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A Rhetorical Analysis of Greek Political Discourse  
in Times of Crisis

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# BETWEEN ADVERSARINESS AND COMPROMISE

## A Rhetorical Analysis of Greek Political Discourse in Times of Crisis

*Assimakis Tseronis and Dimitris Serafis*

### Introduction

In Greek antiquity, rhetoric was inextricably related to politics, not only in the narrow sense of politics as deliberation about a future course of action but also in the broader sense as active engagement and participation in all public proceedings of the polis (Harris 2017). In modern times, rhetoric has been associated with embellishment and manipulation, and as such it has been connected mainly to appearances and demagogy (Martin 2013). This is a rather unfortunate development that does not do justice to the analytical and explanatory potential of rhetorical categories for the study of argumentative communication in general and political discourse in particular.

Greek scholars who study rhetoric are mainly affiliated to university departments in classics, ancient philosophy, and pedagogy. In academic literature but also in journalism and texts produced by users in social media, references to rhetorical strategies and rhetorical figures abound. Nevertheless, there are not many attempts to use rhetorical categories in a systematic way for the study of communication in general or political communication in particular. Moreover, when rhetorical concepts are indeed used for conducting analyses of discursive or social phenomena, these are most of the time borrowed from the classical Aristotelian tradition, and hardly ever updated with modern developments to the study of rhetoric and argumentation.

In this chapter, we apply two concepts from classical rhetoric, namely *topoi* and *endoxa* as they have been revised within two modern approaches to argumentation theory, to the analysis of two fragments of parliamentary speeches. In doing this, we agree with Amossy (2017: 262–263) who writes that “Political discourse is meant not only to persuade by rationally justifying a choice, but also to reinforce existing values and shared opinions, so that citizens can be mobilized, in times of crisis to defend these values.” At the same time, we acknowledge that political discourse in general and parliamentary discourse in particular are characterized by both adversariness and compromise (see Ilie 2017). In the approach we take, we assume that political discourse

ideally seeks to balance the manipulatory and deceitful dimension of politics with the deliberative and rational one. The combination of concepts from classical rhetoric and modern argumentation theory helps to explain how this tension is managed.

In parliamentary debates, adversariness is expected, but compromise is also necessary since the parties and the MPs do not only need to follow certain institutional rules but also to accept certain starting points. Especially at a time of crisis for the whole nation, one would expect the MPs and party leaders to be ready to put aside certain antagonisms and focus on the shared attempt to deal with the problem. For the purposes of illustration of the analytical and explanatory relevance of these categories, as they have been revised in the two models of argumentation we adopt, we analyse the speeches of the government and opposition leaders during the 2010 parliamentary debate on the signing of the first memorandum of understanding between Greece and the “troika” of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the analysis we show how each speaker balances between adversariness and compromise in the discussion of this crucial bill that was the beginning of a change in the financial and political status quo in both Greece and Europe, and how they manage to address the multiple audiences and their own political agendas under the constraints of the institutional setting and the expectations set by the external audience (national and European).

### **The Study of Rhetoric in Contemporary Greek Humanities and Social Sciences Scholarship**

The academic study of rhetoric among Greek scholars in modern times remains to a large extent in the hands of classicists, philosophers and pedagogues. As a result, one finds more studies about the ancient Greek texts rather than studies that make use of the rhetorical theory developed in these texts in order to analyse contemporary communication.

Besides numerous publications of translations from Ancient to Modern Greek of the original works by the sophists, Aristotle and the Attic orators, Greek classicists have published a number of studies focusing on rhetoric and the Athenian democracy (Alexiou 2020), rhetoric and persuasion in different genres and institutional settings (Papaioannou et al. 2020), as well as on more specific topics such as the performance dimension of oratory (Serafim 2017) and rhetoric and emotions (Spatharas 2019). Rhetoric in Byzantium has not received enough attention yet, with the exception of a monograph by Papaioannou (2013).

Scholars from philosophy departments in Greece have published studies that focus on the intricate relationships between classical rhetoric and ancient philosophy (see Balla 1997 on Plato and rhetoric, and Protopapas-Marneli 2005 on Stoics and rhetoric). Bassakos (1999) has proposed a re-assessment of rhetorical concepts, such as stasis, as tools for the critical study of modern political philosophy (see also the studies collected in the volume by Kindi et al. 2019).

While rhetoric is present in the Greek school curriculum in both a direct way (through the study of classical orators in original or translated versions) and an indirect way (through the teaching of writing and composition), it is in the last decades that scholarly research about the teaching of rhetoric has been conducted (see Egglezou 2014a, 2014b for primary school, and Papadopoulou and Pangourelia 2018 as well as Sachinidou 2015 for Lyceum). Moreover, in the last two decades several associations for the promotion of the teaching of the rhetorical skills of public speaking and debating have been founded,

and debate tournaments have been organized at local and national level among teams from high schools and universities.

A quick look at scholarly work published in the Greek language shows that the study of rhetoric is influenced almost exclusively by the classical Aristotelian categories. With very few exceptions, Greek scholars seem to ignore or overlook the developments of modern rhetorical theory in the twenty-first century and the connections between rhetoric and argumentation (see Aune 2008 and Kock 2022 for an overview of the most important authors from the US and Europe). At the same time, there is no systematic study of the connections between rhetoric and linguistics, except maybe in the work of Nakas (2005) who has studied extensively the language patterns that characterize known rhetorical figures in a variety of spoken and written genres. Scholars working in text linguistics and discourse analysis refer occasionally to some of the most well-known categories of rhetoric, such as the three persuasive means or the rhetorical canons and figures, but they do not make any systematic use of these categories, or of elaborations proposed within contemporary rhetorical scholarship, as a method for analysis. In the next section, we introduce two of these contemporary extensions of rhetorical concepts which can prove useful for the study of political and parliamentary discourse in particular.

### **Revisiting and Expanding Classical Rhetorical Categories: Endoxa and Topoi**

When studying contemporary Greek political discourse, researchers in humanities and social sciences draw from a combination of theoretical approaches ranging from text linguistics to (critical) discourse analysis and sociology or political theories, without however making a systematic use of categories from classical rhetorical studies or of categories developed in modern approaches to rhetoric and argumentation (see, for example, the studies in Hatzidaki and Goutsos 2017). Rhetoric is either treated too broadly as “rhetorical strategies” without any further specification, or too narrowly as the search for rhetorical figures in political speeches. On the other hand, in the international literature on political discourse and deliberation, a rhetorical turn is attested (see Finlayson 2007; Martin 2013; Hatzisavvidou and Martin 2021). As Martin (2013: 88) explains, political rhetorical analysis “involves employing rhetorical categories to explore how political actors make interventions to control or ‘appropriate’ particular situations”. At the same time, discourse scholars such as Wodak (2009) and Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) incorporate insights from classical rhetoric and modern argumentation studies into the frameworks that they propose for the study of political discourse in particular (see Amossy 2017 for a brief overview, and Tseronis 2013 for a review).

Two concepts from classical rhetoric that have been elaborated and incorporated in contemporary approaches to discourse and argumentation studies and which are particularly relevant for the study of political discourse are topoi and endoxa (Rubinelli 2009). Endoxon (plural: endoxa) is defined by Aristotle in the book of Topics (A1, 100b 21–23) as “generally accepted opinions [...] which commend themselves to all or to the majority or to the wise that is, to all of the wise or to the majority or to the most famous and distinguished of them”. As such, endoxa characterize dialectical arguments, that is arguments whose premises are not merely true or false but are somehow connected to what a particular audience knows. Arguments based on endoxa have higher chances of

persuading an audience since they adapt to the values, beliefs, and norms of that audience. *Topos* (plural: *topoi*) in Aristotle was used in two senses: (a) as inferential principles, from which arguments can be drawn, and (b) as possible themes of the discussion, what Rigotti and Greco (2019: 21) describe, respectively, as the “*topoi from*” and the “*topoi around*”. While originally *topoi* described a system for the invention stage in the process of arguing, in modern approaches (see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) *topoi* have been employed as an analytic tool.

Within discourse studies, the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) (see Reisigl and Wodak 2016) can be regarded as the first framework that has consistently employed concepts from rhetoric, specifically, the Aristotelian concept of *topos* to identify argumentation strategies that permeate concrete instances of public communication. For the study of right-wing populist discourse in Austria, for example, DHA identifies a series of *topoi*, including the *topos* of people, of anger, of liberty, and of law and order. Working within the DHA, Boukala (2016) proposed to include the Aristotelian concept of *endoxon* in order to describe the dominantly accepted values and knowledge in a specific socio-cultural context. In that respect, *topoi* should be seen as (re)activating *endoxa* during the development of a dialectical syllogism. According to the author, the interplay of *topoi* and *endoxa* can better encapsulate content-logical (*topoi*) and contextual (*endoxa*) premises which govern the syllogisms that pave the way to a(n) (often implicitly) defended standpoint.

Within argumentation studies, it is the pragma-dialectical model of argumentation (van Eemeren 2010) and the Argumentum Model of Topics (Rigotti and Greco 2019) that have drawn insights from rhetoric in order to provide a contextualized and situated account for the analysis and evaluation of argumentation (see also Kock 2022). Pragma-Dialectics, developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004), is an encompassing theoretical framework combining philosophical and pragmatic insights in order to account for both the descriptive and the normative dimensions in the study of argumentative communication. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (1999, 2002) have extended the pragma-dialectical theory with rhetorical insights, by introducing the concept of strategic manoeuvring.

In the strategic manoeuvring approach (van Eemeren 2010), the analyst assumes that argumentative discourse is the result of a strategic design that seeks to strike a balance between the dimension of reasonableness and the dimension of effectiveness. More specifically, the argumentative moves identified in the discourse are assumed to be the result of choices made regarding the content (topical potential), the ways of adapting to audience demand, and the selection of suitable presentational devices. As van Eemeren (2010) explains, the three aspects of strategic manoeuvring relate to major categories from classical rhetoric, namely the systems of *topoi*, the discussion of audience and *endoxa*, as well as the system of choices concerning the canon of *elocutio*. Selection from the topical potential concerns the material for the arguments at the argumentation stage and for the other argumentative moves in the other stages of a critical discussion, and thereby relates to the sense of *topoi* as both inferential principles and possible themes of discussion. Adaptation to audience demand requires the speaker or author to secure communion with the views and preferences of the targeted audience, by appealing to the different types of audience and their respective views and preferences. Selection from presentational devices refers to the communicative means that are used in presenting the various argumentative moves.

The Argumentum Model of Topics (AMT) developed by Rigotti and colleagues (see Rigotti and Greco 2019) complements the strategic manoeuvring approach in a productive way. The AMT acknowledges the heuristic and warranting function of *topoi* and incorporates them in a systematic way in order to account for the inference processes involved in argumentative discourse. It claims that inferences are part of argumentation schemes, namely “the structures that connect the premises to the standpoint or conclusion in a piece of real argumentation” (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 208). To reconstruct the passage that connects standpoint and argument(s), the proponents of the AMT distinguish between two components, the procedural-inferential component and the material-contextual component. These two interrelating components are based on two core concepts of the rhetorical (Aristotelian) tradition, namely *topos/topoi* (*locus/loci* in the Latin tradition) and *endoxon/endoxa*. If taken together, these components encapsulate the (onto-)logical (see *loci*) and the contextual (see *endoxa*) premises that the speaker or author must take into consideration in order to effectively draw an inference in different socio-cultural circumstances.

More specifically, the “procedural-inferential component” consists of (a) the *locus* “as the source from which arguments are taken” (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 210), and (b) the *maxim*, which realizes the inferential principle(s) that stem(s) from each *locus* (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 209). For example, the statement “if the cause is present, the effect will be present” (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 208) would be an appropriate *maxim* related to the so-called “*locus* from final cause” that falls under the means-end type of argumentation. On the other side, the “material-contextual component” includes (a) the *endoxon*, which is defined as “a general premise that is accepted by the relevant public [...] in a specific argumentative situation” (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 214), and (b) the *datum*, which is a “premise of a factual nature” (Rigotti and Greco 2019: 215). The *maxim*–*datum* interplay makes these two components converge to a first conclusion/minor premise, creating a quasi-Y structure that points to the final conclusion, that is, the defended standpoint (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 208–216 for an overview).

The concept of strategic manoeuvring helps the analyst to explain how the text under analysis has come to be produced, that is, as a result of choices that the speaker or writer made regarding the three aspects of topical potential, audience adaptation and presentation. Such an explanation is of importance for the reconstruction of argumentation and eventually for its evaluation. At the same time, the AMT distinguishes the elements that play a role in the inference process that underlies the justification of the claims made in argumentative communication. As such, the model helps to connect the argumentative claims both with the context in which they have been put forward (by identifying the *endoxon* that relates to the claim) and with the logical bridge necessary for warranting their argumentative function (by identifying the *locus* that makes the passage to the claim). While the AMT provides the deeper inference structure of an argument, the strategic manoeuvring approach seeks to connect the production of the argument to the situational context. As van Eemeren (2010: 108, n. 36) observes, the distinction of the *endoxon* component in the AMT links the topical potential aspect of strategic manoeuvring with the audience demand.

### **Political Rhetoric and Parliamentary Debates**

Politics has been connected with speech (*λόγος*) since antiquity, while rhetoric as the art of finding the available means of persuasion in any given situation has been used and

abused by political agents ever since. It is this connection with speech, both as language and as reasoning, that has drawn discourse analysis scholars into the study of the various genres of political communication (see studies collected in volumes edited by Cap and Okulska 2013; Chilton and Schäffner 2002; Fetzer 2013; and Wodak and Forchtner 2017, among others), and has made political theorists pay attention to the use of language in political communication (Finlayson 2007; Martin 2013). As Cap and Okulska (2013) and Fetzer (2013) observe, political communication in its broadest sense occurs in three different domains: (a) highly institutionalized settings such as the parliament, involving politicians, political parties, governments and ministers (what Fetzer refers to as “politics from above”); (b) highly diversified settings where citizens, non-governmental social institutions and other public or private initiatives express their political views (what Fetzer refers to as “politics from below”); and (c) the media where political discourse from either of the two other domains is represented and commented upon. Among the genres of political communication that have received most attention (in both international and Greek scholarship), one finds political speeches, election posters, policy papers, (parliamentary) debates, press conferences, and political interviews.

Parliamentary discourse belongs to the highly institutionalized discourses of political communication and consists of a number of sub-genres which mainly fall under the deliberative genre of rhetoric (see Ilie 2017). It is during parliamentary debates that ministers and MPs as well as party leaders deliver speeches and interact with the ultimate goal of collectively reaching decisions regarding legislation and policies. As Ilie (2010: 13) notes, “Parliamentary interaction exhibits a permanent competition for power and leadership roles, but also for fame and popularity as concrete manifestations of MPs’ public image.” Depending on the type of parliament and the institutional and cultural specificities, parliamentary debates in some countries can be characterized by more adversarial and confrontational behaviour than others (see Georgalidou et al. 2019 for a study about aggressive behaviour in the Greek parliament).

Tsakona (2009: 87–88), who describes the Greek parliamentary system as a highly competitive one, observes that

the main interest of Greek politicians is not to provide political and legal arguments on the issues discussed; rather, they address a wider audience using a familiar (i.e. everyday and conversational) mode in order to attract the attention of the public and persuade them that their policies are right, that their criticisms are justified, and that they have something better to propose than their opponents.

Because the ultimate goal of parliamentary debates remains collective decision-making regarding national policy, one would expect this to be reached on the basis of exchange of arguments and the assessment of their quality. Even if on the surface MPs may use creative language and humour, as Tsakona observes, it should still be possible to identify what the rhetorical and argumentative function of such a presentational choice can be (see previous section about strategic manoeuvring). Tsangaraki (2022), who studied argumentation in the Greek parliament with a focus on the sub-genre of the speeches of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition during plenary debates, identifies repetitions, digressions, *ad hominem* attacks and attacks about inconsistency as typically occurring strategies employed by the speakers in order to achieve their goals while observing the institutional and generic constraints of the rhetorical situation (see also Zarefsky 2008).

### **Sample Analysis: The Debate on Greece's First Bailout Program**

In this section, we analyse two fragments from the speeches that prime minister George A. Papandreou and the opposition leader Antonis Samaras gave during the plenary parliamentary debate on May 6, 2010 concerning the measures proposed by the government for the implementation of the European Financial Stability Facility (see Appendix). We first provide a short description of the political context. In the analysis, we focus on the arguments that can be reconstructed from what is said by the two speakers, by combining the insights about strategic manoeuvring and the argumentative inference process that we presented above.

Following a series of meetings with EU officials concerning the financial stability of Greece, and only seven months after the parliamentary elections of 2009, prime minister Papandreou, leader of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), announced Greece's immediate recourse to the European Financial Stability Facility in April 2010. As a result, Greece entered an almost ten-year turbulent period during which continuous austerity bailout programs were implemented by the successive cabinets, under the strict supervision of the so-called "troika" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB). From 2009 until 2015, Greece witnessed the rise and fall of several governments and a thorough rearticulation of its political and party system. The established socialist party (PASOK) ended up being totally marginalized and the former marginal radical left SYRIZA started leading the Greek opposition, before leading a coalition government (2015–2019) with the nationalist ANEL party (see Serafis et al. 2022 and references therein, for an overview). At the same time, the Greek far right gained momentum when the openly neo-Nazi party, Golden Dawn, entered the Greek parliament in 2012.

Papandreou's predicament in this debate was that his party had been elected (in October 2009) on a political platform which was promising extension of social benefits against the right-wing New Democracy (ND) party led by Kostas Karamanlis, while under the current situation he had to persuade PASOK's electorate, the MPs of the party and the Greek people about the adoption of austerity fiscal reforms, and extensive privatizations. Samaras, on the other hand, who had been elected president of the ND party after Karamanlis' defeat, had to repair the negative image that the party inherited from his predecessor while at the same time he had to manage the expectations that other EU conservative governments had of the role his party could play in the crisis. Samaras was not denying the necessity and the very core of fiscal reforms, but he was fiercely opposing tax increases and salary/pension cuts. He was proposing, instead, a (re-)negotiation of the "troika's" bailout terms through a program of extensive privatizations that could enable Greece to avoid a shocking decrease in living conditions.

Because of the institutionalized activity of the parliamentary debate in general and the specific circumstances of this particular debate, the audience addressed by both politicians is assumed to be heterogeneous, consisting of individuals or groups who have either different opinions or different starting points, what van Eemeren (2010: 110) refers to as a multiple and mixed audience. The audience addressed consists of the two politicians' own party members, the members of the other parties attending this discussion, the Greek people watching the discussion, but also the politicians and citizens of other EU member states and of countries outside the EU. In his speech, Papandreou frames the discussion about the voting of the bill as a dilemma ("Either we vote and implement the Agreement, or we condemn Greece to bankruptcy"). He creates a generalized feeling of

blame, stressing the responsibilities of the previous ND government but also of every other political party, indirectly including his own. On the other hand, Samaras frames the discussion as concerning a decision about subordination of the country to foreign supervision institutions (“Today we are called to discuss the literal subjugation of the country under foreign control mechanisms”). He elaborates on an alternative proposal concerning the ways that the country may decrease the deficit, namely by privatizations. On various occasions throughout the speech, Samaras warns or even threatens about actions his party may take regarding the protection of the so-called red lines. The two fragments (see Appendix) that we selected to analyse below present in a rather condensed form the main arguments of the two speakers.

Papandreou’s argument for voting for the specific bill can be summarized as follows:

1. The main opposition party should vote in favour of the bill
  - 1.1 The parliaments of EU member states are voting in favour of providing financial support to Greece
  - 1.2 The opposition party bears the main responsibility for the current financial state

In the fragment under analysis (and throughout most of his speech), Papandreou refrains from formulating a standpoint that explicitly states the goal as “voting for the bill”. Instead, he makes the presentational choice to connect the act of voting with the act of taking responsibility, and thereby to appeal to the audience’s sense of duty as well as to the endoxon stating that the government is the responsible guardian of the society. When it comes to choices from the topical potential, his first reason in support of the standpoint is based on a comparison between what the parliaments of the other EU countries have done and what the vote of the Greek parliament should be. The underlying reasoning that connects this with the standpoint would be a “locus from analogy”, explicated in terms of the maxim: if A similar to B does C, then B should do C too (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 261). By choosing this argument, Papandreou seeks to present the actions of the foreign parliaments as solidarity towards the Greek people, therefore connecting his argumentation to an appeal to the EU institutions while simultaneously emphasizing a pro-EU/IMF profile. At the same time, such a topos seeks to appeal to the indebtedness that the Greek people and the Greek parliament should feel since it would be ungrateful of them to reject the offer of help by the foreign governments.

In the second argument, Papandreou chooses to attack the opposition by pointing to the responsibility that it bears for the current financial state. With this, he refers back to an extensive part of his speech where he enumerates actions of the previous government that increased the country’s debt. He thereby presents the ND party as the main accountable political force for the financial turbulence that his government needs to fix as a responsible guardian of Greek society. The scheme that links this argument with the main standpoint is based on a “locus from definition”, which takes the form of the maxim: if X is predicated on a definition, then X is predicated on the defined term as well (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 302). As such the opposition is defined as irresponsible, contrary to the dominant values of the guardian of the society, and is expected to vote for the bill if they want to restore their image. Papandreou makes an interesting choice regarding the presentation of his second argument, formulating it not as an assertion but as a slogan-like elliptical statement that follows a conditional: “if you do not assume your responsibilities, the conclusion will be simple: you

have been irresponsible as Government and irresponsible as Opposition. You defected as Government and you are defecting as Opposition.” In choosing this formulation, he appeals to the memory and the emotions of the voters of his party and of those citizens who did not vote for the ND party in the last elections, being disappointed with the numerous scandals concerning mismanagement and police oppression by the previous government.

The choice to confront the opposition with the request to assume responsibility for the ND party’s previous mismanagement of the country’s finances is a risky one, when considering Papandreou’s main goal, which is to have the other parties vote for the bill. On the one hand, it increases the adversariness which goes counter to the spirit of consensus that the members of the parliament would be expected to show at a time like this. On the other hand, it is probably the only argument he can use, given that historically both parties are to blame for the current state, as they have been alternating in power since the restoration of democracy in 1974. Since he cannot openly and one-sidedly blame his own party (even though he does that in an indirect way when he states in an earlier part of his speech: “Yes, we were all to blame, some of us less, and some of us more, all those who governed Greece”), he chooses to appear critical towards the opposition. This is a choice that may eventually appeal to a large part of the Greek public that has been disappointed by the previous government under the ND party. At the same time, Papandreou chooses to present the endorsement of the support by the foreign governments as “help” of the EU member states towards the Greek people and to pass over the fact that Greece’s bailout was minimizing the financial threat for these foreign governments too.

Samaras’ argument for voting against the specific bill can be summarized as follows:

1. The opposition party will not vote the bill
  - 1.1 The measures proposed in this bill will put the country into recession
  - 1.2 These measures do not provide any hope
  - 1.3 The government does not need the support of the opposition for the bill to pass
  - 1.4 The opposition party does not want to become an accomplice to the destructive consequences of these measures

Samaras chooses to present the opposition’s main argument for voting against the bill in a clear and unequivocal way, by stating that the proposed measures will lead the country to further recession. This appears as a conclusion to the first part of his speech in which he elaborates on his party’s alternative plans for dealing with the sovereign debt crisis. Here, as in other parts, Samaras makes the topical choice to emphasize the financial consequences of the proposed measures for the country’s economy, something which constitutes a clear argument from negative consequences that contrasts with the rather vague formulations that Papandreou used when discussing the consequences of the measures for the Greek citizens. The argument connects with the standpoint through the “locus from termination and setting up” which is realized in terms of the maxim: if X is bad, X must be avoided (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 263).

Samaras proceeds with the rebuttal of Papandreou’s comparison between the attitude of the foreign parliaments regarding the support towards Greece and the Greek opposition’s reluctance to vote for the bill. This is a rather delicate move for him since he needs to appeal both to the expectations of the EU partners and to those of his own party members. On the one hand, Samaras was expected to confirm his commitment

to the decision taken by the parliament, since the EU partners required reassurances about the payment of the debt, while, on the other hand, he had to appear firm about his party's decision to vote against the bill. He seeks to balance these two goals by using a dissociation between the "help" that the foreign parliaments offer and the "concrete measures" that the Greek parliament is asked to vote. His second argument connects with the standpoint through the "locus from ontological implications" which is realized through the maxim: if X is/is not compliant with dominantly accepted implications, X must/must not be followed (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 254). Given the situation and the pro-EU orientation of his party, Samaras, just like Papandreou, chooses to present this as "help" and to background the fact that this is a decision that the governments of the EU member states had to take in order to secure their own exposure to the risks of the debt crisis. To that effect, he even makes an explicit promise when he states that "The foreign parliaments know that what they will offer, they will get back." The second argument appears at first sight to be a repetition of the first and main argument, concerning the consequences of the measures. But this time, the argument is not presented in factual terms but rather in emotional terms with reference to the concept of hope and the use of the metaphor of the patient and the drug. In doing this, Samaras appeals to the concerns of the Greek citizens who are described as the patients who risk dying from the proposed measures. By emphasizing that it is the government that takes the decision about the dosage of the drug and that the EU partners are only responsible for the recommendation of the drug, Samaras seeks to keep the delicate balance between his internal and external audience.

The last two arguments emphasize the adversary character of the discussion. By stating that the bill will pass even without the opposition's positive vote, which is true since the government had the majority of seats in the parliament, Samaras seeks to point out Papandreou's inconsistent behaviour of criticizing the opposition so vehemently while asking them for support. This argument connects to the main standpoint through the "locus from final-instrumental cause", which is realized through the maxim: if X is/is not a means to achieve a goal, then X should/should not be employed (see Rigotti and Greco 2019: 258). By making this topical choice, Samaras seeks to argue also towards the international creditors that his involvement in the vote is not necessary for the ultimate implementation of the proposed reforms. Through his last argument Samaras emphasizes that he (and his party) do not want to be associated with the negative consequences that this agreement will have for the Greek people, and uses the word "accomplice". By making such a topical and presentational choice, Samaras clearly appeals to the expectations of his own party members and party supporters, thereby risking appearing to prioritize the party's own interests in coming to power again over the country's need for a political consensus at a time of economic crisis. Similar to the second argument by Papandreou, this, too, is an argument based on the "locus from definition", whereby Samaras seeks to portray his party as being in accordance with their presupposed role (see endoxon) to protect the citizens from the negative consequences of the proposed measures, the difference being that the two leaders have opposite views about what the negative consequences entail.

Compared to Papandreou who makes the topical choice to emphasize responsibility and duty, Samaras stresses the concept of hope, both in the passage under study and in other parts of his speech. In this fragment as well as in the rest of his speech, he is interested in establishing the image of his party as one that offers an alternative solution to the problem while remaining a partner that the other EU member states can

trust. He thus seeks to appeal to the expectations of multiple audiences both within his own party and the party's voters as well as within the EU. On the one hand, as leader of the ND party, he was struggling to control a heterogeneous parliamentary group that consisted of MPs who favoured certain measures of the proposed agreement and MPs who supported an anti-PASOK, anti-austerity position. On the other hand, his party's steady commitment to Greece's EU/Eurozone membership did not permit him to fiercely oppose the bailout program (as, for example, the left-wing parties, SYRIZA and the Communist party KKE, did during this parliamentary debate).

### **What Future for Contemporary Greek Rhetorical Studies?**

In this chapter, we made use of the classical rhetorical concepts of *topoi* and *endoxa* as these have been revised within two contemporary models of argumentation theory, namely *Pragma-Dialectics* and the *Argumentum Model of Topics*, in order to show how politicians balance between adversariness and compromise given the constraints of the situation and the multiple audiences that they address. The goal was to update Greek scholarship on contemporary rhetorical studies and to show the analytical and explanatory potential of these concepts as a complement to the customary focus on the use of rhetorical figures and of the three means of persuasion in political communication. In our sample analysis of the parliamentary speeches by prime minister Papandreou and the leader of the opposition Samaras during the debate about the first bailout program, we focused on the micro-level with the aim to account for the rhetorical strategies that go beyond the choice of words, and to acknowledge both the rational and emotional dimensions of political discourse, addressed by the content-logical (see *loci*) and contextual (see *endoxa*) lines of reasoning.

Compared to linguistic analysis, frame or content analysis of political speeches, the reconstruction of the arguments produced by politicians allows one to study the reasoning and inference processes, and to uncover the connections between what is said and what is meant. Focusing on the arguments exchanged in political communication makes it possible to assess their quality and their contribution to political action by explaining how they are grounded in beliefs, values or knowledge shared between the speaker and the audience. The proposed analysis could be expanded by carrying out a systematic evaluation of the argumentation produced by the two speakers both in terms of the cogency of their arguments and in terms of their rhetorical efficiency. Moreover, the study of political communication remains incomplete if one does not pay attention to the non-verbal aspects of politicians' performance (see studies in Poggi et al. 2013) or to the use of images in printed and online political communication (see Seizov 2014; Serafis et al. 2020; Tseronis 2017; Veneti et al. 2019).

Rhetorical studies of Greek political discourse could benefit from enriching their analytical toolkit not only with concepts such as *topoi* and *endoxa* but also with the list of specific types of arguments, such as the so-called practical or pragmatic arguments, or specific types of rhetorical strategies such as *apologia* and *dissociation*. Identifying specific types of arguments, instead of generally talking about the arguments used in discourse, and specifying the rhetorical strategies that speakers or authors of texts exploit, can contribute to a nuanced analysis and evaluation of political discourse. The way forward is to open up to interdisciplinarity and make the most of the synergies between classical studies of rhetoric and modern approaches to argumentation studies, as well as approaches to discourse and multimodal analysis.

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## Appendix

Fragment from Papandreu's speech in the Greek parliament on May 6, 2010 (Greek text copied from the official document of the Minutes, followed by translation in English provided by the authors of the chapter)

Σήμερα, καλώ και πάλι την Αξιωματική Αντιπολίτευση: Τολμήστε να αναλάβετε για μια φορά την ευθύνη για τις πράξεις σας. Τολμήστε την υπέρβαση, τουλάχιστον ως ανάληψη ευθύνης για τα πεπραγμένα. Τολμήστε να στηρίζετε μια προσπάθεια, για τη σωτηρία της χώρας. Τολμήστε για δυο λόγους: Τα κοινοβούλια των άλλων χωρών αποφασίζουν, οι λαοί των άλλων κρατών-μελών αποφασίζουν να στηρίζουν την Ελλάδα. Αποφασίζουν να δώσουν δάνεια στην Ελλάδα. Αποφασίζουν ενωμένα να δώσουν μια μάχη για τη σωτηρία της χώρας μας. Εμείς, απέναντι σε αυτούς, τι λέμε; Δεν δείχνουμε ότι υπάρχει η ενότητα των πολιτικών δυνάμεων, τουλάχιστον από αυτούς που είχαν και ιδιαίτερη ευθύνη, κύριε Σαμαρά. Και αυτό είναι ένας δεύτερος λόγος. Διότι αν δεν αναλάβετε τις ευθύνες σας, το συμπέρασμα θα είναι απλό: Ανεύθυνοι ως Κυβέρνηση, ανεύθυνοι και ως Αντιπολίτευση. Λιποτακτήσατε ως Κυβέρνηση, λιποτακτείτε και ως Αντιπολίτευση. (Χειροκροτήματα από την πτέρυγα του ΠΑΣΟΚ)

Today, I call once again on the Opposition: dare for once to take responsibility for your actions. Dare to go the extra mile, at least as a way of assuming responsibility for what has been done. Dare to support an effort to save the country. Dare for two reasons: The parliaments of the other countries are deciding, the people of the other member states are deciding to support Greece. They are taking the decision to give loans to Greece. They are deciding unitedly to fight for the salvation of our country. What do we say to them? We are not showing them that there is unity of the political forces, at least of those who had a certain responsibility, Mr. Samaras. And that's the second reason [why you need to vote for the bill]. Because if you do not assume your responsibilities, the conclusion will be simple: you have been irresponsible as government and irresponsible as

opposition. You defected as government and you are defecting as opposition. (Applause from the PASOK party members)

Fragment from Samaras' speech in the Greek parliament on May 6, 2010 (Greek text copied from the official document of the Minutes, followed by translation in English provided by the authors of the chapter)

Με τα μέτρα που προτείνετε σήμερα, μας βάζετε πιο βαθιά στο φαύλο κύκλο της ύφεσης και γι' αυτό δεν πρόκειται να ψηφίσουμε το νομοσχέδιό σας. (Χειροκροτήματα από την πτέρυγα της Νέας Δημοκρατίας)

Θα πω κάποια ρητορικά ερωτήματα. Μας λέτε: «όταν η Ελλάδα ζητά από τα άλλα ευρωπαϊκά κοινοβούλια να ψηφίσουν τη χρηματοδότηση, πώς εσείς την καταψηφίζετε;». Απαντώ. Τα άλλα κοινοβούλια ψηφίζουν βοήθεια προς την Ελλάδα, εμείς ψηφίζουμε για συγκεκριμένα μέτρα. Τα ξένα κοινοβούλια ξέρουν ότι αυτά που θα δώσουν, θα τα πάρουν, εμείς ξέρουμε ότι αυτά που θα πάρουμε θα τα υποστούμε αλλά, πέραν από τη χρηματοδότηση θέλουμε και την ελπίδα. Γι' αυτόν το λόγο συνεχώς είμαστε εδώ, για να προσφέρουμε λύσεις ελπίδας, άλλο μίγμα οικονομικής πολιτικής. Και αυτό είναι πολύ διαφορετικό, γιατί τα άλλα κοινοβούλια ψηφίζουν να δοθεί στην Ελλάδα ένα φάρμακο, δεν ψηφίζουν τη δοσολογία του φαρμάκου. Εσείς εδώ προτείνετε ένα φάρμακο σε δοσολογία που κινδυνεύει να σκοτώσει τον ασθενή και αυτό εμείς σας το επισημαίνουμε και δεν μπορούμε να το δεχτούμε. Και εν πάση περιπτώσει, δεν καταλαβαίνω ποιο είναι το πρόβλημα. Αν εσείς πιστεύετε στα μέτρα που προτείνετε σήμερα, τι σας νοιάζει η δική μας άρνηση; Έτσι κι αλλιώς, αυτό το νομοσχέδιο «περνάει» - κάτι που είπατε εδώ πέρα με περισσή κομπορρημοσύνη- χωρίς τη δική μας βοήθεια. Δεν μας έχετε ανάγκη εμάς. Αν πάλι δεν πιστεύετε στα μέτρα που προτείνετε σήμερα, τότε δεν ψάχνετε για στήριξη, αλλά για συνερόχους στην καταστροφή και εμείς συνένοχοί σας δεν πρόκειται να γίνουμε! (Χειροκροτήματα από την πτέρυγα της Νέας Δημοκρατίας)

With the measures you are proposing today, you are putting us deeper into the vicious cycle of recession and that is why we are not going to vote for your bill. (Applause from the New Democracy party members)

I will raise some rhetorical questions. You tell us: “while Greece asks the other European parliaments to vote for its funding, how do you vote against it?” I answer: The other parliaments are voting to aid Greece, we are voting on specific measures. The foreign parliaments know that what they will offer, they will get back, we know that what we will receive will be with a cost but, in addition to the funding, we also want hope. That is why we are constantly here to offer solutions of hope, another mixture of economic policy. And this is where the difference lies, because the other parliaments are voting about giving Greece a medicine, they are not voting for the exact dosage of the drug. You are proposing here a drug at a dosage that risks killing the patient and we are pointing this out to you and we cannot accept it. And in any case, I do not understand what the problem is. If you believe in the measures you are proposing today, what do you care about our refusal? In any case, this bill “will pass” – something you stated here bragging – without our help. You don't need us. If, on the other hand, you do not believe in the measures you are proposing today, then you are not looking for support, but for accomplices to the disaster, and we will not become your accomplices! (Applause from the New Democracy party members)

