

**WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?
SUPPORT OF CRITICAL NATIONAL POLICIES
DEPENDS ON SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL
PROCESSES AND MEDIA FRAMING**

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Abstract: The study examined the factors that predict support of national policies during the Greek economic crisis: Greece leaving the European monetary union (Grexit) or agreeing on a new memorandum that entails bailout packages in return of austerity measures. The relations between support of these policies and social identity, perceived injustice, collective efficacy, and emotions (anger, fear-and-helplessness) were found significant. These relationships were moderated by media frames that portrayed the economic situation as uncertain (vs. certain). Uncertainty frame moderated the relationship of (a) collective efficacy with policy support and of (b) fear-and-helplessness with policy support. A moderated mediation analysis also showed that media frame moderated the mediational relationship between perceived injustice and anger in predicting Grexit. The results suggest that support to such policies depends on people's subjective interpretations of their situation (e.g., perceived injustice) but media frames affect these processes as well.

Key words: Collective efficacy, Identity, Media framing, Policy support, Social injustice, Uncertainty

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INTRODUCTION

During the times of economic crisis citizens are often asked (via general elections, referenda etc.) to support governmental policies that may determine a country's course in the coming decades. These policies may include the adoption of austerity measures, as it is the case in many European countries that have been hit by the recent economic crisis. One such example is Greece (focus of the present study), where citizens have been often faced with the dilemma of either complying with harsh economic policies (i.e., memoranda agreed with international lenders) or breaking up with the European monetary union altogether and return to the national currency (i.e., Grexit). Since such policies can have significant and lasting consequences on citizen's lives, it is both interesting and socially relevant to investigate the factors on which people's support of critical national policies is based.

The present study draws upon two broad theoretical strands to provide some answers to the above question: social psychological and media effects research. First, social psychological research has provided valuable insights on how people perceive their economic and social situation and how these perceptions predict their involvement with, and support of, social action. Research in this field has examined how people understand their hardships and grievances and how they intent to cope with these difficulties and take some kind of action (e.g., van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). The social psychological approach mainly focuses on people's subjective understandings: people's perception of injustice, the degree to which the objective situation is understood as unfair to themselves personally or to a group as a whole (Smith & Ortiz, 2002); collective efficacy, that is, the degree to which people believe that collective action will be instrumental in achieving their goals (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999); and, finally, a subjective sense of social identity to the ingroup (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). All three have been proposed as important predictors of collective action. Thus, the more people perceive their situation as unjust, think that they altogether succeed in their collective goals, and identify with their group, the more they are motivated to take social action to counter their misfortunes and grievances.

Also, relevant research in this context has shown that people's emotional reactions (such as anger or fear) to the interpretation of their situation can also play an important role in predicting policy preferences and collective action tendencies (e.g., van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). For example, it has been proposed that anger that follows perceived injustice significantly motivates action tendencies to redeem unjust disadvantages (e.g., Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Tausch et al., 2011). A basic goal of the present research was to examine the proposed mediating

role of anger between perceived injustice and action tendencies proposed in the literature (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2004).

On the other hand, it is assumed that mass media have an important role in affecting people's perceptions and understanding of the surrounding economic and social reality (Shah, McLeod, Gotlieb, & Lee, 2009). Especially during the years of crisis, the media play an important role not only in providing citizens with relevant information but also with frames of understanding the crisis (e.g., which are the causes and its consequences, and how it can be tackled). Sometimes these frames provide confidence and assurance (i.e., certainty) as to how things are going and sometimes provide doubtfulness and uneasiness (i.e., uncertainty). Exposure to the latter frame, for example, can make people fearful or angry and affect the kind of policies they think best in dealing with the economic situation. We hypothesized that such media content can moderate the relations between social psychological variables and policy preferences.

The present study investigated the predictors of people's support of critical national policies by focusing, on the one hand, on people's subjective experiences of their situation (perceived injustice, collective efficacy, social identity and emotions), and, on the other, on the influence of media frames that promote a certain or an uncertain view of the current socioeconomic reality.

Socio-psychological predictors of policy support

During the current economic crisis citizens, in Greece but also in other European countries, have been asked to decide on appropriate policies that need to be implemented. Such policy preferences can be understood as a form of collective action supported and agreed by citizens to handle the difficult socioeconomic situation and, most importantly, curve a path out of it. Support of national policies is thus an answer to a collective "*What should we do?*" question that concerns the present and the future of the country. Research in social psychology of collective action has attempted to answer the question of how people understand their difficulties and grievances and how they decide to undertake or support action to improve their life conditions (Klandermans & Roggeband, 2007; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). In doing so, relative research focuses mainly on people's subjective interpretations of their situation as the motivating variables predicting collective action.

This research has focused on relevant concepts, such as perceived injustice, emotions, perceived efficacy, and social identity (for theoretically integration attempts see van Zomeren, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008). The concept of relative deprivation

is essential to understand the assumed predictive power of perceived injustice. Relative deprivation theory (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Star, & Williams, 1949; for a review see Walker & Smith, 2002) suggests that feelings of deprivation emerge as a consequence of social comparison with specific others or the situation one was in the past. When people feel entitled to something in comparison to others, or to their past situation, they are motivated to support alleviative action (Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Group-based deprivation has been found to predict collective action based on both its cognitive and affective aspects, with the latter being a much more powerful predictor of collective action (see Smith & Ortiz, 2002).

Emotional reactions to one's interpretation of their situation have been found to be associated with collective action. Especially anger, following perceptions of injustice, motivates support of, or intention to, collective action. Specifically, it has been suggested that anger mediates the effects of perceived injustice on collective action (Mackie et al., 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2004), a relationship that was examined in the present study as well. Fear, on the other hand, is associated with avoiding action tendencies (Chrysochoou, Papastamou, & Prodromitis, 2013; Devos, Silver, Mackie, & Smith, 2003; Miller, Gronin, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009). It is of interest to the present study whether emotions predict support of national policies, over and above the rest of social psychological variables.

Another predictor of collective action, namely, collective efficacy, is understood as a belief shared by group members that the causes of group disadvantages can be removed and the situation of the group can be improved through a unified effort (Mummendey et al., 1999). The perception of group efficacy makes people to think that they are capable of bringing about social change (Drury & Reicher, 2009) and, therefore, is positively related with collective action (Hornsey et al., 2006; see van Zomeren et al., 2008 for meta-analytic evidence). We expected that people will support policies depending on their belief that they are able as a collective and as a nation to achieve their goals which in this case was to deal with, and escape from, the economic crisis.

Finally, within this socio-psychological research, social identity has been associated with intention or support of collective action. The degree that group members feel to be united with their fellow ingroup members and share a psychologically important identity is a significant determinant of collective action (see van Zomeren et al., 2008). The greater the identification with the ingroup, the more likely group members will resume collective actions toward social change (see Drury & Reicher, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). We expected that people's national identification will predict their policy preferences.

Media framing

The socio-psychological approach to explaining collective action put most attention to the way people interpret their (disadvantaged) situation and how these interpretations motivate action. But how do people come to understand and interpret their situation? Their personal experiences, or the interpersonal communication with people at their proximate social surrounding can be important. However, there is significant evidence that people interpret and give meaning to their social and political context depending on the way mass media define and give meaning to this reality (see Iyengar, 1991; Shah et al., 2009; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). The media provide interpretative schemata or frames that people use to put an order to their social environment. A widely held definition of media framing is proposed by Entman (1993), “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Therefore, people are encouraged by media frames to connect certain issues with particular definitions, causes, implications and treatment (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; for a review of framing as a media effects model see Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Often the media portray socioeconomic reality as uncertain and uncontrollable. This representation can be more profound during an economic crisis where the socio-economic situation is uncertain enough. As Bauman suggests (Bauman & Bordoni, 2014), the economic crisis leads to feelings of uncertainty and ignorance at both the individual and the institutional level (such as the media and journalism). Uncertainty exists when situations are ambiguous, complex, unpredictable, or when people feel insecure about their own state of knowledge (Babrow, Hines, & Kasch, 2000). Interestingly, uncertainty sometimes is thought to motivate people to reduce complexity and ambiguity, so they would have better control over their environment, but other times is thought to lead to inactivity if knowing is more threatening than not knowing (Brashers, 2001). For the present study, uncertainty is understood as a description of the economic situation in a way where there is no predictability about what will happen in the near future and where the forces operating are beyond the control of the citizens. Such a framing is expected to intensify emotions of anger and fear. Because of that, uncertainty framing facilitates the prediction of collective action by negative emotions. A moderation effect is then expected, so that uncertainty (vs. certainty) will affect the relations between the subjective experiences of the crisis (perceived injustice, collective efficacy, social identity, emotions) and support of national policies.

Also, the present study assumed that media framing can have an effect not only directly on people's emotions and preferences but also on the relationships between emotions and preferences, hence an indirect effect. Specifically, we were interested in the relationship between injustice and anger that has been evident in previous research (Mackie et al., 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2004) where anger mediated the effects of injustice on collective action. Does media framing moderate this mediational relationship? While an uncertainty frame may allow perceived injustice to lead to increased emotions of anger, a certainty frame may inhibit the relationship. The latter frame by providing reassurance and confidence may be able to stop perceptions of injustice to be associated with anger. This is the moderation mediation hypothesis of media framing.

Finally, because the context of the present study bears important political and ideological implications for the participants, it was expected that participants' ideological self-positioning will affect both their understanding of their situation and their support of national policies. Previous research has shown that left-right ideology is related with political participation, with citizens at the left end of the ideological spectrum supporting collective actions at a greater degree (Muller, 1979; Opp et al., 1995).

The present study

The study examined whether support of national policies is predicted by social psychological predictors such as perceived injustice, emotions, collective efficacy, and social identity; it also explored the effects of exposure to media framing on these relationships. The study took place in April of 2015, few weeks before the Greek government negotiated with their international lenders at the European Council of July the extension of economic help to the country, contingent on the implementation of economic policies (i.e., austerity measures). During that period, there was a heavy media reporting on the meetings and the ongoing negotiations between Greek officials and representatives of the international lenders.

The present study examined whether people would provide support of the adoption of a new memorandum (accompanied with new austerity measures), or of a breakdown in the negotiations with the international lenders (accompanied with the so-called Grexit), or other policies such as pushing an agenda of debt relief (i.e., the Greek government should fight for a debt relief as its main goal in the negotiations before discussing any measures). All these preferences were proposed and discussed to a degree by politicians, the media, and other actors in public life. To examine the effects of media framing, two texts were developed, one conveying a certain and one

an uncertain frame of the negotiations. The research questions and hypotheses tested in the study are the following:

RQ1. Are the social-psychological variables, that is, identity (national and politicized), collective efficacy, perceived injustice, and emotions (anger, fear, and helplessness) related to policy preferences?

H1. It is expected that emotional reactions will predict policy preferences over and above efficacy, injustice and identity.

RQ2. Does uncertainty (vs. certainty) media framing differentially affect the relations between social-psychological variables and policy preferences?

H2. It is expected that media frame will moderate the mediational process of anger on the injustice policy preference relationship.

METHOD

Design - Participants

A total of 240 individuals (110 male and 113 female) participated voluntarily in this experimental study. From this initial sample seven participants were excluded because they had a large amount of missing data. A snowball sampling was followed. Care was taken to include people with a wide range of demographics. They were randomly allocated to one of the three conditions (74 in the *certainty* frame, 76 in the *uncertainty* frame, and 73 in the *control* condition). In the control condition participants were not given any message to read and, consequently, were not asked to report any emotions. They responded to the rest of the questionnaires. Age ranged from 18 to 60 years ($M = 35.38$, $SD = 12.46$). Sixty-four participants were students, 15 participants were unemployed, 26 were working on a part-time basis, 41 were working as clerks in the private or public sector, 37 were professionals, and 40 were retired. Sixty-nine participants had completed secondary education, 14 secondary professional school, 35 higher technological institutions, 78 higher education, and 27 had post-graduate or PhD degrees. Demographic variables did not correlate with policy preferences and were not considered further in the analyses.

Frame manipulation

Following extensive content analysis on various media outlets and editorials published in the press at the time, two texts were developed based on real newspaper articles. Each one described the current situation of the negotiations with the international lenders. One, the certain frame, conveyed that the negotiations are progressing in a

constructive way, that there is a common understanding between the negotiating parts, and that there is certainty about how negotiations are progressing toward the decisive one of June. The other, the uncertain frame, portrayed the negotiations as very unstable and unpredictable and suggested that there is great uncertainty on how the negotiations will progress till the decisive meeting of the European Council in the end of July. An effort was made so that various text characteristics of the frames should be held constant, such as, the style of writing, the size of the message (all messages had similar size of around 270-280 words), and the title (they all had the same title: *The course of the negotiations with our international lenders*). The messages were described as newspaper editorials that participants were asked to read. Each frame was embedded into the questionnaire covering around the 3/4 of an A4 page. Participants read the text after they had provided their answers to the scales of left-right political orientation, perceived injustice, collective efficacy, and national identity.

Questionnaires

Left-right political orientation

Participants positioned themselves politically on an one-item left-right scale (1 = *extreme left* to 9 = *extreme right*).

National identification

There were three items tapping national identification. Participants reported (on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*) a) whether they identify with Greeks, b) how important it is for them to be Greek, and c) how proud they are to be Greek (adapted from Mummendey et al., 2001). Internal consistency was high, Cronbach's $\alpha = .944$.

Perceived injustice

Participants reported (on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*) the degree to which a) European and international partners treat Greece in fair way, b) agreements with European and international partners are fair, c) agreements with European and international partners are legitimate, and d) European and international partners are legitimate in making suggestions to Greece on how to overcome the crisis. Internal consistency was high, Cronbach's $\alpha = .901$.

Collective efficacy

We measured collective efficacy with the following three items (on a 7-point scale,

ranging from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*): a) I think that all Greeks together can face the economic crisis; b) I think that all Greeks together can take the situation in our hands and face the crisis; and c) I think that, if all Greeks together make an effort, we can make it. Cronbach's α was .945.

Perceived uncertainty

Participants reported how uncertain they felt after they had read the framing text on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much so*). This question served as a manipulation check for the framing manipulation.

Emotions

Participants were asked to rate the emotions they had while they were reading the message, using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*). The emotions were: *fearful, vulnerable, confused, helpless, powerless, resigned, angry, annoyed, irritated, and furious*. All emotions were subjected to a principal component analysis revealing two factors (explaining 74% of variance). The first factor was named *fear-and-helplessness* (containing the items *fearful, vulnerable, confused, helpless, powerless, resigned*, Cronbach's $\alpha = .896$) and had an eigenvalue of 5.48 (54% of variance, all loadings > .6). The second factor was named *anger* (*angry, annoyed, irritated, and furious*, Cronbach's $\alpha = .928$) and had an eigenvalue of 1.81 (18% of variance, all loadings > .8).

National policies

Participants reported what actions they thought Greece should take in the light of the forthcoming negotiations with the European and international partners (on 13 7-point items, ranging from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*): *walk out of the European monetary union, agree on a new memorandum with the partners, break up with partners completely, deny paying back national debt, return to national currency, pay back debt by freezing salaries and pensions, impose more taxes, demand debt haircut, make economic decisions without consulting partners*. All actions were subjected to a principal component analysis revealing three factors (explaining 69% of variance). The first factor was named *Grexit* (containing the items *walk out of the European monetary union, break up with partners completely, deny paying back national debt, return to national currency, make economic decisions without consulting partners*, Cronbach's $\alpha = .898$) and had an eigenvalue of 3.81 (42% of variance, all loadings > .7). The second factor was named *memorandum* (*agree on a new memorandum with the partners, pay back debt by freezing salaries and pensions, impose more taxes*, Cronbach's $\alpha = .532$) and had an eigenvalue of 1.27 (14% of

variance, all loadings $> .6$). The third factor, *debt relief*, had only one item (*demand debt haircut*) with an eigenvalue of 1.13 (12% of variance). However, in the following analyses the item *debt relief* was employed as a dependent variable, since a factor with one item cannot be accepted as a true factor.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

Inspection of the means of variables in Table 1 shows that participants identified considerably with their national identity ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.81$), perceived the memoranda to be unfair and unjust ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.53$), and felt collectively efficacious ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.88$).

To examine which policy preference was more acceptable to the people compared to the others, a repeated measures ANOVA on the means of the items loading the first two factors and the item corresponding to the third factor was conducted and revealed statistically significant differences, Wilks' Lambda = .24, $F(2, 220) = 347$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .76$. Three paired samples t -tests were used to make post hoc comparisons between policy preferences. A first paired samples t -test indicated that participants supported fight for debt relief ($M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.41$) significantly more than Grexit ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.72$); $t(221) = -18.25$, $p < .001$. A second paired samples t -test indicated that participants supported Grexit ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.72$) significantly more than agreement to a new memorandum ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.71$); $t(221) = 3.94$, $p < .001$. A third paired samples t -test indicated that participants supported fight for debt relief significantly more than agreement to a new memorandum; $t(222) = -21.48$, $p < .001$.

Using Pillai's trace, there was a significant effect of condition on emotions (anger and fear-and-helplessness), $V = 0.09$, $F(2, 147) = 6.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Separate univariate ANOVAs showed significant effects of condition on anger, with uncertainty (vs. certainty) leading to greater anger ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 1.95$ vs. $M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.85$, respectively), $F(1, 148) = 12.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, and on fear-and-helplessness, with uncertainty (vs. certainty) leading to greater fear-and-helplessness ($M = 3.25$ vs. $M = 2.61$, respectively), $F(1, 148) = 6.35$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$.

Using Pillai's trace, there was no significant effects of condition on policy preferences, $V = 0.005$, $F(3, 145) < 1$.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations among all variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
1. Politicized identity	4.49	1.69								
2. National identity	5.38	1.81	.30**							
3. Perceived injustice	2.74	1.53	.17*	-.11						
4. Collective efficacy	4.76	1.88	-.06	.50**	-.29**					
5. Anger	4.09	1.97	-.01	.13	-.22**	.02				
6. Fear/Helplessness	2.94	1.58	.08	.19*	.09	-.03	.51**			
7. Grexit	3.20	1.72	-.13*	.01	-.48*	.30**	.26**	-.16*		
8. Debt Relief	5.37	1.41	.05	.37**	-.39**	.34**	.18*	-.01	.36**	
9. Memorandum	2.56	1.71	.10	-.09	.45**	-.14*	-.05	.24**	-.32**	-.11

p* < .05, *p* < .01. [Anger and Fear/Helplessness were not measured in the control condition]

Inspection of the intercorrelations between the variables of the study reveals interesting findings. Left-right political orientation was associated only to Grexit, with those who positioned themselves at the left end of the political spectrum reporting greater preference for Grexit. National identity was positively associated with debt relief: the more one identified with their nation, the more they asked for a solution to the debt problem. Perceived injustice, a potent predictor of collective behavior, according to social psychological literature, was associated with all policy preferences, positively with Grexit and debt relief, and negatively with memorandum. The more participants thought that previous memoranda with creditors were unjust, the more they preferred Grexit and debt relief, and the less they wanted a new memorandum. Collective efficacy was also associated with policy preferences, positively with Grexit and debt relief, and negatively with memorandum. Regarding the emotions participants experienced as they were exposed to the media framings, anger was positively related with Grexit and debt relief, while fear-and-helplessness was positively related with memorandum and negatively with Grexit. All these correlations are meaningful and show the connections between social psychological factors and support of national policies as well as between emotions and support of national policies.

To further examine the predictive power of social psychological factors and emotions on the support of national policies, a series of hierarchical regression analyses were performed.

Hierarchical regressions

To examine the predictive power of social psychological variables on support of national policies across conditions, a series of hierarchical regressions analyses were

Table 2. Summary of hierarchical regression analyses for variables predicting policy preferences for certainty frame (N = 76)

Variable	Grexit		Variable	Memorandum		Variable	Debt relief	
	B	t		B	t		B	t
<i>Step 1</i>								
Left-right	.11	1.08	Left-right	-.11	-.89	Left-right	.12	1.26
National id	-.28	-2.06*	National id	-.05	-.32	National id	-.05	-.39
Injustice	.44	4.23***	Injustice	-.37	-3.05**	Injustice	.47	4.65***
Efficacy	.42	3.11***	Efficacy	-.11	-.72	Efficacy	.37	2.86**
<i>Step 2</i>								
Left-right	.11	1.24	Left-right	-.10	-.87	Left-right	.12	1.23
National id	-.19	-1.62	National id	-.09	-.58	National id	-.03	-.20
Injustice	.46	4.73***	Injustice	-.37	-3.10**	Injustice	.47	4.65***
Efficacy	.33	2.64**	Efficacy	-.07	-.44	Efficacy	.34	2.62**
Anger	.39	3.77***	Anger	-.12	-.96	Anger	.05	.52
Fear/Helplessness	-.27	-2.62**	Fear/Helplessness	.21	1.65	Fear/Helplessness	-.13	-1.24

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Note: For Grexit: $R^2 = .40$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .11$ for Step 2 ($ps < .01$). For Memorandum: $R^2 = .12$ ($p < .01$) for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .03$ (ns) for Step 2. For Debt relief: $R^2 = .44$ ($p < .01$), for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .01$ (ns) Step 2.

Table 3. Summary of hierarchical regression analyses for variables predicting policy preferences for uncertainty frame (N = 75)

Variable	Grexit		Variable	Memorandum		Variable	Debt relief	
	B	t		B	t		B	t
<i>Step 1</i>								
Left-right	-.08	-.64	Left-right	.27	1.80#	Left-right	.07	.55
National id	-.26	-1.90*	National id	-.02	-.15	National id	.20	1.46
Injustice	.46	4.46***	Injustice	-.45	-4.25***	Injustice	.38	3.64**
Efficacy	.20	1.68	Efficacy	.12	1.02	Efficacy	.14	1.12
<i>Step 2</i>								
Left-right	-.07	-.61	Left-right	.23	1.89*	Left-right	.08	.62
National id	-.26	-1.90*	National id	-.10	-.77	National id	-.03	-.20
Injustice	.31	2.59*	Injustice	-.37	-3.01**	Injustice	.32	2.57*
Efficacy	.23	1.94*	Efficacy	.14	1.19	Efficacy	.16	1.40
Anger	.30	2.30*	Anger	-.07	-.55	Anger	.15	1.12
Fear/Helplessness	-.22	-1.81#	Fear/Helplessness	.28	2.23*	Fear/Helplessness	-.01	.04

$p < .07$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Note: For Grexit: $R^2 = .31$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .06$ for Step 2 ($ps < .05$). For Memorandum: $R^2 = .27$ ($p < .01$) for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ($p = .07$) for Step 2. For Debt relief: $R^2 = .28$ ($p < .01$), for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .02$ (ns) for Step 2.

run (see Tables 2, 3, and 4). Also, to explore the differential effects of media framing on the dependent variables, the analyses were run for each condition (certainty vs. uncertainty) separately. At the first step of the regression analyses, all social psychological variables were entered, that is, left-right identification, national identity, perceived injustice, and collective efficacy. At the second step, the emotions of anger and fear-and-helplessness were entered, in order to examine whether these variables add over and above the previous variables in predicting support of national policies. These analyses were run within the two media frames (certainty and uncertainty).

Table 4. Summary of multiple regression analysis for variables predicting policy preferences for control condition (N = 75)

Grexit			Memorandum			Debt relief		
Variable	B	t	Variable	B	t	Variable	B	t
Left-right	.05	.41	Left-right	-.01	-.03	Left-right	.01	.03
National id	-.04	-.32	National id	-.19	-1.62	National id	.43	3.49**
Injustice	.36	3.17**	Injustice	.52	4.87**	Injustice	.07	.63
Efficacy	.23	1.83#	Efficacy	.08	.71	Efficacy	-.01	-.06

#p < .07; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Note: For Grexit: R² = .40 for Step 1; ΔR² = .11 for Step 2 (ps < .01). For Memorandum: R² = .12 (p < .01) for Step 1; ΔR² = .03 (ns) for Step 2. For Debt relief: R² = .44 (p < .01), for Step 1; ΔR² = .01 (ns) Step 2.

In the *certainty* frame, national identity was negatively related to Grexit but not to other policies. Perceived injustice positively predicted both Grexit and debt relief, but negatively the new memorandum solution. Collective efficacy was positively related to both Grexit and debt relief. Hence, the more people felt that previous agreements were unfair and the more they believed that altogether Greeks can make it, the more they supported Grexit and debt relief. Memorandum was only related to the perceptions that previous agreements were fair. On the second step of the analysis, emotions were included and predicted Grexit over and above the first step variables. The more angry and the less fearful and helpless they felt, the more they supported the solution of Grexit.

In the *uncertainty* frame, results for national identity and injustice replicated generally the certainty condition. That is, national identity was negatively related to Grexit but not to other policies (as in the certainty condition) and injustice was positively related to both Grexit and debt relief, but negatively to the new memorandum solution. Unlike certainty condition, collective efficacy was not related to any policy. This finding indicates that media framing differentially affects the

relationship between efficacy and policy support. On the second step of the analysis, emotions added over and above the first step variables only for Grexit. Anger was positively, and fear-and-helplessness was negatively related to Grexit. Unlike certainty condition, fear-and-helplessness positively predicted memorandum. This is also another indication of a differential effect of framing on the relationship between fear-and-helplessness and support of memorandum. These differential effects possibly indicate moderation effects that will be tested later.

In the *control* condition injustice and collective efficacy were positively related to Grexit, and injustice was related to memorandum. National identity was positively related to debt relief.

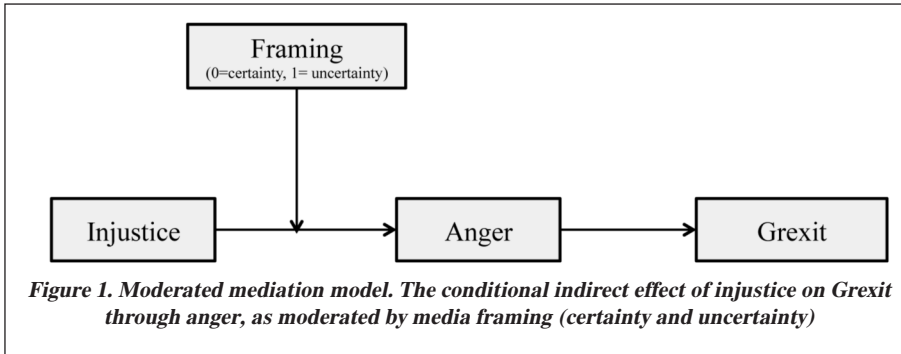
Moderation mediation analysis

To examine whether uncertainty framing moderates the relationship between perceived injustice and anger (see Figure 1), PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013) 'Model 7' was analyzed with injustice entered as the independent variable and Grexit as the outcome variable. Anger was entered as the mediator variable. Condition (0 = certainty frame, 1 = uncertainty frame) was entered as the moderator and 1000 bias corrected bootstrap samples were requested (see Table 5). The bootstrapped estimates

Table 5. Regression results for moderated mediation model of injustice on Grexit through anger with media framing as a moderator of the relationship between injustice and anger

Predictor	Estimate	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Anger (mediator variable model)				
Constant	3.612	.455	7.940	.001
Injustice	.031	.143	.210	.833
Framing	2.413	.621	3.887	.001
Injustice X Framing	.461	.195	2.365	.019
Grexit (dependent variable model)				
Constant	4.163	.396	10.520	.001
Injustice	.537	.080	6.693	.001
Anger	.135	.062	2.154	.032
Conditional effects at framing = 0 and 1				
Framing	Bootstrap indirect effect	Bootstrap SE	95% CI bias corrected	
0 (Certainty)	.004	.021	(-0.059, 0.033)	
1 (Uncertainty)	.066	.036	(-0.148, -0.074)	

N = 149. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 1000.



revealed a significant moderated mediation effect, $b = .06$, $SE = .36$, 95% CI [-.148, -.074]. Thus, the extent to which anger accounted for the link between injustice and Grexit was conditional on framing.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the factors that predicted national policies in a context of deep sociopolitical crisis. Before the final negotiation between the Greek government and the international lenders at the European Council meeting of July 2015, Greek citizens were bombarded by a number of messages from politicians inside and outside the country that came under the scrutiny of public discussion. Some of these messages were supporting a new agreement (and a memorandum accompanied with austerity measures) and a few others were warning that such an agreement would perpetuate Greece’s negative economic spiral, and thus an exit from the European monetary union and a return to national currency was needed (Grexit). The present study examined which were the factors that predicted people’s support of the then discussed national policies. The focus was on social psychological factors such social identity, injustice and collective efficacy all of which have been found to predict collective action in general (see van Zomeren et al., 2008). The effect of emotions (anger and fear-and-helplessness) was also examined.

It was evident that national identity, perceived injustice and collective efficacy were important variables predicting policy preferences (RQ1). Specifically, perceived injustice predicted all three policies: Grexit, agreement to a new memorandum, and debt relief. The more participants thought that previous agreements with international lenders were unjust, the more they were in favor of Grexit and of a fight for debt relief and the less they supported the solution of a new memorandum. This

was evident across certainty conditions. Perceived injustice proved a powerful predictor of policy support (Smith & Ortiz, 2002; Tausch et al., 2011).

Collective efficacy was also found to predict the solution of Grexit and debt relief. However, under the uncertainty frame collective efficacy seemed to lose its predictive power. This is an indication of a moderation effect; uncertainty framing undermined the relationship between efficacy and policy support. This is interesting since it suggests that the relationship between collective efficacy and policy support is weakened by a frame of uncertainty that promotes an interpretation of the situation as uncontrollable and unknown.

The emotional reactions to media framing were found to be important predictors of support of national policies, over and above injustice, collective efficacy and social identity (H1). As expected, anger predicted Grexit, so that the angrier were the participants, the more they favored Grexit. On the other hand, the more they experienced fear-and-helplessness, the less they were inclined to support Grexit (Chrysoschoou et al., 2013). These findings were evident irrespective framing. Interestingly, fear-and-helplessness was positively related to the agreement of a memorandum under the uncertainty framing (but not in the certainty one), an indication of a moderation effect. The increase of fear-and-helplessness under the uncertainty condition also strengthened the predictive power of the emotion on policy support.

Research in collective action has frequently pointed to the relationship between perceived injustice and anger. The more people feel that their situation is unfair and unjust, the more angry they get. It has been also suggested that anger mediate the effects of perceived injustice on collective action angry (Devos et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2009). The present study examined this relationship and examined whether this mediational relationship is moderated by media framing of uncertainty. A frame of uncertainty that points to the uncontrollability of the economic situation and the unknown that lurks in the future allows the relationship between injustice and anger to hold. On the other hand, a frame of certainty soothes this relationship. This moderated mediation hypothesis was supported by the analysis (H2).

Neither national nor political identity proved to be particularly significant predictors of policy support (RQ1). Perhaps this happened because the context was not essentially perceived as an intergroup one, either us versus them (in terms of nationalities) in the international arena or us versus them inside the country (in terms of social class).

The moderation effects of media framing on the relationships (a) between efficacy and policy support and (b) between fear-and-helplessness and memorandum support, underline the importance that media frames have on people's understanding of their

socioeconomic situation (RQ2). They affect the way people understand and interpret their situation (Shah et al., 2009) and for this, media framing should be considered as an important factor contributing to the subjective experiences that predict people's intention to provide support to one policy or another. In other words, while social psychological models have so far emphasized individuals' interpretative processes that predict support of collective action, it should be noted that this interpretation and subjective experience is often affected and mediated by the processes of communication. The media provide interpretative frames that influence people's understanding of their situation and the relationships between social psychological processes and policy support.

Limitations

The study has a number of limitations that should be discussed. The sample, although varied in terms of demographics, is nevertheless a convenience sample prohibiting this way the breadth of generalizability of the findings. Also, the Debt Relief factor of policy support consisted of only one item weakening this way its psychometric characteristics. Furthermore, although perceived uncertainty was included as a manipulation check, it is not certain how participants understood the frames and what meaning-production processes they employed themselves. In future research, it would be useful to include measures of participants' thoughts to assess their thinking process as they are exposed to the specific media frames.

Conclusion

The present study examined a number of variables that predict the support of critical national policies, such as Grexit and agreement on a new memorandum during the recent Greek economic crisis. All social psychological variables, perceived injustice, collective efficacy and social identity, proved to be significant predictors. Emotions of anger and fear-and-helplessness were also significant predictors of policy support. Media framing of the economic situation as certain vs. uncertain moderated some of the relations found. This suggested that exposure to media content should be taken into account when examining people's interpretations of their socioeconomic situation as predictors of support of, or intention to, collective actions or national policies.

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