participants who preferred to use their mobile devices instead of their computer to complete an online survey, which contributed to higher survey participation rates (Andreadis, 2020).

The data for both ISSP 2022 (about gender and family roles) and ISSP 2023 in Greece were collected in almost the same period. This setting has given us the opportunity to create various versions of the questionnaires (e.g. one including the items of ISSP 2022 only, another including the items of the ISSP 2023, and one that combined both ISSP 2022 and ISSP 2023). In this paper we present a preliminary analysis of data from participants who have responded to the later, longer questionnaire that include questions from ISSP 2022 and ISSP 2023. The data collected, however, had to be processed before they could be analysed. For that, data cleaning methods were applied which involved dealing with incomplete data by calculating or deleting cases, depending on the severity and type of missing information (Andreadis, 2014). We also focused on identifying and correcting errors, such as typos and inconsistencies in data entry. In addition, statistical methods were used to identify and handle outliers, ensuring that anomalous data points did not alter our results. These thorough data cleaning practices enhance the reliability and accuracy of our data set, thus increasing the efficiency and reliability of our analysis (Andreadis, 2014). As the final dataset was available, we performed the statistical analysis using SPSS 28th version.

5. ANALYSIS

As displayed on Figure 1, many of the participants who stated they voted for the New Democracy party in the last national elections reported being neutral towards this proposal (41%), with less agreeing and agreeing strongly (34.6%) and about one in four disagreeing and disagreeing strongly (24.5%). This distribution suggests a relatively balanced stance among New Democracy voters, with a slight lean towards neutrality or agreement with the proposal.

Conversely, nearly half of the SYRIZA voters disagreed and disagreed strongly with the proposal (53.4%), a smaller portion were neutral (13%), and the proportion of those who agreed or agreed strongly (33.6%) was more than the voters of New Democracy. This indicates a stronger opposition to the proposal among SYRIZA voters, reflecting a significant divergence in opinion compared to New Democracy supporters.

Among those who reported voting for PASOK, opinions were more evenly divided. The percentage of those agreeing or agreeing strongly with the proposal (35%) was similar to New Democracy and SYRIZA voters. Meanwhile, those who were neutral

(31%) and those who disagreed and disagreed strongly (34%) were also closely matched. This balanced distribution among PASOK voters highlights a lack of a clear consensus within this group.

Similarly, among KKE voters, fewer agreed and agreed strongly with the proposal (29.1%), a comparable percentage were neutral (33.9%), and the largest group disagreed and disagreed strongly (37.1%). This distribution shows a slight majority leaning towards disagreement, but with significant portions of neutrality and agreement, indicating diverse opinions within the KKE voter base.

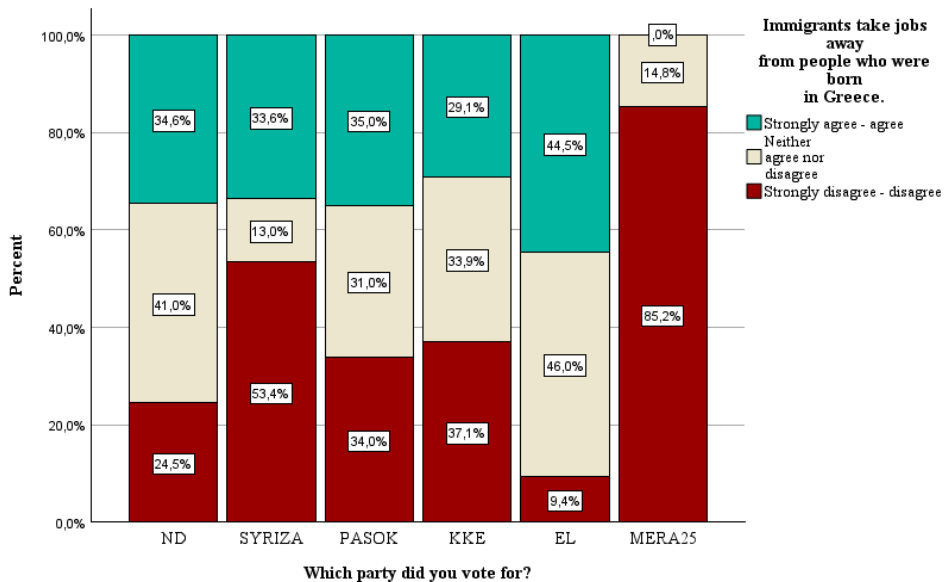


Figure 1: Party preference and views on immigrant job impact

For those who voted for the Greek Solution party, the majority agreed and strongly agreed with the proposal (44.5%) or remained neutral (46%), with a small percentage disagreeing and disagreeing strongly (9.4%). This indicates a generally favorable or indifferent stance towards the proposal among Greek Solution voters, with minimal opposition.

Finally, a substantial majority of those who voted for MeRA25 disagreed and disagreed strongly with the proposal (85.2%), with only a small portion being neutral (14.8%), and none agreeing or agreeing strongly with the proposal. This overwhelming opposition reflects a strong, unified stance against the proposal among MeRA25 voters.

Regarding the statement “Immigrants improve Greek society by bringing new ideas and cultures,” the survey participants expressed a range of opinions based on their political affiliations (Figure 2). Specifically, among those who voted for New

Democracy in the last parliamentary elections, a small portion agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (15.7%), while a significant number remained neutral (38.4%), and a substantial portion disagreed and disagreed strongly (45.9%). This indicates a general skepticism or ambivalence towards the positive impact of immigrants on society among New Democracy voters.

In contrast, more than half of the participants who voted for SYRIZA expressed agreement with the statement (55.6%), reflecting a more favorable view of immigration. Additionally, a significant portion of SYRIZA voters were neutral (31.3%), and a very small number disagreed and strongly disagreed (13.1%). This suggests that SYRIZA supporters are generally more open to the idea that immigrants bring beneficial new ideas and cultures to Greek society.

Among those who voted for PASOK, opinions were evenly distributed across all response options. Specifically, one-third agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (31.9%), another third were neutral (35.4%), and the remaining third disagreed and strongly disagreed (32.8%). This balanced distribution indicates a lack of a dominant perspective on immigration within the PASOK electorate, reflecting a more diverse range of views.

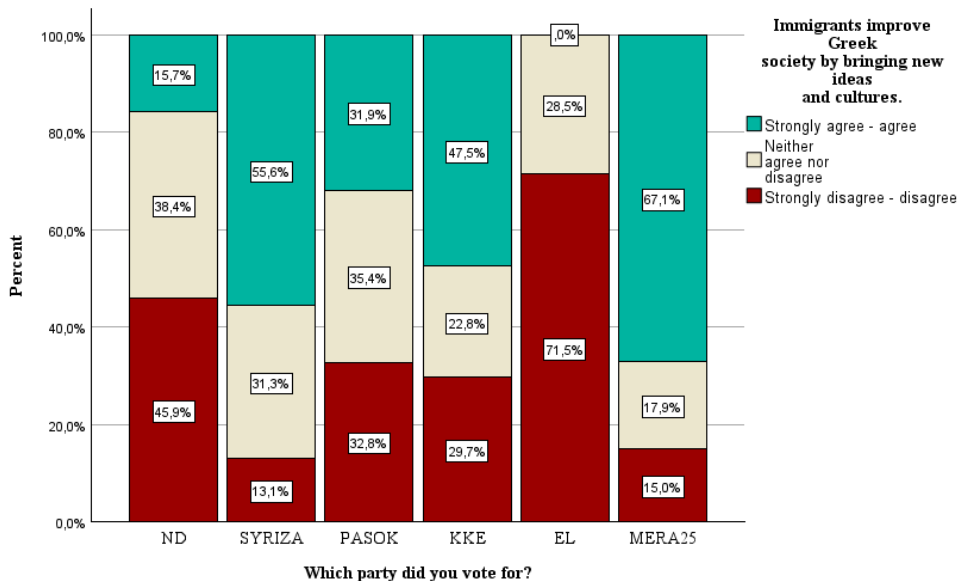


Figure 2: Party preference and immigrants' social impact

Nearly half of the KKE voters agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (47.5%), showing a significant level of support for the positive contributions of immigrants. Meanwhile, a smaller portion remained neutral (22.8%), and a notable portion

disagreed and strongly agreed (29.7%). This distribution reveals that while there is considerable support for immigration within the KKE voter base, there is also a significant minority that is skeptical.

Participants who voted for the Greek Solution party were predominantly against the statement. Only 3 out of 10 were neutral (28.5%), while the overwhelming majority (71.5%) disagreed and disagreed strongly. This strong opposition indicates a clear stance among Greek Solution voters against the notion that immigrants improve Greek society.

Lastly, those who voted for MeRA25 largely agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (67.1%), indicating strong support for the positive impact of immigrants. The remaining respondents were split, with half being neutral (17.9%) and a small percentage disagreeing and strongly disagreeing (15%). This suggests that MeRA25 voters are generally very supportive of the idea that immigrants bring valuable new ideas and cultures to Greece.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The ISSP 2023 National Identity and Citizenship Module provides a comprehensive exploration of how individuals perceive these concepts in contemporary societies. Through questions related to citizens' responsibilities, their social expectations, and attitudes towards immigration, including issues of nationalism and patriotism, the module investigates the multifaceted role of the citizen and reveals insights into how national identity influences citizens' attitudes towards immigration and social cohesion. This study aimed to shed light on the impact of these issues on the electoral behaviour of Greek citizens, specifically exploring their attitudes towards immigrants and their integration.

Supporters of New Democracy exhibit a balanced stance towards the statement that immigrants improve Greek society. While a significant portion remains neutral, there is also a notable skepticism or disagreement towards the positive impact of immigrants. SYRIZA voters generally express more positive attitudes towards immigrants, with a majority agreeing that immigrants bring beneficial new ideas and cultures. This indicates a supportive stance towards immigration. Opinions among PASOK voters are evenly divided, reflecting a lack of consensus on the positive impact of immigrants. This suggests a diverse range of views within the PASOK supporter base. Voters aligned with KKE show a mixed perspective on immigration. While a significant portion supports the idea of immigrants contributing positively to Greek society, there is also a notable segment that disagrees, indicating internal diversity within the KKE electorate. Greek Solution supporters are predominantly opposed to the notion that immigrants improve Greek society. This indicates a clear and strong stance against immigration among the Greek Solution voter base. MeRA25 voters overwhelmingly support the idea that immigrants bring valuable new ideas and

cultures to Greece. This reflects a positive and welcoming attitude towards immigration. Overall, these findings underscore the diverse and sometimes polarized attitudes towards immigrants within the Greek political landscape. They highlight how political affiliation shapes perceptions of immigration, with significant implications for policy-making and social cohesion in Greece. Understanding these varied perspectives is crucial for fostering informed public discourse and developing inclusive policies that address the complex challenges related to immigration.

The ISSP 2023 National Identity and Citizenship Module provides a detailed exploration of how people perceive these concepts in contemporary societies. Through questions related to citizens' social expectations, and attitudes toward immigration, including issues of nationalism, this study aims to shed light on how these factors influence electoral behavior and the integration of immigrants, as a part of Greek society. This paper provides some preliminary findings using a subset of the collected data to introduce and attract other researchers to use the ISSP. Further, more comprehensive and complex analyses will follow once the entire dataset has been fully cleaned and processed.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Οι διαρκείς αλλαγές που πραγματοποιούνται λόγω της παγκοσμιοποίησης και της μετανάστευσης, μεταμορφώνουν τους καθιερωμένους τρόπους με τους οποίους τα έθνη αυτοπροσδιορίζονται και επηρεάζουν τη δυναμική των παραδοσιακών κοινωνιών. Η μελέτη αυτών των αλλαγών παρέχει πολύτιμες γνώσεις για τον αντίκτυπο που έχουν στις σύγχρονες κοινωνίες και στους πολίτες. Για να εξερευνήσει τη σημασία αυτών των ζητημάτων στην ελληνική πολιτική και χάραξη πολιτικής, αυτή η μελέτη συνδέει το θέμα Διεθνούς Προγράμματος Κοινωνικών Ερευνών για το 2023 της Εθνικής Ταυτότητας και της Ιθαγένειας με τις πολιτικές στάσεις στην Ελλάδα. Το Διεθνές Πρόγραμμα Κοινωνικών Ερευνών είναι ένα συνεργατικό ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα που μελετά γενικά τις πεποιθήσεις και τις στάσεις των πολιτών απέναντι σε κοινωνικά ζητήματα σε πολλές χώρες. Το θέμα του ερωτηματολογίου για το 2023 περιλαμβάνει ερωτήσεις για τη δημοκρατία, τη μετανάστευση, την παγκοσμιοποίηση και την ιθαγένεια. Το κύριο ερώτημα της έρευνας είναι μελετώντας την εκλογική συμπεριφορά των Ελλήνων πολιτών να ερευνήσει τον αντίκτυπο των προαναφερθέντων θεμάτων στις απόψεις τους απέναντι στα ζητήματα αυτά. Ταυτόχρονα, η μελέτη εστιάζει στη συσχέτιση των κομματικών προτιμήσεων των συμμετεχόντων με κοινές στάσεις που σχετίζονται με συγκεκριμένα πολιτικά ζητήματα.

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