

**Representing Europe in times of crisis.**  
**Rhetorical construction of “Europe” in the parliamentary discussions**  
**regarding the voting of the three Memoranda in Greece**

Emmanouil Takas <sup>1</sup>

Gerasimos Prodromitis <sup>2</sup>

Stamos Papastamou <sup>3</sup>

**Abstract**

This study focuses on the exploration of the political discourse regarding the voting of the three Memoranda in Greece, at a period characterized by the concept of "crisis", that triggered violent processes of redefining the social environment. As Greek society was under the strain of European stability, it was called upon to fully comply with the European imperatives of "development" and "competitiveness". In this context, the political discourse formed central representations and each political party tried to increase its sphere of influence. This study approaches the notion that the representations in the political discourse are formed under terms of strategic communication. Further, such representations aspire to influence four parallel audiences: the intra-party audience, the intra-parliamentary audience, the wider intrastate social audience and the international audience (European partners, main European political actors, international organizations, political actors and the media).

To investigate the way in which the Greek political system constructs the representation of Europe in the context of the Memoranda, the official parliamentary transcripts regarding the voting of the first, second and third memoranda were analysed. The analysis was based on both the quantitative and the qualitative approach, using the Iramuteq open source software (Ratinaud, 2009).

The central findings of this thesis underline the way in which the Greek political system established Greece's relationship with Europe in terms of dependence, how Greece gradually complied with European imperatives and internalized the concept of "Debt".

**Keywords:** Social Representations, Political Discourse, Crisis, Europe, Memorandum.

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<sup>1</sup> Laboratory of Experimental and Social Psychology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece, manostakas@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Laboratory of Experimental and Social Psychology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece, gprod@panteion.gr

<sup>3</sup> Laboratory of Experimental and Social Psychology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece spspsps3@gmail.com

## **Introduction:**

The Greek social reality for at least a decade (2008-2018) could be summed up in a single word: "crisis"; Economic, political, partisan, social crisis, crisis of values, institutions, politics, identities. This crisis triggered violent processes of re-evaluating the social environment as the Greek society found itself trapped in the European "stability". Greek citizens were called upon to fully comply with the European requirements and the new reality of economic and social conditions, under the threat of social marginalization and economic asphyxiation strangulation. In this context, new concepts were formed and older ones were re-evaluated. A new political discourse was articulated and new political forces emerged in an effort to re-establish a new social reality. The common denominator of all the above: strategic communication. This study focuses on the exploration of political discourse regarding the voting of the three Memoranda in Greece, at a time when it was characterized by the concept of "crisis", which triggered violent processes of re-shaping the social environment. Greece signed three Memoranda, in an effort to remain in the European Union, since all harsh measures foreseen in those Memoranda were regarded as prerequisites to avoid a "Grexit". On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, the Prime Minister of Greece Giorgos Papandreou announced from the Greek island Kastelorizo that Greece appealed to the "Support Mechanism" to avoid bankruptcy. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Greek Parliament was called upon to vote in favor or against the first Memorandum, under the financial surveillance of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. From that time and for the next (at least) ten years Greece experienced deep financial and mostly social turmoil. The Eurozone debt crisis, stemming from the global financial crisis, was regarded as the most important in the European Union (Roch & Uhlig, 2018; Samarakoon, 2017). Despite two years of efforts and enormous economic and social costs, the Eurozone and especially Greece have failed to find a way out. Europe was regarded as "ineffective" in managing the crisis both regarding Greece and the EU. The lack of leadership was linked to the attitude during the crisis by the countries of Northern Europe and especially Germany. These countries managed to recover more quickly from the crisis of 2008-2009 and were now the central reference point for economic rescue for all European countries in the region, demanding austerity and strong fiscal adjustment (Bogain, 2014; Lehndorff, 2012). Therefore, the second Memorandum was signed on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 with even harder measures in an already torn-apart social context, namely high unemployment and crime rates (Saridakis & Spengler, 2012), social and financial imbalances (Gibson, Hall & Tavlas, 2012), labor deregulation and severe pension cuts (Liberaki & Tinios, 2012) and political instability (Katsikas, 2012; Matsaganis, 2013). The second

Memorandum was signed by a governmental coalition of the two historical rivalry parties in Greece (PASOK center and ND right-wing). What was also unique in this period is that the PM of Greece, Mr. Loukas Papadimos, was not directly elected from the Greek people, but was rather appointed. The second Memorandum proved to be extremely hard for the Greek society and led to the emergence of strong anti-Memorandum political rhetoric especially from the left-win party SYRIZA. This led to elections on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and it resulted in the electoral victory of SYRIZA that formed a coalition with the right-wing party ANEL (Independent Greeks). After hard negotiations between the new elected government and Troika (Klapsis, 2015; Stavrakakis, 2015; Zahariadis, 2017) SYRIZA and ANEL introduced the third Memorandum to the Greek Parliament.

### **Literature review:**

A crisis is defined as a specific, unexpected and out-of-routine event or series of events, which is based on organizational reasons and creates high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization's higher goals (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 1998). Additionally, a crisis occurs in various forms, in various fields, and refers to an undesirable generalized situation, the extent of which indicates its depth. Regardless of the form and area of manifestation, a crisis brings feelings of insecurity, threat and urgency (Boin, 2005; Coombs, 2010) and seeks to identify the origins of the crisis especially when the crisis delegitimizes political choices (Boin, 2005; Boin, Stern, & Sundelius, 2016; Carafano & Weitz, 2008). The causes of the crisis can be traced back to the system itself and remain unnoticed either due to the fact that the first signs of the crisis were not given due importance, or because the political scene failed to fully recognize the causes. For these cases, researchers (Reason, 1990) use the term "systemic pathogeny", as the underlying causes existed before the onset of the crisis. Alternatively, however, the crisis may be the product of a micro-change in an extremely complex system. As all three social, political and economic structures are based on high levels of complexity and interaction, an abnormality in a small subsystem can cause chain reactions and adversely affect the whole system. At the same time, this complexity makes it difficult to highlight a malfunction, as it requires a thorough knowledge of the entire system. Thus, this dysfunction may go unnoticed at first, until it manifests itself on a larger scale, in the form of a crisis.

In times of crisis, citizens expect government agencies to act decisively to address the effects of the crisis, exercising risk or at least minimizing the negative consequences (Boin et al., 2016). The longer the exit from the crisis is delayed and the more normal the daily routine, the more the rivalry intensifies, as more and more elements of feedback on the conflict are added. In the

context of this study, the political discourse focused mainly on an effort to construct the social environment, especially regarding Europe and the future of Greece within the European "family". This political discourse is being studied in the specific context of the parliamentary proceedings. Despite its political significance, parliamentary discourse began to be studied relatively recently and was mainly approached linguistically (see for example Antaki & Leudar, 2001; Chilton, 2004; Christie, 2002; Ilie, 2000, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2010; Teun A van Dijk & Wodak, 2000). Parliamentary discourse is articulated with a formality that includes mainly political arguments, which are constructed within a specific political context (Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004; Van Der Valk, 2003; Teun A Van Dijk, 2002). Van Dijk (2004) points out that parliamentary discourse is defined mainly by the fact that participants are members of Parliament, that it is constituted within a political institution of Parliament, and that prime ministers carry out legislative work. In addition, PMs are expected to express, evaluate and justify their political positions as well as evaluate, attack and delegitimize the political positions of the opposition.

In the context of this study, the parliamentary speech is expected to contain normative statements regarding the "necessity" of the Memorandum in order for Greece to remain in the "European family" as well as delegitimizing positions regarding the evaluation of the policy imposed through the Memoranda. Parliamentary discourse is formed in "real time", where the positions, oppositions and attacks of political actors are recorded, in a specific context of reference and under a specific parliamentary procedure.

The use of political discourse is based on the synthesis of political ideologies and strategies in an effort to legitimize the decisions of the political leadership (Ilie, 2010). While confrontation and conflict are central concepts in the study of parliamentary discourse, processes of consensus and agreement are recorded not only within each parliamentary political party but also between political parties (Chilton, 2004). Parliamentary debates presuppose, on the one hand, a spirit of confrontation, which manifests itself in acts of consolidation and rivalry for power, and, on the other hand, in acts of cooperation, which is evident in cases of collective decision-making on problems involving all political parties. Thus, in the context of this study, the signing of the Memoranda obviously goes beyond narrow party boundaries and concerns a political choice (voting for or against the Memoranda), which has an impact on the wider social fabric.

Therefore, political actors often have to act through language, raising issues, setting issues in the debate, placing themselves and others in specific relationships, creating assumptions about the realities that listeners are obliged, at least temporarily, to accept (Chilton, 2004). Power can also be exercised through the control of the use of language for example through processes of agenda

setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), a concept that has been extensively explored in the strategic communication literature and concerns how the political elites and the media choose to present the main themes of their discourse by drawing the public's attention to specific issues. Establishing themes in the context of parliamentary debates lies in the rhetorical focus of political parties on specific "issues", such as debt, Europe and the domestic political system.

It would be useful to mention that in this study, the Greek parliamentary discourse “echoes” to four levels of audience: First in the intra-party, where the dominant narrative structures are formed in order to strengthen the party identity. Secondly, the intra-parliamentary, where the meaning of the Greek crisis, Europe and the Memoranda appear in terms of rhetorical antagonisms and the rhetorical competition underlines what collective / party representation of the Memorandum will dominate and become a norm. Third, the intra-state, where political rhetoric, despite its differences, functions as a transmitter of political messages aiming to provide meaning and evaluation of the productive causes of the crisis and the promotion (or not) of the Memorandum as a solution. At the same time each political party is called upon to compete with the rest to increase its influence on the recipients / voters. Fourth, the international audience, where international recipients (European Union, European Commission, International Monetary Fund, "markets", other states in the international arena) evaluate the political positions of national political actors. At the same time, they indirectly or directly affect the power and reliability of each message.

The parliamentary discourse changes, depending on the focal themes. *Mutatis mutandis* the Greek parliamentary discourse under study changes as it was articulated in a period of intense time, a period of "crisis", economic, social, political, and humanitarian. Therefore, it is important to examine how this crisis affects strategic political communication in the context of parliamentary debates on the adoption of the three Memoranda. Special focus is being placed on how “Europe” was rhetorically constructed comparatively in the three parliamentary sittings, drawing upon the sociopsychological theoretical framework of social representations (Moscovici, 1961/1976).

## **Theoretical framework**

The concept of social representations with their focus on everyday communication and thought, aims to highlight the connection between the psychology of social actors and modern social and cultural trends (Moscovici, 1988). Social representations include emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and practices (Jovchelovitch, 1996; Moscovici, 1961/1976). If, however, social representations are approached from this point of view exclusively, they are approached "statically" referring to the notion of "theory", which includes practices and examples that support the theory itself. On the contrary, social representations, from a dynamic approach contain the constant dialectic between a "network" of ideas, metaphors and images (Moscovici, 1995). The concept of social representations incorporates fundamental concepts, such as opinion, image, and attitudes. Moreover, they incorporate concepts that do not involve the dynamic and active participation of social actors, who through their interaction constantly form, reproduce and reconstruct social reality. In this way the subject is actively involved in the creation of social meaning, while previous approaches depict people as simple receivers of a pre-formed message from the external environment. On the contrary, the concept of social representation approaches each social actor in a way that it reshapes and reconstructs the external environment. Thus each social actor participates in the construction of his/her environment, in a constantly enriched reconstruction of both the social actor and the environment (Moscovici, 1961/1976).

The dynamic and synthetic nature of social representations is also emphasized in Jodelet (1984) arguing that the concept of social representation implies a special form of knowledge, the knowledge of public opinion (*sens commun*), the contents of which express the management of processes socially determined. In addition, it reveals the forms of social thinking. Social representations are a way of practical thinking oriented towards communication, understanding and management of the social environment. As such, they have special characteristics in terms of content organization, mental processing and logic. The social definition of the contents or processes of representation means the reference to the conditions and contexts in which the representations emerge; to the communications through which they circulate; to the functions they perform in their interaction with the world and others. Jodelet's approach emphasizes the importance of communication in terms of understanding, evaluating, interpreting and managing the social environment.

Thus, political rhetoric and the way in which Greek political protagonists construct the dominant themes influences the way in which these representations are disseminated to the wider society through political rhetoric. Therefore, political rhetoric organizes the meaning and content of the representation of the focal themes and creates a frame of reference for the formation of the representation of the Memoranda in the wider society, in what is usually called "public opinion".

### **Methodology:**

This study focuses on the analysis of parliamentary discourse regarding the voting of the three Memoranda in Greece and is based on the official transcripts of the parliamentary sittings. The open source software Iramuteq (Ratinaud, 2009; Ratinaud & Marchand, 2012) was used for the analysis. Iramuteq is based on the Python and R programming languages and its innovation lies in the ability to examine large corpora, both qualitatively and quantitatively. A total of four variables were formed to analyse the parliamentary proceedings: First, the number of Memorandum (first Memorandum, second Memorandum, third Memorandum), second, the political speaker, third, the status of the political speaker (Prime Minister, Party Secretary, Party Chairman, General Secretary Member of Parliament, Rapporteur) and fourth, the political party to which the political speaker belongs. The principle of the analysis of each parliamentary debate on the voting of each Memorandum is captured through the hierarchical classification of the lectical choices of each parliamentary debate. Through thematic and structural analysis, the dominant clusters in each parliamentary debate are captured. The verbal material is hierarchically classified, based on the statistical significance of the co-appearance of words in the corpus. The method used for this analysis is based on the Reinert method (Reinert, 1983, 1990). This method categorizes the lectical choices into separate clusters while capturing the percentage that each cluster covers in relation to the overall text as well as the hierarchical appearance of the words, based on the value  $\chi^2$  of each word. This first analysis allows the first imprinting of verbal material into semantic categories and is the beginning of the recognition of the interpretive patterns of each cluster.

Following the mapping of the descending hierarchical classification (Reinert, 1983;1990), the study of each cluster and in particular in this study the exploration of the cluster “Europe”, continues with a construction of a table. At this table the  $\chi^2$  value of each word in the cluster is depicted showing the most dominant lectical choices. The aim of this study is to explore how the representation of “Europe” was rhetorically constructed in all three parliamentary sittings regarding the voting of each Memorandum.

**Data analysis:**

The descending hierarchical classification of the political rhetoric regarding the voting of the first Memorandum, classified the lectical material into five themes (see Figure 1).

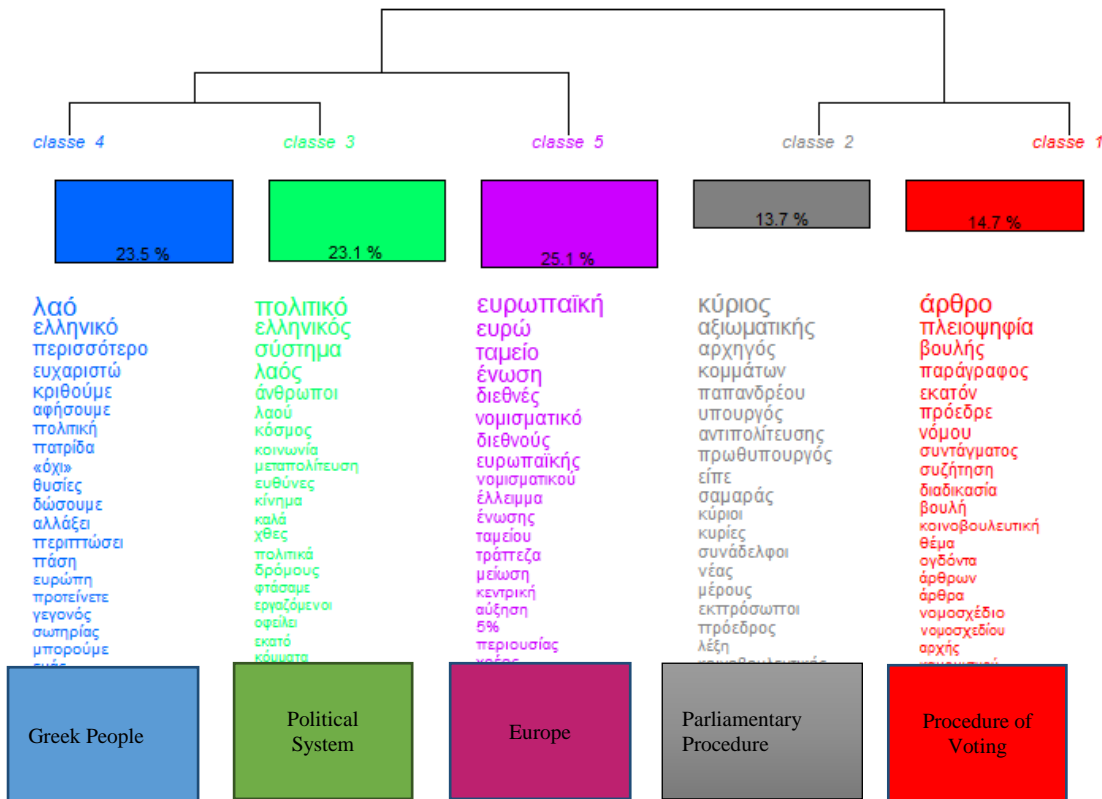


Figure 1. Descending Hierarchical Classification of lectical choices regarding the voting of the first Memorandum<sup>4</sup>

The classification of the political rhetoric regarding the voting of the first Memorandum classified the corpus into five distinct categories. These five clusters are grouped into two wider thematics, the first one containing cluster 1 and cluster 2 focus on intra-parliamentary processes, while the second one containing clusters 3, 4 and 5 focus on political rhetorical constructs. More specifically, cluster 1 (covering 14.7% of the entity of the corpus) contains lectical choices regarding the procedure of the voting and cluster 2 (13.7%) describes the parliamentary procedure in general. Therefore, the first two clusters concentrate on the parliamentary technicalities, even though the procedure of the voting of the Memorandum (with simple or qualified majority) triggered ideological differences between the political parties. cluster 3 (23.1%) and cluster 4 (23.5%) concentrate on the “political system” and the notion of “Greek people” respectively, where

<sup>4</sup> Even though the Descending Hierarchical Classification “orders” the corpus into classes (classe 1, classe 2, etc) in this paper the term “cluster” is used instead of “class” to avoid any misinterpretation



the political system constructed its reliability in terms of serving the “interest of the Greek people”. The dominant theme in this is “Europe”, covering 225.1% of the entity of the corpus. It highlights the importance of the political system to construct the representation of Europe, and operates as a focal point of reference regarding how the “political system” and the “Greek people” communicate. In order to deeper examine how “Europe” was constructed, the following Table (Table 1) shows the most statistically significant lectional choices of the particular cluster.

<b>Word</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>p value</b>
European	120,57	p < 0,0001
Euro	104,35	p < 0,0001
Fund	102,44	p < 0,0001
Union	80,57	p < 0,0001
International	75,75	p < 0,0001
Monetary	74,94	p < 0,0001
Deficit	50,01	p < 0,0001
Decrease	42,27	p < 0,0001
Increase	38,87	p < 0,0001
Debt	30,08	p < 0,0001

Table 1. Table of statistical significance of lectional choices of the cluster “Europe”

The most statistically significant words of the cluster “Europe” construct the representation in terms of institutions and economic means. Europe is mostly approached as the sum of “European Union” and the “International Monetary Fund”. The notions “deficit”, “increase”, “decrease” and “debt” highlight that Europe was mostly represented in financial terms rather than political. This approach could be understood since from the onset of the financial crisis in 2008 Europe and especially Germany seemed reluctant to provide political solution and promoted severe austerity (see also Dullien & Guérot, 2012; Paterson, 2011).

This call for austerity remained with high intensity during the voting for the second Memorandum in Greece. The descending hierarchical classification of the political rhetoric regarding the voting of the second Memorandum classified the corpus into five distinct clusters (Figure 2).

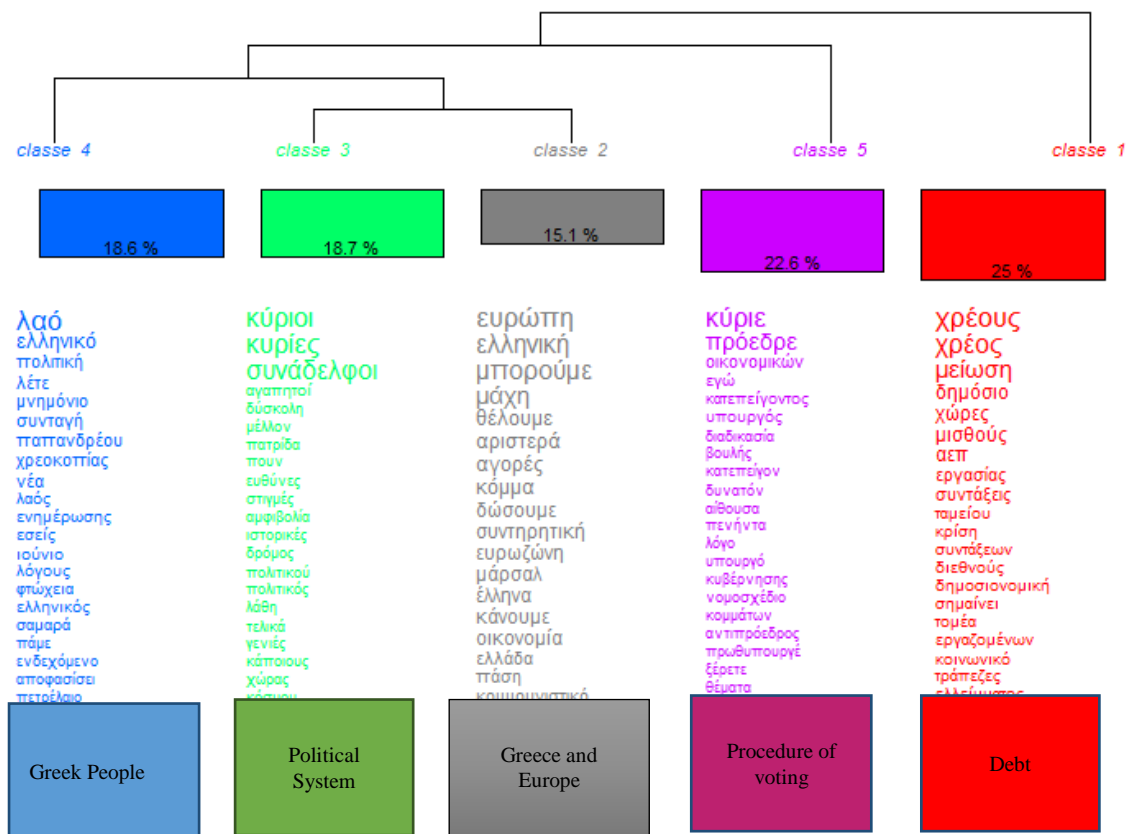


Figure 2. Hierarchical classification of rhetorical choices regarding the voting of the second Memorandum

The most dominant category (“Debt”, 25%) is distinct from the other four, therefore it operates as a focal point of reference in this parliamentary discourse. This contrasts with the parliamentary discourse regarding the voting of the first Memorandum, where the dominant cluster was “Europe”. This change appears due to the internalization of the necessity of remaining inside the “Euro-family”. However, in the second Memorandum the political system strives to handle the prerequisite for remaining in the E.U. which is the managing of the debt. The fifth cluster (Procedure of voting, 22.6%) is the second more dominant category, due to the nature of the voting, which was again under terms of “urgency”. There, political actors had to vote only in favor or against the Memorandum and no parliamentary discussion regarding the content of the Memorandum was foreseen, something that was also given during the voting of the first Memorandum. Cluster 4

(“Greek people”) again focuses on the “national interest” and is connected again to Cluster 3 (“Political system”, 16.7%) and “Greece and Europe” (15.1%). As with the parliamentary discourse regarding the voting of the first Memorandum, the political system again strives for credibility under the name of the “interest of the country”. But, at the same time the remaining of Greece within Europe is under consideration (cluster 2, “Greece and Europe, 15.1%) since political forces are challenging the norm that Greece should remain in the EU under any circumstances.

To examine how the Europe was represented in this parliamentary sitting, Table 2 contains the most statistically significant words of the second cluster, “Greece and Europe”.

Word	$\chi^2$	p value
Europe	60,23	p < 0,0001
Greek	56,28	p < 0,0001
Battle	51,49	p < 0,0001
Left	37,77	p < 0,0001
Markets	36,37	p < 0,0001
Party	35,53	p < 0,0001
Conservative	33,07	p < 0,0001
Eurozone	33,07	p < 0,0001
Marshall	32,88	p < 0,0001
Greek	29,97	p < 0,0001

Table 2. Table of statistical significance of lectional choices of the cluster “Greece and Europe”

In this cluster the political parties differed in the way they illustrated the position of Greece within or outside E.U. This divide was between SYRIZA and KKE (left and communist party respectively) and PASOK, ND and LAOS (center and right-wing parties). Even though Europe is acknowledged as “conservative” by all members of the Greek parliament, the center and right-wing parties support that a “battle” should be given to remain in the EU. Though the left parties suggest that the “battle” should be given to leave the EU (see also Takas & Samaras, 2016). The pro-Memorandum rhetoric represents Europe under terms of necessity and despite the harshness of the measures Greece should “at all costs” remain in the EU. On the contrary, the anti-Memorandum rhetoric focuses on the measures that Europe demands to be taken, since these measures have a deep and profound negative effect on the social context. One of the major anti-Memorandum voices was the left wing-party SYRIZA that was later elected government but, to the surprise of many, signed the next Memorandum in Greece, the third consecutive Memorandum.

The hierarchical classification of the parliamentary transcript regarding the voting of the third Memorandum generated again five new clusters within the corpus, but with distinct differences in comparison to the clusters in the previous parliamentary sittings (Figure 3).

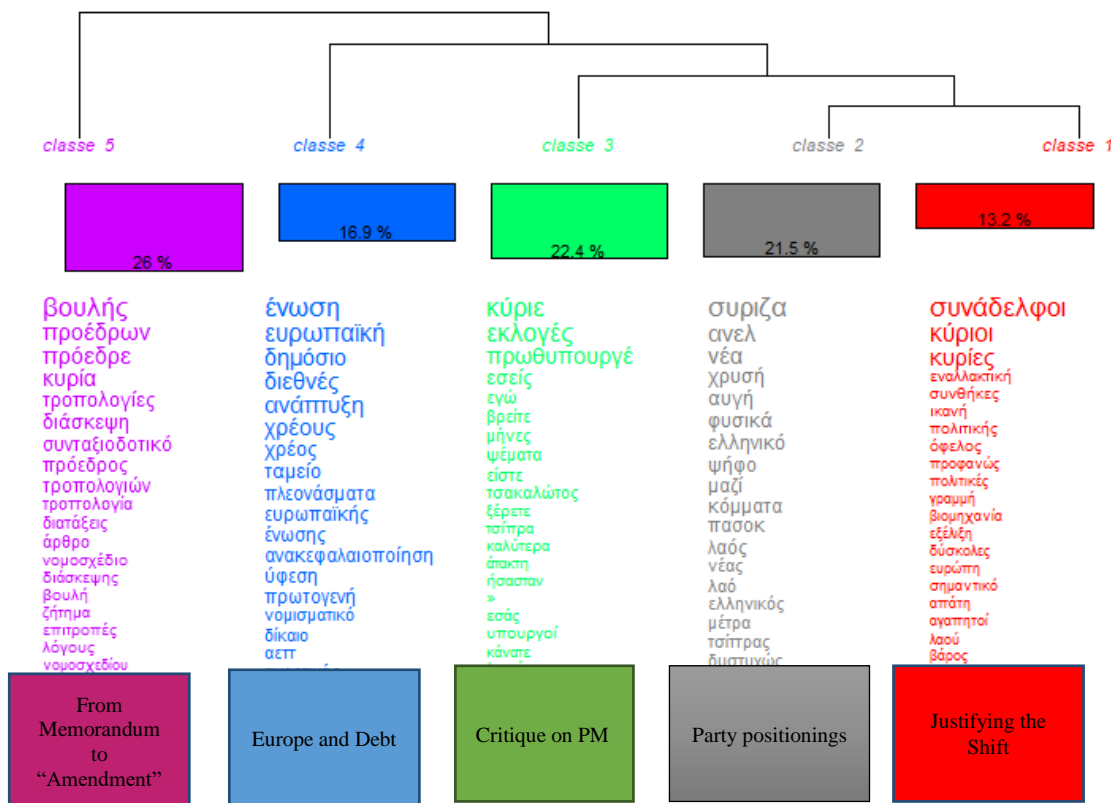


Figure 3. Hierarchical classification of lectional choices regarding the voting of the third Memorandum

The most dominant cluster is Cluster 5 (From Memorandum to Amendment, 26%) where the government, consisted of former anti-Memorandum parties, tried to explain the necessity of the third Memorandum not as a Memorandum per se but as amendments to pre-existing financial issues that had to be addressed. The representations of "Europe" and "Debt" have now been internalized into the second smallest cluster (Cluster 4, 18.9%) and is directly connected to all other three remaining clusters (Cluster 3, "Critique on PM, 22.04%; Cluster 2, "Party positioning", 21.5% and Cluster 1, "Justifying the shift", 13.2%). The pro-Memorandum shift of SYRIZA and ANEL forced the other parties that were mostly pro-Memorandum to shift their focus not on the Memorandum and the Debt themselves, but on securing the positioning of the partisan sphere of influence.

<b>Word</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P value</b>
Union	73,42	p < 0,0001
European	67,82	p < 0,0001
Public	63,37	p < 0,0001
International	59,77	p < 0,0001
Growth	58,36	p < 0,0001
Debt	54,45	p < 0,0001
Fund	43,71	p < 0,0001
Surpluses	43,42	p < 0,0001
Re-capitalization	39,71	p < 0,0001
Depression	38,48	p < 0,0001

Table 3. Table of statistical significance of lectional choices of the cluster “Europe and Debt”

Table 3 depicts the necessity of Greece’s remain in the European Union and the acceptance of “Debt” as “public” (and not as private). The pro-Memorandum shift of SYRIZA and ANEL left little room for rhetorical antagonisms. The signing of the third Memorandum “tied” Greece’s remain in EU with the acceptance and management of the huge (formerly private) debt. “Europe” was again constructed in financial terms highlighting once more the absence of qualitative political critique.

### **Discussion of data**

The aim of this study was to explore how the Greek political system represented Europe and its relation to Greece in times of severe crisis. In the parliamentary debate on the adoption of the first Memorandum, Europe was recorded as the most extensive cluster (see Graph 1), emphasizing the importance given by the Greek political system. The Greek political system was called for the first time to negotiate its relationship with Europe under conditions of conflict, as it had to consolidate its position in the European Union. Europe's image is shaped by economic conditions, and the reference to this includes the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Europe's economic-centric approach highlights Greece's economic dependence. The reference to the Troika is made to construct the "Memorandum or Bankruptcy" dilemma, implying that non-voting of the Memorandum automatically means that Greece would no longer be able to borrow financial resources. Thus, Europe is constructed having a strong position in the political rhetoric with the requirements of which the Greek political system is called to

comply (see also Papastamou, Gardikiotis, & Prodromitis, 2017). The pro-memorandum rhetoric fully complies with this approach as it considers the signing of the Memorandum to be a "patriotic duty" since it ensures Greece's position in the EU. On the contrary, the anti-memorandum rhetoric emphasized in the existence of an "alternative route" outside the European Union.

Regarding the parliamentary debate on the voting of the second Memorandum, "Europe" and "Greece" as representations, have now been integrated into a much smaller cluster (see Figure 10), as debt, despite two years of severe austerity, constantly threatening the viability of the Greek economy. Thus, the thematic "Debt" itself is the central theme of reference and country's position in Europe is interpreted through it. The concept of the Memorandum is again a central reference, as it will ensure the country's viability and is a focal rhetorical reference. Europe is once again in a position of "power", as in the parliamentary debate on the first Memorandum, the "Memorandum or Bankruptcy" dilemma remains, as well as the rhetorical framework of the Memorandum under "patriotic duty". On the contrary, anti-memorandum rhetoric depicts Europe under conditions of oppression and non-progress. In the present parliamentary debate, despite the limited visibility of the "Europe and Greece" cluster, the formation of "Europe" is taking place on ideological terms (see also Takas & Samaras, 2016). The pro-memorandum rhetoric presents a conservative approach in terms of full submission and compliance so that Greece remains in the "heart of the EU" and development is ensured, while anti-memorandum rhetoric frames Europe in terms of blackmailing. While in the parliamentary debate on the first Memorandum Europe was a dominant theme, the representation of which was a central concern of parliamentary rhetoric, in the second Memorandum there are processes of internalizing the need for the country to remain in the EU and comply with Europe's mandates. At the same time, in the first parliamentary debate, Europe was a separate rhetorical construction, while in the second, Europe appeared in the same cluster with "Greece". In the parliamentary debate on the third Memorandum, Europe is again not the main reference, but rather the second smallest cluster (see Figure 19).

More specifically, Europe, in the third parliamentary debate, is associated with clear references to the concept of Debt, which was the central reference in the debate on the adoption of the second Memorandum. In the first parliamentary debate, the main topics were "Europe and Greece", with almost equal central references. In the second parliamentary debate, Europe and Greece co-appeared in a less important cluster in the dominant theme of Debt. In the third parliamentary debate Europe is depicted with limited visibility. This process highlights how central conflicting concepts in the broader political parliamentary dialogue lose their centrality and are directly linked to the concept of Europe. During the two years between the voting of the first and

second Memoranda, the "necessity" of Greece's remaining in Europe was fully internalized and in the three years between the signing of the second and third Memoranda, the "property" of the Debt was fully internalized. In these three years, the Debt has been internalized as "Greek", "public" and the only way to consolidate the country and get out of austerity is to manage the debt. The parliamentary debate on the adoption of the third Memorandum was marked by the pro-memorandum shift of SYRIZA-ANEL. This shift further reduced the conflicting reports in Europe and fully complied with the internalization of the Debt, as it was called upon to simply manage it being unable to politically address the issue. The whole approach highlighted Europe's inability to politically handle the financial crisis and Europe's persistence in econometric approaches, disregarding the social implications.

## Conclusion

Regarding the parliamentary discussion for the voting of the first Memorandum, “Europe” was the dominant representation and was constructed under econometric terms in an effort to evaluate and comprehend the “other”. The parliamentary discussion for the voting of the second Memorandum focused on the “Debt” was the dominant theme and at the same time Europe was represented in the smallest theme incorporating the notion of “Greece”. The political rhetoric focused on the relationship between Europe and Greece, arguing against or in favor of Greece’s remain in the European Union. In the parliamentary discussion regarding the voting of the third Memorandum, the pro-Memorandum shift of the former anti-Memorandum political parties SYRIZA and ANEL, diminished the importance of challenging both the debt itself as well as the position of Greece in- or outside the European Union. The remaining of Greece in Europe and debt were internalized, were fully accepted and the primary concern was the “management” of Europe’s demands on severe austerity.

While Europe is nowadays facing the pandemic of corona-virus, hopes are growing that Europe will fulfil its political integration by avoiding to address matters in a strictly financial approach. Even though Europe seemed reluctant to dynamically handle the previous crisis by showing solidarity and social sensitivity it is now crucial to re-negotiate its existence and prove to be an actual Union facing collectively this new crisis. Future studies could focus on the representation of Europe in the parliamentary discourse during and after the corona virus period. It would be of particular interest to examine to what extent in times of crisis the political systems “call upon” Europe to collectively face issues that concern the whole entity of the European Union.

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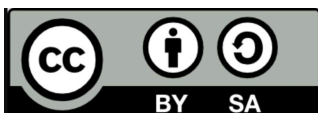
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