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What do Greek political elites think about Europe and the crisis? An exploratory analysis

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Yannis Tsirbas[#] and Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos[*]

ABSTRACT

In this paper the views of a sample of 74 Greek Members of Parliament (MPs) on European integration and the handling of the economic crisis by the EU are discussed and interpreted. The survey of MPs, which was conducted in 2014, is a replication of a comparable study conducted in 2007. Greek MPs continue to be attached to Europe, but evaluate negatively EU's institutions' role during the economic crisis. Overall, three groups of parliamentarians, namely pro-government MPs, parliamentarians self-placed at the centre of the left-right spectrum and more experienced MPs, tended to have more pro-European views and attitudes than MPs of the opposition, left-wing MPs and less experienced MPs. The dominant dimension of conflict for Greek political elites is the issue of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The SYRIZA-ANEL government that was formed after the January 2015 elections was not a surprise given the close proximity of these two parties on their stance towards the MoUs and the EU.

Keywords: Political elites, European integration, identity, representation, governance

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What do Greek political elites think about Europe and the crisis? An exploratory analysis

1. Introduction

Since 2010, the fiscal and financial crisis in Europe has increased the perceived importance of the European Union (EU) and, at the same time, the questioning of its effectiveness and scope. In the period up to the elections of May 2014 for the European Parliament (EP), as the crisis in the Eurozone evolved, parliamentary elites continued to play the role of mediators between EU institutions and citizens. That role became particularly sensitive and vulnerable when economic adjustment programs were formulated and agreed between the EU and Member-States, as it happened in Ireland, Portugal and Greece.

In order to address the afore-mentioned questions, an international research project was devised by J. Real-Nato (University of Almeria, Spain), under the title European National Elites and the Crisis (ENEC). The research project examines the attitudes of Members of National Parliaments (MPs) in ten EU Member-States (Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) and partly serves as a replication of the 'InTune' project.

'InTune' (standing for 'Integrated and United') was a research project on European and national identity, representation, and the scope of governance, which involved surveys of elites and mass publics in 16 EU Member-States and two candidate Member-States, on the basis of a common standardized questionnaire. The 'InTune' survey of 2007 for Greece is used in this paper in order to register changes across time. The

results of the ENEC survey for the rest of EU countries will be presented by other researchers in the annual conference of the Council of European Studies (CES) in July 2015 in Paris.

The crisis in Greece

Since 2010 fierce political debates have taken place on whether the blame for the crisis should be put on Greece or the EU and whether the measures provided by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were appropriate or even necessary. A major erosion of social trust and a great delegitimation of the political system as a whole preceded the crisis and paved the way for the dealignment of the Greek political and party system (Verney, 2014, p. 20). The twin 'earthquake' elections of May and June 2012 (Voulgaris & Nikolakopoulos, 2014) saw the rise of SYRIZA, a party of the radical left, to the status of the main opposition party in the Greek parliament.

Interviews with Greek MPs for this project took place in 2014, i.e. within the term of the previous Greek parliament (2012-2014). In the midst of conducting field research for this project, elections for the European Parliament (EP) took place (May 2014). In these elections SYRIZA was a clear winner with 27 per cent of the vote. ND came second with 23 per cent and Golden Dawn came third with 9 per cent. PASOK, which had obtained 12 per cent of the vote in the June 2012 elections, formed a center-left umbrella electoral ticket, declined even further and came fourth with 8 per cent. As it was expected, the electoral campaign for the EP elections was dominated by the issue of Greece's overcoming the crisis and whether European Union's policies had been appropriate or not.

2. Research Questions

Our main research question is the following: in what ways have the experience of the economic crisis and the debates noted above affected what Greek political elites think of the EU? More specifically we seek to explore: 1) How has the Eurozone crisis affected the attitudes of political elites towards the EU? 2) How political elites evaluate the role played by EU institutions in the management of the crisis? 3) How do they perceive the future of European integration? 4) Which factors explain the configuration of political elites' attitudes towards the EU? And 5) were there in the previous parliament any signs of the seemingly 'obscure' coalition Government that came of the January 2015 elections?

3. Theoretical background and brief review of the literature

Since the late 1990's European issues have been integrated into domestic political agendas (Hooghe and Marks 1999). National elites had been supportive of the European integration process, serving both as its driving agents and local legitimating intermediaries (Haller 2008). Many studies have tried to explain the general support for EU integration among national elites and how the elites influence and shape national public opinion (Katz and Wessels 1999; Ray 1999; Marks et al. 2002, Johansson 2002). Studying elites does not mean that with regard to the project of European integration elites matter while masses do not. In an elite-driven project, such as the project of European integration, the attitudes and expectations of citizens count by placing limits on the discretion which political elites enjoy in formulating national and EU policies.

In the context of inter-governmentalism, EU Member-States are treated as equal and their governing elites play multiple roles, now pursuing national interests, then furthering the integration of nation-states of the EU (Milward 1992, Haller 2008, Scharpf 2009).

Study results regarding the relationship between elites and the public point towards two directions. On the one hand there is evidence supporting the argument that elites shape citizens' opinions (Gabel and Scheve 2007, Ray 2003), often depending on the degree of consensus among elite members (Hooghe and Marks 2005). On the other hand, other studies suggest that public opinion also influences elites' opinions, mainly through elections (Carrubba 2001).

The InTune project (noted in section 1 above) has challenged the notion of a coherent European elite (Ilonzki 2010, Conti et al. 2011, Best 2012). Identity, representation and scope of governance were not subjects dealt with by elites in a common way.

Explaining differences in elite attitudes towards European integration

Past research has shown that the stance of political elites and parties may vary along other dimensions. Some relevant hypotheses have emerged. First, according to Sitter (2001), there is a distinction between government and opposition. Incumbent parties will tend to be more supportive of European integration than opposition parties and in fact a party's stand may change when it shifts from being in the opposition to assuming government responsibilities. Second, according to Szczerbiak and Taggart (2000), parties positioned on the margins of a country's party system will tend to be anti-integration, while parties closer to the centre

of the party system will tend to favour European integration. And, third, the position of a party along the left-right scale matters (Hooghe et al. 2004) but is not permanently fixed. The left emphasizes international cooperation more than the right which underlines national state authority (Budge et al. 2001). However, the socialist left has moved from an anti-EU to a pro-EU stand, as the case of the Greek socialist party (PASOK) shows (Verney 1996). Other left parties, e.g., the communists, have retained a Eurosceptic or even strong anti-EU stand.

The shifting views of political parties and elites regarding Greece in the EU

Results of past research on Greece have shown that the notion of national and European identity for Greek political elites was underlined by the factors of 'traditionalism' and 'liberalism' (Nezi, Sotiropoulos & Toka, 2010, p. 87-88). The modernisers or liberals wanted to accelerate domestic reforms through Europeanisation. Traditionalists understood the EU as a threat challenging the country's traditional cultural identity. A dimension with similar characteristics to 'traditionalism' was also found in 2012 in a context where the ideological dimensions of party competition were examined (see Freire, Tsatsanis & Tsirbas, 2014).

In terms of representation, measured as the amount of trust in certain European institutions, Greek parliamentarians trusted the European Parliament (EP) the most and, in general, showed more trust than the public towards the EP (Nezi, Sotiropoulos & Toka, 2010, p. 89). At the same time, in 2007 MPs were more supportive of transferring responsibilities of decision making to the European level, than the public opinion (Nezi, Sotiropoulos & Toka, 2010, p. 90). Self-placement on the left-right scale was the best predictor of MPs opinions, with MPs on the

left being less pro-European and more skeptical about the process of European integration than those on the centre and on the right (Nezi, Sotiropoulos & Toka, 2010, p. 94). However, a study of Greek parliamentary representatives conducted in July 2013 highlighted the importance of other issue dimensions as well, except from the traditional left-right dimension (Karyotis, Rudig & Judge, 2014).

Hypotheses

Although the scope of the present paper is rather descriptive and exploratory, we believe that four general hypotheses could be formulated in relation to our research questions and the above theoretical review: 1) Greek parliamentarians in general are expected to be less favourable towards the EU and the process of the European integration in comparison to 2007 because of crisis-related developments. 2) Greek MPs attitudes towards the handling of the crisis by EU institutions are naturally expected to differ according to MPs party affiliation, i.e. MPs of parties which supported and implemented EU's solutions will be more favourable than MPs of parties which opposed these solutions. Moreover, as we move towards the Left end of the political spectrum stances towards the EU should be less favourable, as will be the case with less experienced MPs. 3) Since coalition formation requires a certain degree of proximity, there should be, in the parliament under investigation, a traceable rapprochement between SYRIZA and ANEL, the government partners after the January 2015 election.

4. Methodology and data collection

Our project is based on structured and detailed interviews, based on a questionnaire devised in collaboration with researchers from another nine EU Member-States who participate in this comparative study (comparative data from other countries is not yet available). A total of 74 Greek MPs were interviewed in Athens between February and October 2014. In order for the final sample to be representative of the national assembly, quota sampling was applied, in terms of party, gender and whether the MP was a newcomer or not. As shown in Tables 1, 2 & 3 the sample is quite satisfactory in terms of representativeness, which is the reason why weighting was deemed unnecessary. The only exception is the Greek Communist Party (KKE) which did not issue a permission to its MPs to participate in this study either on 2007 or in 2014.

Table 1: Respondents' Party

	Sample (%)	Greek Parliament (%)
ND	43.2	42.3
SYRIZA	25.7	23.7
PASOK	10.8	9.3
ANEL	4.1	4.3
GD	6.8	5.3
DIMAR	5.4	3.3
KKE	0.0	4.0
Independent MPs	4.1	7.7

Note: ND = New Democracy, SYRIZA = Coalition of the Radical Left, PASOK = Panhellenic Socialist Movement, ANEL = Independent Greeks, GD = Golden Dawn, DIMAR = Democratic Left, KKE = Communist Party of Greece.

Table 2: Newcomers*

	Sample (%)	Greek Parliament (%)
Newcomers	55.4	49.7
Not newcomers	44.6	50.3

*MPs who were elected for the first time either in May or June 2012 general election.

Table 3: Respondents' Gender

	Sample (%)	Greek Parliament (%)
Men	78.4	79
Women	21.6	21

Altogether 69 interviews were conducted face-to-face and five interviews were conducted via telephone. Interviews lasted 29 minutes on average. The overall response rate of the study was 30 per cent, i.e. 249 MPs were contacted in total in order to obtain the 74 interviews. The sampling error for this sample size is in the area of ±9%.

Answers to the questions were inserted in the questionnaire as multiple-choice answers or items on a Likert scale. In order to identify causal relations, we employed principal components analysis (PCA), discriminant analysis and binary logistic regression. As shown in section 5 below, PCA serves in finding latent variables that differentiate MPs' views. The components revealed from PCA serve then as independent variables in discriminant analysis, which has the advantage of plotting party affiliations across dimensions. On the other hand, the predictive power of the same factors is tested through logistic regression, where they are used as predictors of MPs being in government or opposition.

Finally, our main explanatory variables are party affiliation and ideological self-placement on the Left-Right scale. Although the fact that the variables 'newcomers vs. not newcomers' and MPs' 'governmental experience vs. no governmental experience' seem to differentiate the views of MPs, it has to be born in mind that both variables are inter-correlated with certain parties' MPs. This is so because the vast majority of SYRIZA's, ANEL's and GD's MPs are newcomers and the MPs with governmental experience are mostly those of ND and PASOK.

5. Results

5.1 Respondents' profile

Additional information about the MPs who participated in the study shows that their mean age is 52 years old and their average tenure in parliament is 5.4 years (data not shown). Also, 23 per cent of the interviewees have been members of the cabinet, i.e. government ministers (Table 5). Concerning their ideological self-placement, the mean score on the left-right axis is 4.85 (Table 4).

Table 4: Respondents' Left-right axis self-placement

	%	Mean Score
0 (Left)	7.0	
1	9.9	
2	9.9	
3	7.0	
4	11.3	4.85

5	7.0
6	12.7
7	12.7
8	15.5
9	5.6
10 (Right)	1.4

Table 5: Respondents' Governmental Experience

	Sample (%)
Have served as ministers	23.0
Have not served as ministers	77.0

5.2 Attitudes of Greek MPs towards the EU

5.2.1 Attachment to different levels of community

We have explored attachment to three levels of political community, i.e. regional, national and supranational. In 2014 Greek parliamentarians were more attached to all levels of community than in 2007. Of course, differences in the cases of attachment to region and country are small and could be attributed to chance, since percentages reach or exceed 90 per cent. In the case of Europe however, there is a significant increase: 3 out of 4 Greek MPs (77 per cent) say that they are "very" or "somewhat" attached to Europe, a figure that was 50 per cent in 2007 (Table 6).

Table 6: Attachment to different levels of community. Percentage distribution of responses (Very/somewhat attached).

	2007*	2014
Attachment to region	86.5	98.6
Attachment to Greece	93.6	100
Attachment to Europe	50	77

* InTune project.

Compared to MPs of ND and PASOK, SYRIZA's MPs are much less attached to Europe (73.7 per cent). PASOK's MPs are the most attached (100 per cent, see Table 7). These differences are statistically significant as χ^2 test indicates [χ^2 (6, N = 74) = 25.866, p = 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.591].

Table 7: Attachment to Europe, percentage distribution of responses by party*.

	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
Very/somewhat attached	77	87.5	73.7	100	33.3	0	100	66.7

*Since Independent Greeks, Golden Dawn, Democratic Left and Independent MPs have small Ns, hereafter results for these parties are considered indicative.

Similarly, as we move from the left towards the right end of the scale, attachment to Europe increases (Table 8).

Table 8: Attachment to Europe. Percentage distribution of responses by self-placement on the L-R scale*.

	Total	Left	Centre	Right	No answer
Very/somewhat attached	77	75	81.8	80	33.3

**Note for tables hereafter*: Left comprises points 0-3 of the L-R scale, Centre 4-6 and Right 7-10.

Since EU is increasingly becoming a major player in the process of everyday decision-making and legislating in national parliaments, it is only logical that parliamentarians with more experience are more attached to Europe (87.9 per cent) than newcomers into parliament (68.3 per cent). This is depicted in Table 9, in a statistically significant relationship [χ^2 (1, N = 74) = 3.964, p = 0.046, Cramer's V= 0.231].

Table 9: Attachment to different levels of community. Percentage distribution of responses by parliamentary experience.

	Total	Newcomers	Not newcomers
Very/somewhat attached	77	68.3	87.9

5.2.2 Trust in European institutions

The trust of MPs in European institutions has declined since 2007. This is especially the case with European Commission (EC), with the mean score being 4.6 in 2014 down from 6.0 in 2007. The EP on the other hand, remains the most trusted institution amongst Greek parliamentarians, with the mean score being 6.7 in 2014 down from 7.1 in 2007 (Table 10).

Table 10: Greek MPs: Level of trust in European Institutions (mean scores), 2007-2014

	Political Elites 2007*	Political Elites 2014
Trust in The European Parliament	7.1	6.7
Trust in the European Commission	6.0	4.6

Note for tables hereafter: Trust is measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 indicates no trust. * InTune project.

When considering breakdowns by party (Table 11), ND's and PASOK's MPs show the most trust in European institutions, while SYRIZA is at the opposite end, especially regarding the EC. The EP is traditionally the most trusted institution amongst national parliamentarians. One-way ANOVAs were conducted and the party differences are statistically significant for both institutions under investigation: European parliament [F(6, 67)=7.722, p=0.000)], European Commission [F(6, 67)=22.199, p=0.000)].

Table 11: Greek MPs: Level of trust in European Institutions. Mean scores by party.

	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
Trust in The European Parliament	6.7	7.7	5.3	7.1	7.7	3.8	8.3	6
Trust in the European Commission	4.6	6.6	2	5.1	3.7	2.4	5.3	2.7

As we move from left to right, trust in European institutions increases. The corresponding results, which are depicted in table 12, are statistically significant for every institution under study: European Parliament [F(3, 70)=7.141, p=0.000)], European Commission [F(3, 70)=20.055, p=0.000)].

Table 12: Greek MPs: Level of trust in European Institutions (mean scores) by self-placement on the L-R scale*.

	Total	Left	Centre	Right	No answer
Trust in the European Parliament	6.7	5.9	6.8	7.8	3.7
Trust in the European Commission	4.6	2.6	5.1	6.5	2.3

Consequently, the relationship between ideological self-placement and trust in the various European institutions is confirmed, as previous research suggests (Nezi, Sotiropoulos and Toka 2009). Moreover, the aforementioned massive renewal (50 per cent) of political personnel that occurred in the Greek parliament after the twin 'earthquake elections' of 2012 (Voulgaris and Nikolakopoulos 2014), has resulted in significant differences between 'newcomers' and older parliamentarians, with the former showing much less trust, especially towards the EC (4 instead of 5.4 for older parliamentarians) (Table 13). The differences for European Commission [$F(1, 72)=6.418$, $p=0.013$)] are statistically significant.

Table 13: Greek MPs: Level of trust in European Institutions (mean scores) by parliamentary experience

	TOTAL	Newcomers	Not newcomers
Trust in the European Parliament	6.7	6.4	7.1
Trust in the European Commission	4.6	4	5.4

5.2.3 Representation of Greece's interests

The percentage of Greek MPs who agree that *"Greece's interests are not taken into account by those making decisions at the EU level"* is 83.6 per cent. In 2007 only 24.7 per of respondents agreed with that statement, while the absolute majority (56.2 per cent) of Greek MPs disagreed with it (Table 14).

Table 14: "Greece's interests are not taken into account by those making decisions at the EU level", 2007-2014. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Political Elites 2007*	Political Elites 2014
Strongly/somewhat agree	24.7	83.6
Neither agree or disagree	19.1	0
Somewhat/strongly disagree	56.2	16.4

*Data from InTune project

It is therefore apparent that Greek MPs in general are not satisfied today with the way that the interests of Greece are represented at the EU level. This notion is further supported by the fact that, with regard to responses to this question, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of party, ideological self-placement or parliamentary experience (years of serving as MP). In all the relevant indices for which comparison with 2007 is available, stances towards the EU are less positive, thus vindicating our first hypothesis.

5.2.4 Democracy in the EU

As indicated in Table 15, satisfaction with the way democracy functions in the EU is rather low both in terms of public opinion and the opinion of political elites. Eurobarometer data (Table 15) shows that the situation in terms of the European public opinion is somewhat more optimistic, with 'very' and 'fairly' satisfied summing to 44 per cent, as opposed to 25 per cent for Greek public opinion and 36.5 per cent for Greek parliamentarians.

Table 15: Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Public Opinion EU28 average 2014*	Public Opinion Greece 2014*	Political Elites 2014
Very Satisfied	4	2	2.7
Fairly satisfied	40	23	33.8

Not very satisfied	32	37	43.2
Not at all satisfied	11	33	20.3
DK	13	5	0

*Data from Eurobarometer 81, Spring 2014.

Once more, PASOK's and ND's MPs are those more satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU, while SYRIZA's MPs indicate no satisfaction at all, followed by other opposition parties, with the exception of Democratic Left (DIMAR), the MPs of which are split in half (Table 16). These differences are statistically significant [χ^2 (6, N = 74)=21.283, p = 0.002, Cramer's V=0.536].

Table 16 Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU by party. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
Very/Fairly satisfied	36.5	56.3	0	62.5	33.3	20	50	0
Not very/Not at all satisfied	63.5	43.8	100	37.5	66.7	80	50	100

Again ideological self-placement of MPs serves as a predictor of the views of MPs, as shown in Table 17. Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU increases as we move towards the right, where it reaches 68 per cent. On the other hand, only 12.5 per cent of left-wing MPs are

satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU. The differences between different categories of ideological self-placement are also statistically significant [χ^2 (3, N = 74) = 17.491, p = 0.001, Cramer's V=0.486].

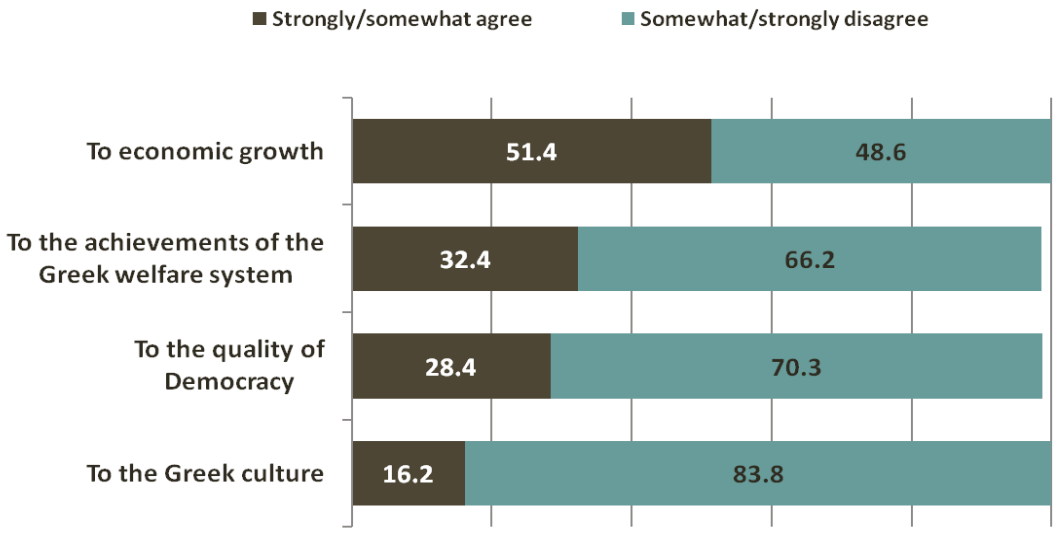
Table 17 Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU by self-placement on the L-R scale*. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Total	Left	Centre	Right	No answer
Very/Fairly satisfied	36.5	12.5	27.3	68	33.3
Not very/Not at all satisfied	63.5	87.5	72.7	32	66.7

5.2.5 The EU as a threat to Greece

The absolute majority (51.4 per cent) of Greek MPs believe that the EU endangers economic growth in Greece. Among our respondents, 32.4 per cent share the same view about the achievements of the Greek welfare system, 28.4 per cent about the quality of democracy and 16.2 per cent believe that the EU endangers the Greek culture (Figure 1).

Figure : The EU as a threat to Greece's economic growth, welfare system, democracy and culture. Percentage distribution of responses.

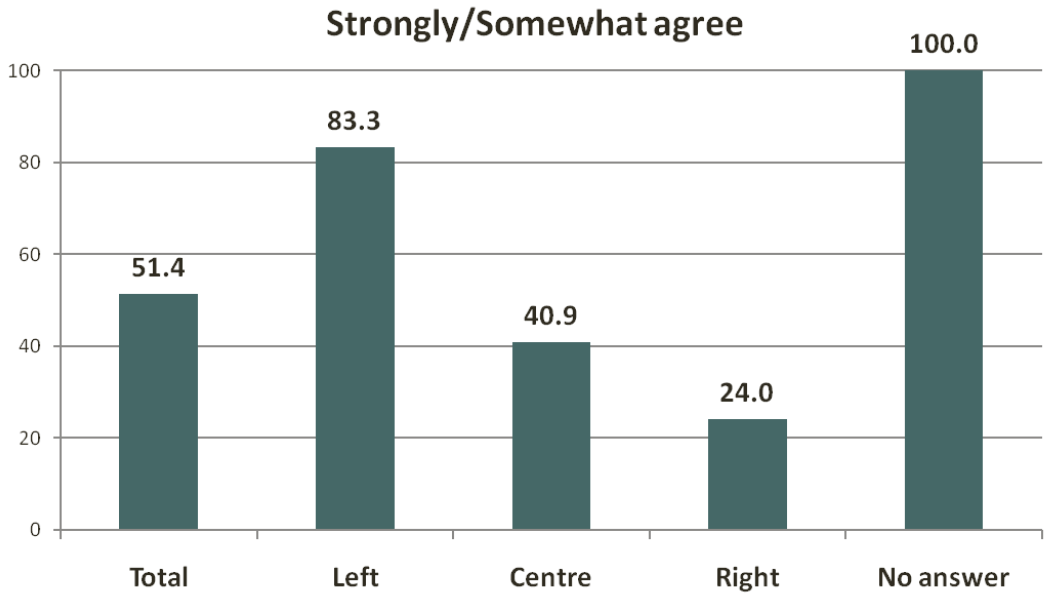


Opposition parties' MPs agree the most with the view that the EU endangers the economic growth of Greece, while PASOK's and ND's MPs disagree (Table 18), in a statistically significant relationship [$\chi 2$ (6, N = 74) = 43.188, p = 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.764].

Table 18 The EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, by party. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
Strongly/Somewhat Agree	51.4	18.8	94.7	12.5	100	100	50.0	100
Somewhat/Strongly Disagree	48.6	81.3	5.3	87.5	-	-	50.0	-

Figure 2 The EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, by L-R self-placement (%)



As shown in Figure 2, agreement with the above view is also differentiated, according to left-right self-placement. In a statistically significant relationship (χ^2 (3, N = 74) = 21.115, p = 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.534), agreement with this view diminishes as we move from left (83.3 per cent) to right (24.0 per cent) on the L-R scale.

Similarly, there are statistically significant relationships between on the one hand agreement with the view that the EU endangers economic growth in Greece and, on the other hand, parliamentary experience (([χ2 (1, N = 74) = 13.845, p = 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.433])) and governmental experience (([χ^2 (1, N = 74) = 5.356, p = 0.021, Cramer's V= 0.269]), with those being more experienced agreeing less with the above view than those not being experienced (Figures 3 & 4).

Figure 3: The EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, by governmental experience. Strongly/Somewhat agree (%)

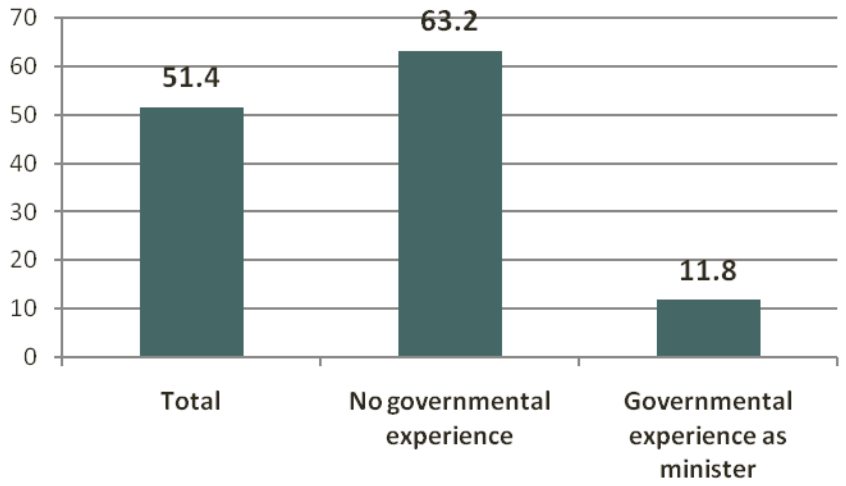
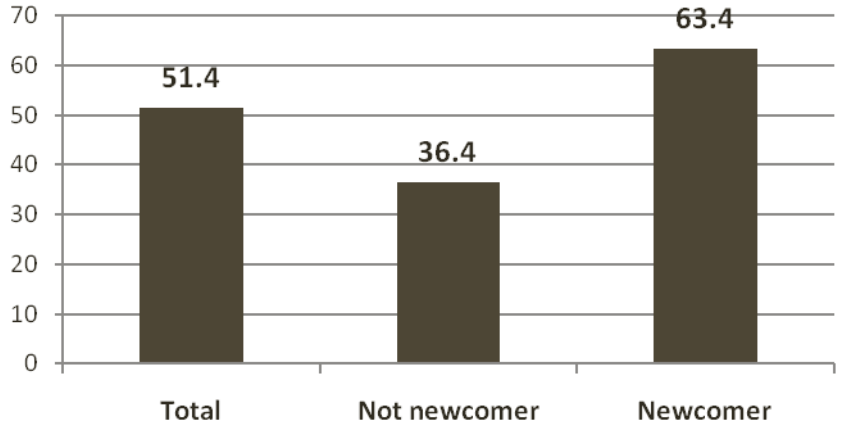


Figure 4: The EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, by parliamentary experience. Strongly/Somewhat agree (%)



5.3. Evaluation of EU institutions' role during the crisis

The MPs' evaluation of EU institutions which were mostly involved in the handling of the crisis, i.e., the European Commission, the European Council and the European Central Bank, is overall negative (Table 19).

Table 19: Evaluation of European institutions' role during the crisis. Mean scores.

	Mean Scores
European Commission	4.1
European Council	4.5
European Central Bank	4.1

Note for tables hereafter: Evaluation is measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 indicates an absolutely negative evaluation.

As expected in our second hypothesis, MPs of governing parties which had signed the bail-out agreements of 2010 and 2012 and implemented the relevant policies evaluate more positively the EU institutions involved in the handling of the crisis. The opposite holds for MPs of opposition parties (Table 22). As one-way ANOVA analysis indicates, this is a statistically significant relationship, for the European Commission [F(6, 67)=13.389, p=0.000)], the European Council [F(6, 67)=12.919, p=0.000)] and the European Central Bank [F(6, 67)=33.293, p=0.000)].

At the same time, self-placement on the left-right axis also differentiates the MPs' evaluations of EU institutions. More concretely, MPs on the left give the most negative evaluations, while those on the right the most positive, in statistically significant relationships (Table 21): European Commission [F(3, 70)=19.062, p=0.000)], European Council [F(3, 70)=17.377, p=0.000)] and European Central Bank [F(3, 70)=18.746, p=0.000)].

Table 20: Evaluation of European institutions' role during the crisis. Mean scores by party.

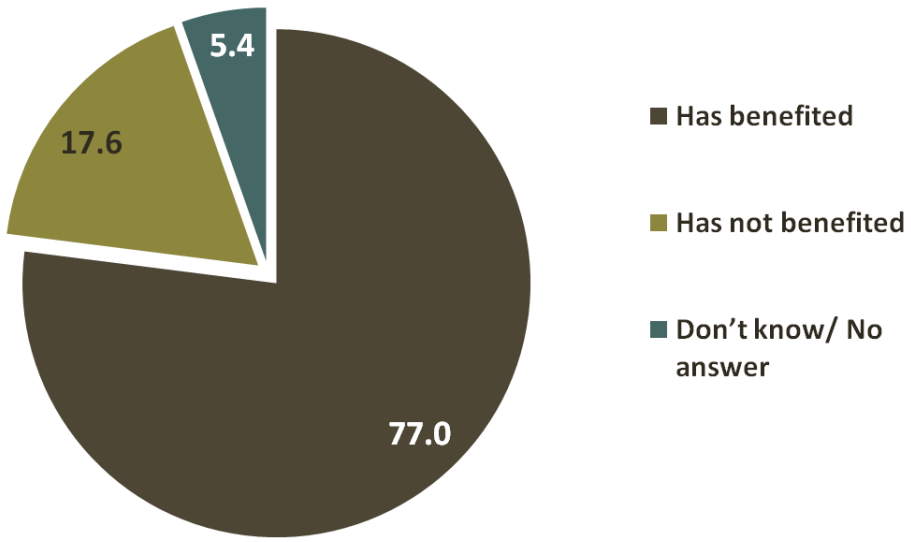
	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
European Commission	4.1	5.8	1.4	4.9	3.7	2.6	4	3.7
European Council	4.5	6.3	1.7	5.5	4	3	4	3.7
European Central Bank	4.1	6.4	0.8	5.9	2.7	0.8	4	3.7

Table 21: Evaluation of European institutions' role during the crisis. Mean scores by self-placement on the L-R scale*.

	Total	Left	Centre	Right	No answer
European Commission	4.1	2	4.5	5.9	2
European Council	4.5	2.3	4.8	6.4	3
European Central Bank	4.1	1.6	4.8	6.2	2.3

However, in an overall evaluation of whether Greece has benefited or not from being a member of the EU, more than three quarters (77 per cent) of Greek MPs are positive. Only 17.6 per cent of Greek MPs think that Greece has not benefited from Greece's membership in the EU (Figure 5).

Figure 5 "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that Greece has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?" (%)



SYRIZA's MPs are divided on this issue: one half believe that Greece has benefited from EU membership, whereas the other half rejects this view. By contrast, MPs of PASOK and ND agree the most with the view that EU membership has been beneficiary for Greece, with 100 and 96.9 per cent respectively (not shown in a table) .

Respondents were asked to rank some potential alternative solutions to the crisis (not shown in a table) and the choice that received the highest percentage as first choice was "an intervention of the EU", with 37.7 per cent, while the second one was "a coordinated action of national governments", with 32.9 per cent.

5.4 The future of European Integration

5.4.1 The process of European unification

The absolute majority of MPs in our sample is supportive of the process of furthering the unification of the EU. More specifically, 54 per cent of the respondents are positioned on the three most extreme points of the eleven-point scale, being in favour of having a more unified EU. The mean score of our sample on the same scale is 7.

Table 22: "Has European unification gone too far or should it be strengthened?" Percentage distribution and mean score of responses of Greek MPs.

	%	Mean Score
0 (unification gone too far)	2.7	
1	4.1	
2	2.7	
3	4.1	
4	2.7	
5	13.7	7.0
6	8.2	
7	6.8	
8	13.7	
9	17.8	
10 (unification should be strengthened)	23.3	

Note for tables hereafter: Evaluation is measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 denotes an absolute view that "unification has gone too far" and 10 an absolute view that "unification should be strengthened".

The parliamentarians of PASOK score the highest with regard to further promoting EU's unification (mean score of 9.1). The MPs of ND follow with a mean score of 8.2 (Table 23). SYRIZA's MPs have a mean score of 5.6, which is slightly above the middle point of the scale. Among smaller parties, Democratic Left is, expectedly, the party mostly favouring the further unification of the EU, while Golden Dawn does so the least. The above results are statistically significant, as one-way ANOVA indicates [F(6, 66)=8.568, p=0.000)].

Table 23: "Has European unification gone too far or should it be strengthened?" Mean scores by party.

	Total	ND	SYRIZA	PASOK	ANEL	GD	DIMAR	Indep.
Mean scores	7.0	8.2	5.6	9.1	6	1.8	8.3	6.7

The relationship between opinions about further promoting European unification and left-right self-placement is also statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level [F(3, 69)=4.252, p=0.008)]. Table 24 shows that MPs on the Centre favour the furthering of EU's unification the most, with a mean score of 8.1, followed by MPs on the right (mean score 7.4).

Table 24: "Has European unification gone too far or should it be strengthened?" Mean scores by self-placement on the L-R scale*.

	Total	Left	Centre	Right	No answer
Mean scores	7.0	6.2	8.1	7.4	3

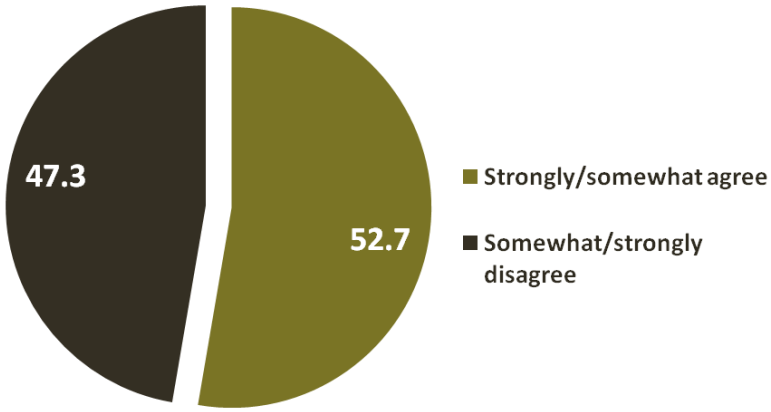
Newcomers in parliament seem to be more reluctant than MPs with longer tenure in parliament to accept the further unification of the EU (Table 25).

Table 25: "Has European unification gone too far or should it be strengthened?" Mean scores by party.

	Total	Newcomers	Not newcomers
Mean scores	7.0	6.5	7.7

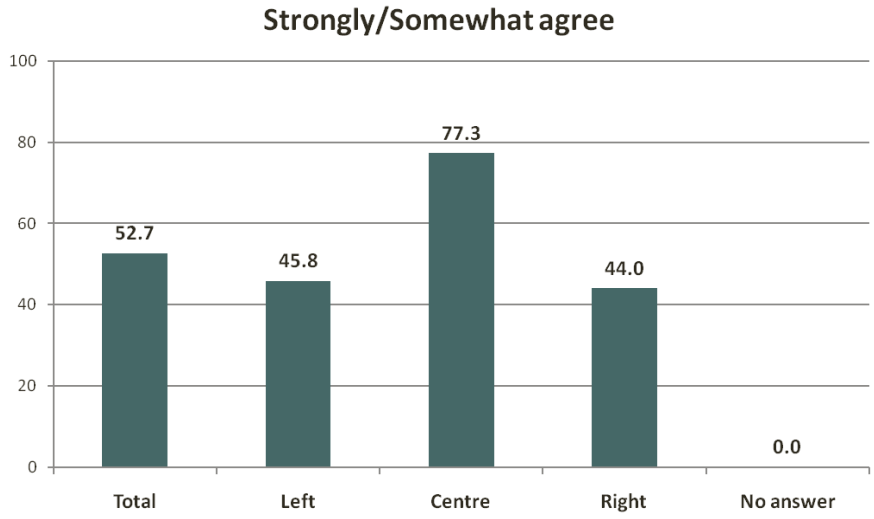
Agreement with the statement *"the European Commission ought to become the true government of the European Union"* is at 52.7 per cent amongst parliamentarians, while disagreement is at 47.3 per cent (Figure 6).

Figure 6: "The European Commission ought to become the true government of the European Union" (%)



The notion of the European Commission becoming the true government of the EU is supported by the absolute majority of parliamentarians who place themselves at the Centre of the Left-Right axis, with 77.3 per cent. Only 45.8 per cent of MPs on the Left and 44 per cent on the Right agree with this statement (Figure 7). This relationship is statistically significant [χ^2 (3, N = 74) = 9.885, p = 0.002, Cramer's V= 0.365].

Figure 7: "The European Commission ought to become the true government of the European Union" (%), by L-R self-placement



However, parliamentarians are not in favour of "a state-like democracy with a EU level government politically responsible to the European Parliament", which they most likely perceive as a step further towards federalism. The percentage of parliamentarians who support such a development is 33.8 (Figure 8). The highest support of a state-like democracy for the EU is found among those parliamentarians who place themselves at the Centre of the ideological spectrum (54.5 per cent, Figure 9) and those who have governmental experience as members of cabinet (64.7 per cent, Figure 10).

Figure 8: "Are you in favour of a state-like democracy with a EU level government politically responsible to the European Parliament?" (%)

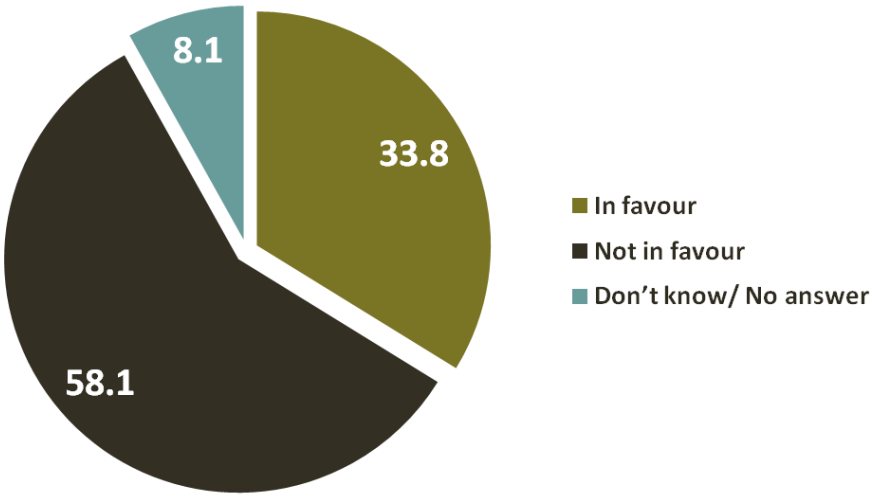
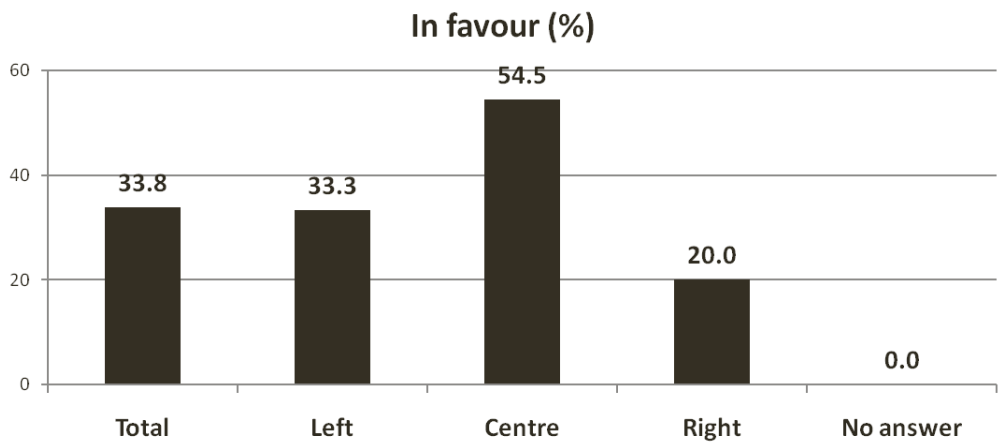
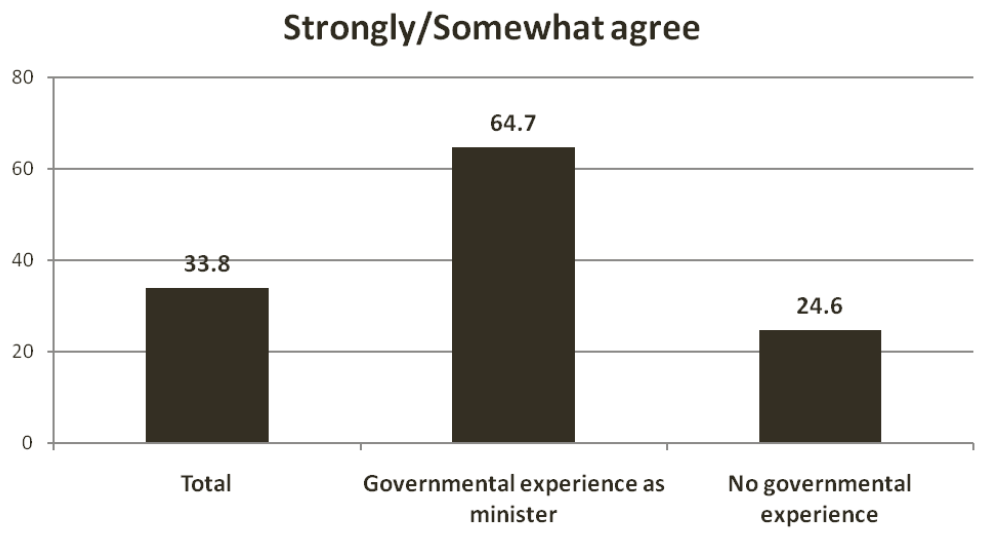


Figure 9: "Are you in favour of a state-like democracy with a EU level government politically responsible to the European Parliament?", by L-R self-placement (%)



[χ^2 (6, N = 74) = 15.613, p = 0.016, Cramer's V= 0.325]

Figure 10: "Are you in favour of a state-like democracy with a EU level government politically responsible to the European Parliament?", by governmental experience (%)

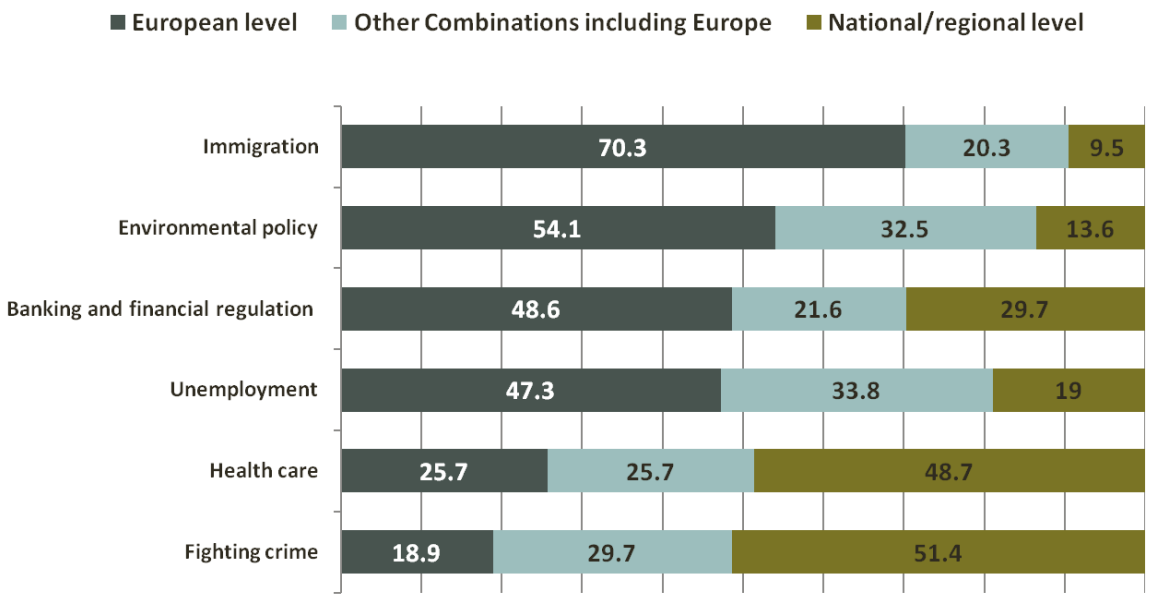


[χ^2 (2, N = 74) = 9.509, p = 0.009, Cramer's V= 0.358]

What is the level (regional, national or European) of policy making which MPs consider most appropriate for policy formulation? According to our respondents, immigration (70.3 per cent), environmental policy (54.1 per

cent), banking and financial regulation (48.6 per cent) and unemployment (47.3 per cent) are the policy areas that should be dealt with at the European level. On the contrary, the provision of health care and fighting crime are policy areas better dealt with at the national level (48.7 per cent and 51.4 per cent respectively, Figure 11).

Figure 11: Preferred level for the formulation of policies



Further on, 79.7 per cent of parliamentarians either strongly or somewhat agree that *"the member states ought to remain the central actors of the European Union",* meaning that Greek political elites choose the national level as their preferred level for the formulation of public policies (Table 26).

MPs are split in half concerning the possibility that most important decisions concerning the EU are "taken by a majority of all European citizens via a European popular referendum", with 52.7 per cent strongly

or somewhat agreeing with such a prospect and 45.9 per cent somewhat or strongly disagreeing (Table 27).

Table 26: "The member states ought to remain the central actors of the European Union". Percentage distribution of responses of Greek MPs.

	%
Strongly/somewhat agree	79.7
Somewhat/strongly disagree	20.3

Table 27: "Most important decisions concerning the EU should be taken by a majority of all European citizens via a European popular referendum". Percentage distribution of responses of Greek MPs.

	%
Strongly/somewhat agree	52.7
Somewhat/strongly disagree	45.9
Don't know/ No answer	1.4

Regarding the formation of a single EU army, only 14.9 per cent agree with such a future development. On the other hand, 56.8 per cent of Greek parliamentarians prefer a combination of an EU and a national army and 24.3 per cent believe that there should only be a national army. Moreover, 4.3 per cent of the respondents believe that there should be neither a national nor a EU army (Table 28).

Table 28: "Some say that we should have a single European Union Army. Others say every country should keep its own national army. What is your opinion?" Percentage distribution of responses of Greek MPs.

	%
National Army	24.3
European Union Army	14.9
Both a National and EU Army	56.8
Neither	4.1

Finally, approval for common policies in taxation, social security, foreign affairs, aid to countries in need and the issuing of Eurobonds exceeds 73 per cent in every case (not shown in a table). Approval ranges between 73 per cent (in favour of a common EU tax system) and 99 per cent (in favour of help offered from the EU to regions of Member-States facing economic or social difficulties).

5.5 The main dimensions of Greek political elite's attitudes towards the EU

Views about the EU, its institutions and its prospects are differentiated according to the party to which MPs belong. In order to determine whether there are some issue dimensions that could explain these differences, first, a principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted, in order to identify the existence of latent variables or dimensions; and, second, discriminant analysis was conducted, using the components from the PCA as independent variables and the party that MPs belong to as dependent variable. Discriminant analysis determines the optimal combination of the independent variables (i.e. "functions") and is helpful

in giving meaning to the structure of competition and conflict between Greek MPs.

Functions are interpreted in terms of standardized coefficients for each independent variable. The larger the standardized coefficient, the more the respective latent dimension contributes to the discrimination between political parties. Group centroids are also employed, in order to portray the relevant positions and distances between parties, across each function. Naturally, only statistically significant ($p<0.05$) components and functions are presented.

Results

Principal components analysis was performed on eight items regarding stances of Greek MPs towards several issues about the evaluation and the prospects of EU. The PCA returned two components that together explain almost 60 per cent of the total variance (Table 29). The first component comprises items capturing a Pro-European/Eurocritical dimension, while the second component is dominated by items that refer to a Federalism/Intergovernmentalism division.

Table 29: Greek MPs-Principal Components Analysis

Agree-Disagree	Pro-European/Eurocritical	Federalism-Intergovernmentalism
The EU endangers the integrity of the Greek cultural system	**0.785**	
Achievements of welfare system in Greece are endangered by the EU legislation	**0.780**	
The EU endangers the quality of democracy in Greece	**0.747**	
EU decisions endanger economic growth in Greece	**0.737**	
Most important decisions concerning the EU should be taken by a majority of all European citizens via a European popular referendum	**0.695**	
The European Commission ought to become the true government of the European Union		**0.875**
Some say that we should have a single European Union Army		**0.611**
The member states ought to remain the central actors of the European Union		**-0.523**
% variance	37.9	21.8

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The discriminant analysis produces two statistically significant functions, albeit one of them comprises almost 96.7 per cent of the total variance. In this dominant function (or dimension of conflict), the component with

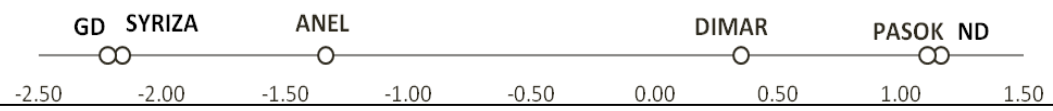
the highest standardized coefficient is Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism (Table 29). It is interesting that when plotting the relevant position of parties across the dimension, an image of pro-bailout agreement/anti-bailout agreement is revealed, with GD, SYRIZA and ANEL on the one end and DIMAR, PASOK and ND on the other. This means that the main dimension of conflict regarding European issues is pro/anti memorandum (MoU), which seems to give meaning to the Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism dimension. In any case, due to the low number of cases, the results of the PCA and discriminant analysis depicted in Table 30 are considered only indicative. Further research may be necessary in order to confirm our results shown below.

Table 30: Greek MPs Discriminant Analysis (N=69)*

Function 1: Canonical correlation: 0.85 / 96.7% of variance

Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients		Structural coefficients	
Pro-European/Eurocritical	Federalism-Intergovernmentalism	**Pro-European/Eurocritical**	Federalism-Intergovernmentalism
1.09	-0.88	**0.65**	-0.34

Mean location of MPs on the function (group centroids)



*Only the most powerful statistically significant ($p<0.05$) function is presented. The other statistically significant function is responsible for only 3.3 per cent of total variance and is dominated by the Federalism-Intergovernmentalism factor, with a standardized canonical discriminant function coefficient of 0.75 and a structural coefficient of 0.94. The

relevant position of parties on the second function remotely resembles a Left-Right dimension.

In order to further assess the predictive power of our two factors, i.e. Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism and Federalism-Intergovernmentalism, binary logistic regression was conducted, with the above factors as predictors and being a governmental or an opposition MP as the dependent variable. We had 70 valid cases in the model. A test of the full model against a constant-only model proved statistically significant, with the predictors reliably distinguishing between MPs of government and MPs of opposition (χ^2=49.717, p<.000, df=2). The relationship between prediction and grouping was moderately strong, with Nagelkerke's R^2=.683 (Table 31).

Table 31: Binary Logistic Regression of 70 MPs-Overall model evaluation.

		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	49.717	2	.000
	Block	49.717	2	.000
	Model	49.717	2	.000
Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit test*		4.785	8	.780
Model Summary				
Step		-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square

1	45,890[a]	.508	.683

[a]Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

*The H-L test's results mean a good fit, since p>.005, however due to small sample size they must be considered indicative.

According to the Wald criterion, both our factors are statistically significant, however Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticicm makes a much stronger contribution to the model, as expected. In sum, logistic regression results show that the less critical towards the EU and the more supportive of federalism an MP was, the most likely he or she would belong to a government party (Table 32).

Table 32: Binary Logistic Regression of 70 MPs-Variables in the equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism	-2.378	.581	16.771	1	.000	.093
Federalism/Intergovernmentalism	1.190	.443	7.217	1	.007	3.287
Constant	-.097	.418	.054	1	.817	.908

Variable(s) entered on step 1: Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism, Federalism/Intergovernmentalism

Overall prediction success of the model was 87.1 per cent (97.5 per cent for belonging to the government and 73.3 per cent for belonging to the opposition) (Table 33). In Figure 13 predicted probabilities of an MP belonging to a Government or opposition by positioning in the dominant

factor are plotted, demonstrating the linearity of the relationship. Wrong and correct predictions, as well as the overall fit of the model are demonstrated in Figure 14.

Table 33: Binary Logistic Regression of 70 MPs-Classification table*

Observed				Percentage
		Government	Opposition	Correct
Government or Opposition party	Government	39	1	97.5
	Opposition	8	22	73.3
Overall percentage				87.1

*The cut value is 0.500

Figure 13: Probability of belonging to a Government or opposition party by Eurocriticism/Pro-Europeanism score (n=70).

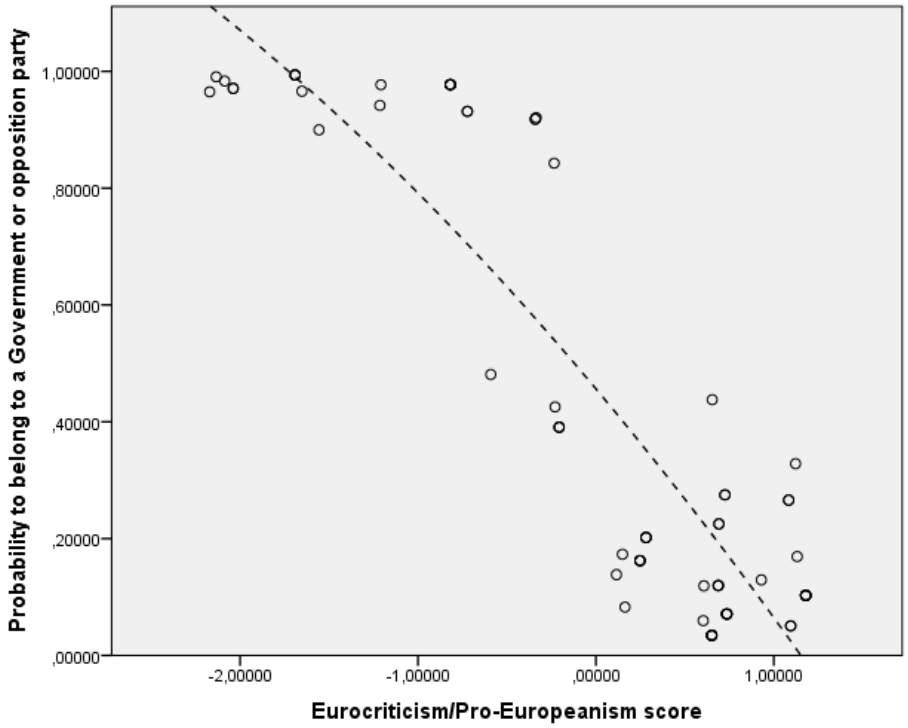


Figure 14: Binary Logistic Regression of 70 MPs-Classification plot of predicted probability of belonging to a Government or opposition party.

```
            Step number: 1

            Observed Groups and Predicted Probabilities

       8 +                                                                                                  O  +
         I                                                                                                  O  I
         I                                                                                                  O  I
F        I                                                                                                  O  I
R      6 +                                                                                                  O  +
E        I                                                                                                  O  I
Q        I   G   O  G     G                                                                                 O  I
U        I   G   O  G     G                                                                                 O  I
E      4 +   G   G  GG    G                                                                                 O O+
N        I   G   G  GG    G                                                                                 O OI
C        I   G G G  GG    G   G                  O                                                          O OI
Y        I   G G G  GG    G   G                  O                                                          O OI
       2 +   G G G  GG    G   G O   GG           O                                                   O O  OO O+
         I   G G G  GG    G   G O   GG           O                                                   O O  OO OI
         I   G G GG GGGO  GO  G G   GG    O      O  GG    G                                O    O OOOO GOOOI
         I   G G GG GGGO  GO  G G   GG    O      O  GG    G                                O    O OOOO GOOOI
Predicted ---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+----------
  Prob:   0       .1        .2        .3        .4        .5        .6        .7        .8        .9         1
  Group:  GGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

          Predicted Probability is of Membership for Opposition
          The Cut Value is .50
          Symbols: G - Government
                   O - Opposition
          Each Symbol Represents .5 Cases.
```

In sum, both discriminant analysis and logistic regression underlined the fact that issues concerning the EU today provide the structure of political competition amongst political elites. Moreover, SYRIZA and ANEL were close on the main conflict dimension, confirming our third hypothesis. The confirmation of our SYRIZA-ANEL proximity hypothesis is further solidified in the next section, where the combined worldview of SYRIZA and ANEL MPs is presented.

6. The coalition government of SYRIZA-ANEL and the EU.

Since our sample survey was conducted, parliamentary elections were held in Greece on 25 January 2015. As shown in Table 34, SYRIZA won the elections with 36.3 per cent, ND came second with 27.8 per cent and GD came third with 6.3 per cent. A newly-formed pro-European party, The River, which contested national elections for the first time, obtained 6.1 per cent. Three more parties, namely KKE, ANEL and PASOK, passed the

three per cent electoral threshold and entered parliament. In brief, for the third consecutive time, seven parties in total entered the parliament.

Table 34 Greece: January 2015 parliamentary elections results and allocation of parliamentary seats.

	(%)	Number of seats
SYRIZA	36.3	149
ND	27.8	76
GD	6.3	17
The River	6.1	17
KKE	5.5	15
ANEL	4.8	13
PASOK	4.7	13
Other	8.5	-
Total	100	300

Source: Greek Ministry of Interior (http://ekloges.ypes.gr/current/v/public/index.html#{"cls":"main","params":{}})

No party held the absolute majority of 151 seats needed to form a government, but a coalition government of SYRIZA and ANEL was formed. This development vindicated the above presented discriminant analysis, were SYRIZA and ANEL were on the same side of the Pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism axis which was identified as the dominant dimension of conflict among political elites.

On the basis of our research, we can construct the combined 'worldview' of today's SYRIZA and ANEL (SYRIZA-ANEL) parliamentary majority toward the EU, even though the total number of MPs has changed after the

January 2015 elections, with SYRIZA obtaining 149 seats and ANEL 13 seats, compared to 71 and 20 respectively, in the previous parliament.

A general conclusion is that SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs, taken as a group, are systematically less pro-European and more skeptical towards EU institutions than the rest of MPs, concerning European identity, representation, scope of government and EU's role during the crisis. SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs feel less attached to Europe and trust less the European Parliament and the European Commission (Tables 35 & 36). However, regarding the EP, the mean score of trust is above average, 5.6.

Table 35: Attachment to Europe, percentage distribution of responses, SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Very/somewhat attached	77	68.2	80.8

*Note for tables hereafter: MPs of all other parties. This categorization is done for presentation purposes, in order to show the views of MPs of the SYRIZA-ANEL government coalition. A full presentation of this variable by party is presented in Table 7.

Table 36: Greek MPs: Level of trust in European Institutions. Mean scores by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Trust in the European Parliament	6.7	5.6	7.2
Trust in the European Commission	4.6	2.2	5.7

* A full presentation of these variables by party can be found in Table 11.

All of SYRIZA-ANEL's parliamentarians believe that Greece's interests are not adequately represented at the decision-making centers of the EU (Table 37). At the same time, only 4.5 per cent of SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs are very or fairly satisfied by the way democracy works in the EU, a figure that is 50 per cent amongst the rest of parliamentarians (Table 38).

Table 37: "Greece's interests are not taken into account by those making decisions at the EU level", 2014. Percentage distribution of responses by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Strongly/somewhat agree	83.6	100	76.5
Somewhat/strongly disagree	16.4	0	23.5

*A full presentation of this variable can be found in Table 14.

Table 38: Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others. Percentage distribution of responses by party.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Very/Fairly satisfied	36.5	4.5	50
Not very/Not at all satisfied	63.5	95.5	50

*A full presentation of this variable can be found in Table 16.

Moreover, 95.5 per cent of SYRIZA-ANEL MPs consider the EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, as opposed to only 32.7 per cent of other parties' MPs and 51.4 per cent in total (Table 39). Nevertheless, the

absolute majority (54.5 per cent) of SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs agree with the notion that Greece has on balance benefited from its EU membership (Table 40), a view that is also shared by three quarters of Greek MPs, as already mentioned in section 5.3 (Figure 5).

Regarding the prospects of further European unification, SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs are rather skeptical. Their mean score on the eleven-point scale about the need for strengthening the unification process is 5.7, being significantly less than the 7.6 score amongst the rest of parliamentarians (Table 41). Furthermore, compared with the rest of MPs, the MPs of SYRIZA-ANEL are less in favour of the enhancement, in the next decade, of common taxation, social security system and foreign policy (Table 42). However, even amongst SYRIZA-ANEL's MPs positive evaluations of common policies comprise the absolute majority.

Table 39: The EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece, by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others. Percentage distribution of responses.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Strongly/Somewhat Agree	51.4	95.5	32.7
Somewhat/Strongly Disagree	48.6	4.5	67.3

*A full presentation of this variable by party can be found in Table 18.

Table 40: "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that Greece has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?" percentage distribution of responses by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Has benefited	77.0	54.5	86.5
Has not benefited	17.6	40.9	7.7
DK/NA	5.4	4.5	5.8

*A full presentation of this variable can be found in Figure 5.

Table 41: "Has European unification gone too far or should it be strengthened?" Mean scores by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
Mean scores	7.0	5.7	7.6

* A full presentation of these variable by party can be found in Table 23.

Table 42: The evolution of the EU over the next ten years: results of the 2014 survey. Percentage distribution of responses in favour of specific common policies, by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others
Common tax system	73	54.5	80.8
Common social security system	81.1	68.2	86.5

Common foreign policy	74.3	54.5	82.7
Help for EU regions in economic or social difficulties	98.6	100	98.1
Issuing of Eurobonds	87.8	81.8	90.4

Note: In favor comprises "approve" and "rather approve" of a certain policy.

Finally, a finding that can be considered as a harbinger of the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government is that the MPs of these two parties evaluate very negatively the handling of the crisis by EU's institutions. On an eleven-point scale (0.0-10.0), were 0.0 means an absolutely negative evaluation, they evaluate the European Commission with a mean score of 1.7, the European Council with a mean score of 2.0 and the ECB with a very low 1.1 (Table 43).

Table 43: Evaluation of European institutions' role during the crisis. Mean scores by SYRIZA-ANEL/Others.

	Total	SYRIZA-ANEL	Others*
European Commission	4.1	1.7	5.1
European Council	4.5	2	5.5
European Central Bank	4.1	1.1	5.4

A full presentation of these variables by party can be found in Table 28.

In sum, SYRIZA and ANEL's MPs views during the previous parliamentary term (June 2012-December 2014) confirm our claim that the dominant division amongst Greek political elites has to do with stances towards the EU. The two parties' MPs share a critical view of EU institutions in general and their role in the handling of the crisis in particular, while they are not as enthusiastic about the prospects of European integration as are their colleagues from most other parties. The above findings underline the fact that there was indeed common ground for the seemingly incongruous, in 'classic' left-right terms, coalition government between SYRIZA and ANEL that was formed after the January 2015 parliamentary elections.

7. Conclusions and further analysis

The views of MPs on the issue of European identity seem to follow pre-crisis patterns, while the two other main subjects discussed in this paper, namely representation and scope of governance, confirm the hypothesis about a rupture in the continuity of MPs' perceptions. The latter is most certainly owed to the rather negative evaluations of EU institutions' role during the economic crisis. Our second hypothesis was also verified since a) governmental MPs, b) MPs self-placed at the centre of the left-right spectrum and c) more experienced MPs tended to have more pro-European views and attitudes than the rest of MPs (members of the opposition, far-right and left MPs and newcomers in parliament).

More specifically, European identity, measured as the extent of attachment to Europe, was stronger in 2014 than in 2007, with more than three out of four MPs stating that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' attached to it. This was the case even with SYRIZA's MPs, the only exception being MPs of ANEL and GD, amongst whom attachment to

Europe was low. As far as representation is concerned, compared to 2007 (the year a comparable survey of MPs had been conducted), trust both in the European Parliament (EP) and the European Commission (EC) was less in 2014, the decline being greater in the case of EC. Governmental MPs and MPs self-placed at the centre and the right of the left-right scale showed more trust in the EP and the EC.

An impressive change, compared to 2007, has occurred regarding views on representation of Greece's interests. In 2014 a vast majority (more than 8 out of 10) of Greek MPs agree with the view that Greek interests are not taken into account in EU's decision-making centres. In 2007 less than 3 out of 10 MPs agreed with this view. Accordingly, only one out of three MPs is satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU, with ND's and PASOK's MPs being the most satisfied.

On the issue concerning whether EU poses a threat to several relevant aspects of Greece's economy and society, namely the welfare system, quality of democracy, culture and economic growth, the absolute majority of MPs agree that EU endangers only economic growth. Only a minority of MPs, who mostly belonged to the then opposition parties, considered that the rest of aforementioned aspects of Greek economy and society were threatened by the EU.

Given the fact that 77 per cent of MPs believe that EU membership has in general been beneficiall for Greece, the perception of EU as a threat to economic growth in Greece has to be linked with the relatively poor evaluation of the role of EU's institutions in handling the economic crisis. MPs evaluated lowly the role of the EC and the role of the European Central Bank in the scale 0.0-10.00. The mean score was 4.1 for the EC

and 4.5 for the European Council. MPs belonging to ND evaluated positively all three institutions and MPs belonging to PASOK evaluated negatively only the EC.

The process of furthering EU's unification finds support among all parties' MPs (mean score: 7.0), with the exception of GD. There are some policy areas, like immigration, environmental protection, banking and unemployment, which are considered by the majority of MPs as most suitable to be handled at the European level, as opposed to health care and fighting crime, which are considered primarily domestic issues.

In order to assess what are the main dimensions, along which the opinions of Greek MPs are differentiated, we conducted principal components analysis, which revealed two latent issue dimensions: pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism and Federalism/Intergovernmentalism. The former component proved to dominate the main statistically significant function produced by a discriminant analysis which was conducted as a next step. The plotting of political parties across the issue dimension of pro-Europeanism/Eurocriticism revealed an arrangement of pro-bailout agreement parties on the one end and anti-bailout agreement parties on the other end of the dimension. This means that the dominant dimension of conflict for Greek political elites is the issue of the MoUs. Moreover, a binary logistic regression confirmed the fact that the above factors are good predictors of whether an MP belongs to a governmental or opposition party (up to the parliamentary elections of 25 January 2015).

At the same time, both discriminant analysis and logistic regression's results of our survey of MPs of the previous parliament (2012-2014) verify the hypothesis that the SYRIZA-ANEL government that was formed

after the January 2015 elections was not a surprise given the close proximity of these two parties on the aforementioned dominant dimension of conflict for Greek political elites, namely their stance towards the MoUs in particular and towards the EU in general. Especially concerning the views and attitudes of SYRIZA-ANEL MPs, it was demonstrated in a separate section (section 6) that they were consistently more critical towards the EU, compared to the total of MPs.

In sum, our findings show that the fiscal and financial crisis has not altered the European identity of Greek MPs but has negatively influenced their perceptions about representation in the EU, the process of European integration, as well as their evaluation of how the EU institutions handled the crisis.

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