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Jennifer R. Wozniak

Chris Hasselmann

Loyola University Chicago, chasselmann@luc.edu

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Chapter 12

Public Attitudes and Support for the EU in the Wake of the Financial Crisis

Jennifer R. Wozniak Boyle and Chris Hasselmann

The economic and financial crisis has dominated the political agenda of both the European Union and its respective governments for the past several years. The economic effects, from rising unemployment to negligible growth rates, have been widely documented and explored. The political consequences likewise have been examined in terms of the impact on various national elections, especially in Greece and most recently in Germany. One area in need of attention, however, is the extent to which existing theories and models of support for integration are able to capture the public's changing perception of the EU. Drawing on a series of *Eurobarometer* surveys before and after the crisis began in 2008, we first assess the extent to which support has been affected, as well as our ability to model such support. We then explore preferences over which actor is best suited to craft solutions to the crisis. We find that support for the EU has been negatively affected overall, but that the EU is still seen as the actor most suited to crafting a solution. We also demonstrate that the variables and models highlighted by the existing literature are capable of capturing this downward trend in an appropriate way. Our main conclusion is that it is the EU's failure to live up to this leadership expectation that has caused its support and trust to plummet as much as it has. As Moravcsik (1998) and Pollack (2001) have argued, the EU provides a kind of two-level game (Putnam 1988), making it possible to pursue policies at the supranational level that are irrational or infeasible at the national one. We argue that one underlying basis for EU support was this alternative route to policymaking. However, the relative failure to lead during the crisis has effectively reduced this two-level game to a single playing field, and best accounts for the decline in support observed.

THE CRISIS AND SUPPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

The starting point of the crisis has generally been marked by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers on September 15, 2008. Table 12.1 presents a chronology of some of the major ensuing events through 2011.

While there were precursor events, the sudden and unexpected collapse of the Wall Street giant was the opening salvo of a global banking crisis that would subsequently evolve into a sovereign debt crisis that now appears to threaten the viability of the euro, if not the EU itself. The effect these events have had on support for the EU has been profound, and it has been getting progressively worse. For example, the Commission notes in its review of the Spring 2012 Eurobarometer (No. 77), that "trust in the European Union has fallen since the autumn of 2011 and now stands at its lowest ever level" (EU 2012, 13). Our primary goal is assess how well existing theories of support capture this decline.

A common way to measure support for the EU is through an index using a fairly common set of survey questions (e.g., Boomgaarden et al. 2011; Garry and Tilley 2009; McLaren 2006, 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2005, 2004; Gabel 1998a; Gabel and Palmer 1995). We continue this drawing on Boomgaarden et al.'s (2011) notion that attitudes towards the EU should be measured on

Table 12.1 A Timeline of the Crisis (2007–2011)

<i>Sept–Nov, 2007</i>		<i>Pre-Crisis Survey: Eurobarometer 68.1</i>
September 15, 2008	Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy (crisis begins)	
December, 2008	EU leaders agree to a 200bn euro stimulus plan	
December, 2009	Greece admits its debt is more than double the eurozone limit of 60% of GDP	
March, 2010	The eurozone approves a safety net for Greece, but provides no loans	
May, 2010	The first Greek bailout is announced (110bn euros)	
		<i>Crisis Survey #1: Eurobarometer 73.4</i>
November, 2010	The Irish bailout is announced (85bn euros)	
February, 2011	The European Stability Mechanism is announced (500bn euros)	
May, 2011	The Portuguese bailout is announced (78bn euros)	
		<i>Crisis Survey #2: Eurobarometer 75.3</i>
June, 2011	A second Greek bailout is announced (109bn euros)	
September, 2011	The Commission predicts eurozone growth will come "to a virtual standstill"	
	Italy's debt rating is downgraded from A+ to A	
	EU Commission President Barroso warns the EU "faces its greatest challenge"	
	UK Foreign Secretary Hague calls the euro a "burning building with no exits"	

Source: Adapted from the BBC, 2012 (including quotations).

multiple dimensions. While some of their five dimensions (performance, identity, affection, utilitarianism, and strengthening (~future integration/deepening and widening) cannot be captured due to the lack of appropriate questions, we construct an index based on the following:

1. Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the European Union is a good thing / neither good nor bad / bad thing?
2. Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?
3. In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?
4. Please tell me if you tend to trust [The European Union] or tend not to trust it?

The resulting 8-point index has been rescaled to 0–100 for ease of interpretation and serves as the dependent variable in the models and figures that follow.¹ A primary concern for any index is internal consistency (reliability): all of the components must be correlated, and measure the same underlying concept. To assess reliability, we use Cronbach's alpha (1951), which provides a measure of the extent to which the items capture different facets of the same basic construct, in this case support for the EU. The scale reliability score (α) for the 4-item index is 0.79 for 2007; it is 0.81 and 0.73 for 2010 and 2011 respectively. While the minimum alpha required "depends on how a measure is being used," alpha's greater than 0.7 imply at least a modest level of reliability and values closer to 0.8 are generally accepted for the kind of survey-based scale used here (Nunnally 1978, 245; see also Lance et al. 2006).²

As an additional check, we examined how both the index and its components change over time. As seen in Figure 12.1, the index (support for the EU) declines after 2007. The concern therefore is that such movement should be caused jointly by all of the components rather than being driven solely by one factor. While Cronbach alphas around 0.8 suggest this is not the case, a conclusion backed up by examining the pairwise correlation of the components, we also compared the mean of each component (not shown) across time, verifying that each one contributes to the overall downward trend as should be expected from an index possessing sound internal consistency.

Figure 12.1 shows the distribution of the mean level of support in the 27 member states in each of the three years under examination. In pre-crisis 2007, the EU enjoyed fairly robust support with a median of 66.9 points, whereas in midst of the financial crisis the median of country averages fell to 59.0 and 57.0 points respectively. Noticeably absent during the crisis years are any member states with an average level of support above 70; in 2007, there were eight.

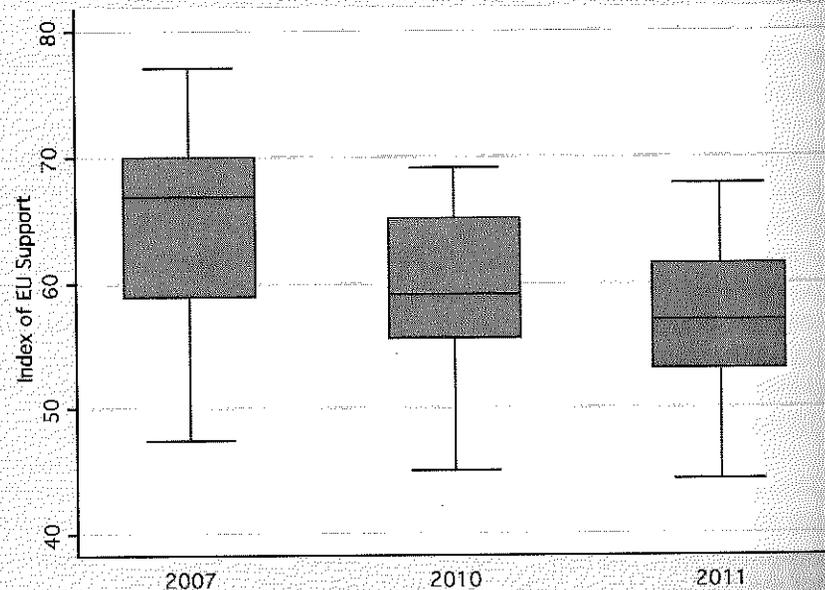


Figure 12.1 Declining Support for the EU. This shows the distribution of the 27 country mean levels of support before (2007) and during the financial crisis. The median was almost 67 in 2007, but had fallen to 59 by 2010 and to 57 by 2011. The crisis years also show the absence of any countries with support above 70. Although the exact number is not conveyed by the upper tail in 2007, there were in fact eight such countries, with a maximum of just over 77 points in Ireland. By 2011, the maximum was only 67.8, in Luxembourg. *Source:* Eurobarometer Nos. 68.1, 73.4, and 75.3.

Given that this crisis has largely affected eurozone countries, we compare the change in support in and outside the eurozone (as of 2011). Figure 12.2 shows a similar drop in support regardless of euro usage. While Greece experienced an especially large drop in support (–21.1 points between 2007 and 2011), and Sweden actually managed a small half-point increase, the average decrease in the two areas was nearly the same: –8.7 points in the eurozone, and –8.1 points outside it. A one-way ANOVA (not shown) more formally supports the claim of both equal means and variances.

EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR THE EU

Just as attitudes towards the EU are widely measured using indexes such as this, they are also modeled as a function of a fairly widely accepted set of factors. While the actual survey questions used vary by necessity, the underlying concepts for which they serve as proxies are well established. These

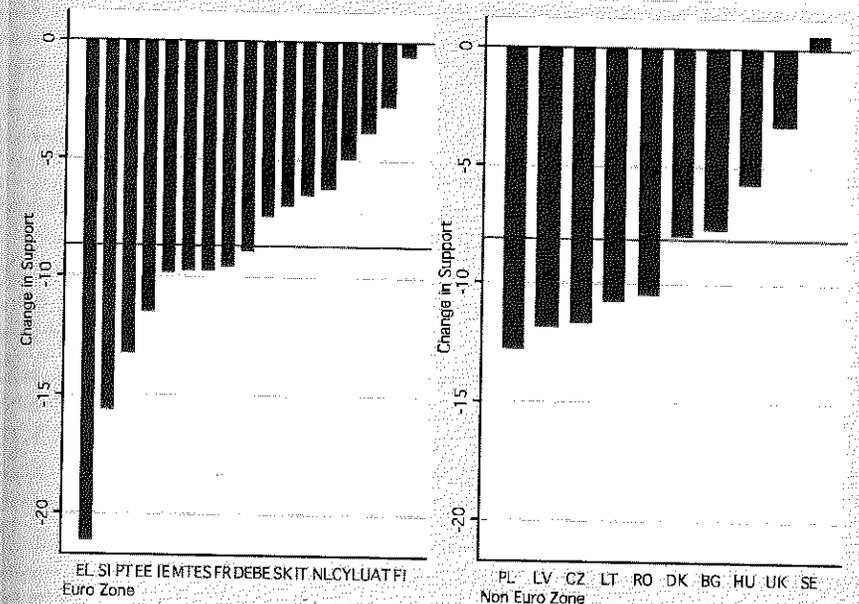


Figure 12.2 Change in Support 2011 vs 2007. This shows the change in the average level of support in each country between 2011 and 2007, separating the 17 countries that use the euro on the left from the 10 that do not on right. While outliers exist in both groups, overall, the decline in support is not dependent on euro zone membership. *Source:* EB Nos. 75.3 and 68.1.

models combine three schools of thought. First, the utilitarian perspective models attitudes towards integration as the result of cost-benefit assessments (see Christin 2005; Tucker et al. 2002; Gabel 1998a, 1998b; Anderson and Reichert 1996; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993). The central thesis is that “different groups . . . experience different costs and benefits from” integration with more educated and skilled individuals “having better opportunities to apply their talents internationally, creating a more positive attitude” towards the EU (Lubbers and Jaspers 2010, 24). The second perspective focuses on political values and the cues generally uninformed individuals use to formulate opinions on the EU (see Hobolt 2006; Gabel 1998b; Franklin et al. 1995). The central thesis here is that left parties are more hostile than right parties because they see the process as overly beneficial to the owners of capital, and of less utility and benefit to labor. In addition, those more inclined to follow and engage in political discussions are better able to comprehend and identify with the fairly abstract concept of European integration (see Inglehart, Rabier and Reif 1991; Janssen 1991). The third school of thought focuses on how integration is or is not seen as a threat to national identity (see Lubbers and

Scheepers 2010; McLaren 2006, 2002; De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005; Hooghe and Marks 2005). While many of the questions regarding national verse EU attachment, or views on immigration were unavailable in the three Eurobarometers used here, Lubbers and Jaspers note that those less educated tend to “feature more nationalistic attitudes and consequently express stronger fears about” the EU (2010, 25).

Steenbergen and Jones (2002) show that when data cluster in groups, such as individuals clustering in countries, a multilevel analysis is preferable to linear regression as the latter produces standard errors that are too small. Therefore, we use a two-level model to accommodate the country and individual-level nature of the data. Because the dependent variable is continuous but truncated on the scale 0–100 and not normally distributed, we fit a random intercept generalized linear model with a Gaussian link function using GLLMM within STATA.³ Since, as Tanasoiu and Colonescu note, “it is reasonable to believe that the respondents have no particular motivation to refuse to answer some questions, . . . we can safely assume that our missing data are” missing at random, and hence amenable to imputation (2008, 369). The imputation method used here is the *Amelia II* program available within the R statistical package (Honaker et al. 2011). Because each country surveyed has essentially the same number of respondents (~1000), but very different populations, the data is weighted at the individual-level by each nation’s share of the total EU population aged 15 and over; at the country level, all countries are weighted equally as the probability a country is included is 1.0 for all member states. The results are presented in Table 12.2.

The single strongest predictor is whether or not one tends to trust one’s own government; such trust in 2007 raised an individual’s support by almost 14.5 points (holding everything else constant). Not surprisingly, once the crisis began, such continued trust resulted in even higher levels of support for the EU. If one tends to trust one’s government, then one is likely to support its intergovernmental efforts, especially in times of crisis. The next several predictors come in pairs, and each yields the expected results. Believing that the national economy will improve over the next 12 months raises support (e.g., by 3.5 points in 2010) while believing it will worsen lowers it (e.g., by –2.5 in 2010). The same is true for expectations concerning one’s own household financial situation; optimism yields higher support (by 0.78 points in 2011) while pessimism lowers it (by –5.2 points in 2011). The relative impact, however, such expectations have depends on whether the forecast concerns the national economy or one’s household situation. When asked about the national economy over the coming year, a positive expectation consistently produces a larger increase in support than the corresponding drop in support produced by a negative forecast: 5.37 vs –0.71

Table 12.2 Multilevel Models of Support for the EU

	2007	2010	2011
Tend to trust national government	14.44 (0.29)*	19.10 (1.02)*	17.25 (0.84)*
Expect Nat. economy to improve over coming yr.	5.37 (0.71)*	3.54 (1.03)*	4.69 (0.58)*
Expect Nat. economy to worsen over coming yr.	–0.71 (0.65)	–2.51 (0.86)*	–2.70 (1.00)*
Expect household Fin. Sit. to improve over coming yr.	1.42 (0.38)*	0.53 (0.91)	0.78 (0.33)*
Expect household Fin. Sit. to worsen over coming yr.	–7.72 (0.36)*	–6.34 (0.63)*	–5.20 (0.68)*
Higher educated	5.06 (0.34)*	7.91 (1.23)*	7.31 (0.92)*
Lower educated	–4.04 (0.39)*	–4.24 (0.69)*	–3.49 (0.93)*
Professional	1.73 (0.62)*	3.37 (1.05)*	1.69 (0.65)*
Manual worker	–1.89 (0.41)*	–1.40 (1.30)	–1.42 (0.96)
Frequently discuss politics	1.00 (0.39)*	1.14 (0.61)	0.87 (0.57)
Never discuss politics	–3.68 (0.32)*	–4.64 (1.08)*	–4.35 (1.05)*
Left-Right self placement on 0–10 point scale	0.47 (0.07)*	–0.22 (0.29)	–0.37 (0.32)
Female	–1.31 (0.28)*	–2.17 (0.41)*	–2.52 (0.62)*
Age	–0.05 (.01)*	–0.06 (0.03)	–0.06 (0.02)*
Constant	62.94 (1.03)*	58.05 (2.24)*	55.00 (1.95)*
Standard deviation of the residuals at the individual level	21.97	23.45	23.28
Standard deviation of the country-specific intercepts	6.61	5.92	6.06
N (individual level)	26,768	26,641	26,713
Log likelihood	–120,750.06	–121,903.52	–122,029.69

*Indicates $p < 0.05$ (standard errors in parentheses).

in 2007; 3.54 vs –2.51 in 2010, and 4.69 vs –2.70 in 2011. The opposite is true when it comes to one’s personal situation. Optimistic forecasts now consistently yield much lower increases in support than the negative impact of more pessimistic outlooks: 1.42 vs –7.72 in 2007; 0.52 vs –6.34 in 2010, and 0.78 vs –5.2 in 2011. In short, the reward the EU gets for good macroeconomic expectations is greater than the punishment it gets for negative ones. When it comes to personal financial outlooks, however, the opposite is true.

The positive/negative pairings continue in regard to education and profession. In 2010, respondents who finished their schooling after the age of 20, or were still studying, were 7.91 points higher on the index than those who finished earlier; those who completed their education before the age of 15, or had no formal education at all, were 4.24 points lower than would otherwise be expected if everything else were held constant. Similarly professional workers are more supportive while manual workers are less so, although not

always significantly so. This conforms to the utilitarian expectation about who is likely to see the EU as an opportunity and who is likely to see it as wage and labor competition.

In terms of capturing the downward trend in support, the model performs as expected. While a number of variables do change their relevant impact as the crisis unfolds, the bulk of the decline is captured by the constant rather than a substantive, theoretically informed variable. This is a good sign as the effect of the explanatory variables highlighted in the literature ought to be fairly independent of the financial crisis. If the coefficients were to suddenly change sign or significantly change their magnitude, then we would have to revisit our theoretical understanding of support. These coefficients ought to be fairly consistent across time, and for the most part they are. A little magnification or mitigation in the wake of the EU's largest ever financial crisis does not fundamentally call into question the theories behind their inclusion. As seen in Table 12.3, when a variable has an increasingly positive effect on support, it does so by less than 3 points and on average by only 1.7 points; when a variable has a more negative effect on support, it does so by less than 2 points and on average by only -0.7 points. The downward trend in support ought to be captured by the constant, and the 8 point drop in the means seen in Figure 12.2 is captured by the 7.94 decline in the constant. So while the predictors generally maintain their expected effects, the crisis itself is acting as an overall drag or deadweight on support. In short, the economic context matters when assessing the EU, as Gabel (1998a) and others have indicated.

Finally, the effects of the crisis can also be seen in the multilevel results. First, at the individual level, the dispersion of the model's error rises from 21.97 points in 2007 to over 23 points in both 2010 and 2011. Because the effects of the crisis are felt most variably at the individual level, there is greater variance in the error term produced by the model during the crisis

Table 12.3 Variables with the Largest Change in Effect on Support for the EU: 2011 vs 2007

	<i>Individuals are x Points More Supportive of the EU in 2011</i>
Tend to trust national government	+2.81 Points
Expect household finances to worsen	+2.52
Higher Educated	+2.25
	<i>Individuals are x Points Less Supportive of the EU in 2011</i>
Constant (expected value all else zero)	-7.94 Points
Expect national economy to worsen	-1.99
Female	-1.21

years. In other words, it is more difficult to model individual-level support during the crisis than it was before because the effects of the crisis are themselves so variable at this level; some individuals were hurt more than others in a way this model cannot fully predict. Second, reflecting the decline in support seen in Figures 12.1 and 12.2, the range of random country-level intercepts does not vary significantly in 2010 or 2011 from what it was in 2007, although there is slightly less dispersion (from 6.6 points in 2007, to 5.9 and 6.1 in 2010 and 2011 respectively). This can also be seen in Figure 12.1, where the total range of support was smaller in 2010 and 2011 (~23 and 24 points respectively) than it was in 2007 (~30 points). We interpret this to mean that the crisis, while hitting Greece perhaps harder than most, has truly been an EU-wide event.

PUBLIC PREFERENCES AND A ROLE FOR THE EU

The first question in devising a solution to any crisis is to consider which actor is best suited to the task. In light of the downward shift in support for the EU demonstrated above, one might reasonably conclude that Europeans sought leadership during the crisis from elsewhere, such as national governments or international actors like the International Monetary Fund. In fact, given the international nature of the crisis, as well as the considerable financial burdens involved, a substantial (if not lead) role for the IMF was probably to be expected. While respondents were not asked which actor they thought should lead, or which they preferred, they were asked in both 2010 and 2011 which actor they felt was "best able to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis" (EB 73.4, v368; EB 75.3, QC3a). Table 12.4 shows the results and yields two main conclusions. First, despite the declining support and trust demonstrated above, the EU was believed to be the most effective actor moving forward; it was the plurality preference in both years. In the interest of space, we omit a country-by-country presentation; however, in 2010 the EU was the plurality preference in two-thirds of the member states, and the first or second choice in 25 of the 27 countries. Second, whether it was through the EU, the IMF, or the G20, there was a nearly universal preference for coordinated international action as opposed to each country attempting to resolve the crisis on its own. Only in Romania, the UK,

Table 12.4 The Actor Most Able to Take Effective Action to Combat the Crisis

	Nat. Gov't	EU	US	G20	IMF	Other	None
2011	17.8%	25.9	12.7	19.4	15.9	1.4	6.9
2010	18.6	28.6	12.6	18.7	14.9	1.3	5.3

Source: Eurobarometer 73.4, Eurobarometer 75.3.

and Sweden did a plurality of respondents believe their national government to be the most capable actor in terms of resolving the crisis. Given the history between the EU and the latter two countries in particular, this is not terribly surprising.

Initially this public expectation was actively resisted as all member states and EU institutions asserted that the solution to the Greek crisis was Greek budget austerity, and *not* an EU or IMF financial rescue. At one level this is to be expected, as no politician anywhere is ever in a rush to inform voters that their taxes must be used to bail out another actor, let alone another country. This hesitancy can clearly be seen in Germany, where although the 2013 federal election was still years away, Merkel was very reluctant to even broach the subject in 2010. At another level, however, focusing on the bailouts misses the broader public expectation for EU leadership. After all, the EU is capable of far more than just negotiating the exchange of funds for budget austerity. For example, as can be seen in Table 12.5, the public was also quite adamant that the financial sector be brought to task for its role in crisis. Almost any EU proposal to curb the financial market was going to be embraced loudly and with considerable *shadenfreude*.

It is worth noting that when it came to financial market regulation, the British were essentially in lockstep with their continental cousins. So while the British government was the most vocal critic of such measures, there is little evidence to suggest that the British public shared its government's concerns. In fact, when it came to regulating wages in the financial sector, the British were more virulent supporters than the EU as a whole (53.4% vs 48.6%).

We argue that this public expectation for EU leadership combined with the increasing likelihood of sovereign defaults is what accounts for the reversal

of member state and EU opposition. When reluctantly forced to admit the problem would not just go away, the EU found itself divided into two camps over whether the IMF or EU should take the lead. Most member states, particularly France and Spain, along with the Commission and the ECB favored an EU-led rescue, while Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands favored an IMF led effort (Barber and Wiesmann 2010; Thomson 2010). These patterns are largely consistent with public opinion in each state, as for example, a plurality of Finns (31%) believed the IMF to be the most capable actor whereas over one-third of Spaniards felt the EU likely to be most effective. In the end, the natural compromise was arrived at: a jointly funded rescue tied to Greek austerity (European Commission 2010).

CONCLUSION

Except within Sweden, the financial crisis has significantly weakened support for the EU, and this decline in support is independent of eurozone membership. Our primary goal was to assess how well existing models of EU support account for this decline. In terms of the variables routinely highlighted by the literature, the results hold up well. Each factor has the effect we have come to expect it to have: a highly educated, male, professional worker with positive expectations for his household finances and national economy who also trusts his government is much more supportive (expected support = 86.7 points), than a lower educated, female, manual worker with negative economic outlooks who never discusses politics and has little trust in her government (36.7 points). In short, the financial crisis does not require us to revisit our theoretical understanding of support for the EU; the existing models and variables continue to perform largely as expected. Our results also confirm that a multilevel design best captures the nested nature of EU-wide public opinion data.

We also demonstrate that despite this decline in support, the EU remains seen as the actor most likely to be effective at dealing with the crisis, ahead of either the IMF or national governments. We believe this expectation for leadership helps us understand in part why the crisis has produced such a drag on support. Figure 12.3 charts the changing degree of trust in both the EU and national political institutions. In the fall of 2004, one of these institutions, the EU, was unlike the others. Whereas half the respondents trusted the EU, 38 percent trusted their own parliaments, and only about one-third trusted their actual government. However, the spring of 2012, the three institutions were essentially perceived the same way with only 31 percent trusting the EU and 28 percent trusting either their own parliament or government. Why the fall from grace?

Table 12.5 Regulation of the Financial Industry (2011)

	Strongly in Favor ¹	Fairly in Favor	Fairly Opposed	Strongly Opposed
Tougher rules on tax avoidance and tax havens	EU: 62.5% UK: 64.0	30.5 29.2	5.4 4.5	1.6 2.3
The introduction of a tax on profits made by banks	EU: 52.0 UK: 56.3	35.6 31.3	9.0 8.5	3.4 4.0
The introduction of tax on financial transactions	EU: 33.1 UK: 23.2	37.8 36.0	20.2 25.2	8.9 15.6
The regulation of wages in the financial sector (i.e., trader's bonuses)	EU: 48.6 UK: 53.4	39.1 33.8	9.2 8.7	3.1 4.1
Increasing transparency of financial markets	EU: 57.0 UK: 54.3	38.0 40.4	4.0 4.1	1.0 1.2

¹The percentage of respondents across the EU, excluding the UK, with the UK figures provided separately. Source: Eurobarometer 75.3.

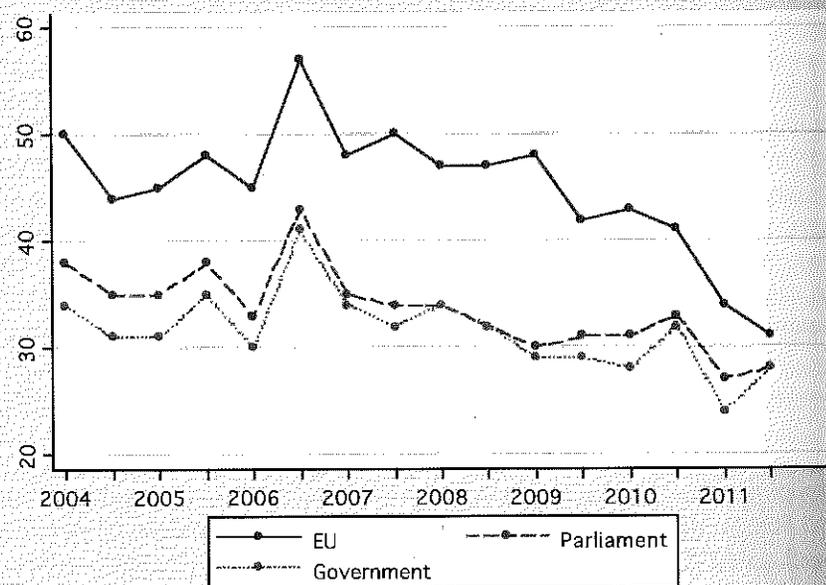


Figure 12.3 The Declining Trust in Political Institutions. This shows the changing perception of the EU vis-a-vis national governments and parliaments in the biannual Eurobarometers (fall and spring). In the fall of 2004, the EU was trusted significantly more than either domestic institution. However, by the spring of 2012, there was little difference between the three as the EU had sunk to the level of the national institutions. *Source:* European Commission 2012, 13.

While the gap began to narrow in the fall of 2009, we argue it is just too simplistic to say that the crisis is to blame because doing so does not really explain why support fell, or why the EU failed to get any credit for the moves it did take. However, when placed alongside the public expectation for leadership demonstrated above, the picture becomes a bit clearer. We believe the convergence shows that the EU has come to be seen as just another government, full of squabbling delegates with little real leadership and precious few accomplishments. While the EU is not seen as having caused the crisis, the responsibility for which most seem to level squarely upon the bankers, the EU clearly failed to (1) prevent the crisis, (2) do much of anything to resolve it, and more importantly perhaps it is (3) seen as actually making matters worse through its enforced austerity (see the various protest marches in Greece for example) and bailouts (see the various protest marches in any of several northern European countries). We also believe that this convergence can help explain why the EU used to be seen far more positively and trustworthy.

Moravcsik (1998) and Pollack (2001) have argued that the EU provides a kind of two-level game (Putnam 1988), making it possible to pursue policies at the supranational level that are irrational or infeasible at the national one. We argue a similar kind of two-level game exists for voters (citizens) as well. The real benefit of the EU is not as a possible replacement for national governments in some kind of federal Europe, or even in an ever closer union, but as an insurance policy or alternative in cases where national political actors and institutions fall short. In most Eurozone countries for example, the EU and the euro were supported because they delivered something national politicians could not: economic growth with lower inflation. Like any political entity, the EU has its share of detractors and skeptics, but even when things went wrong, such as with the earlier attempts at exchange rate coordination in the ERM for example, much the blame fell on the national governments for not getting it right rather than on the EU for having proposed such a silly idea in the first place. Now for the first time since the “empty-chair crisis” and the eurosclerosis of the 1970s, the EU is being seen as suffering from the same ills that have long befallen national governments, namely a failure of leadership and the inability to adopt sound public policies that actually deal with a real-world problem. If the EU is going to just as ineffective as the national level, then it will be supported accordingly. In other words, for too many Europeans, the game looks increasingly the same regardless of which level one looks at. The only effective actor in the entire crisis so far been the ECB, and all Europe’s central bankers really did was buy the politicians time by calming the bond markets with their promise to do whatever is necessary. The problem for the ECB and everyone else is that so far, Europe’s leaders have made precious little use of the time they have been given. One hope is that now that the long awaited German election is over, and returned Merkel to power, it might become possible for the EU take more forceful action in bringing the crisis to a close by enacting much needed reforms in areas such as the labor market, the internal market for services, and competitiveness. In the absence of such EU-led reforms that deliver concrete results, support will likely remain where it is alongside generally distrusted national institutions.

NOTES

1. The index components were recoded so that more supportive attitudes are scored higher. The range is 0–8: 0–2 points from component item #1, 0–1 points from item #2, 0–4 points from item #3, 0–1 points from item #4. Non-responses were imputed by multiple imputation using *Amelia II* (Honaker et al. 2011). This imputation renders each of the components as continuous on the scale indicated.

2. Nunnally's (1978) discussion makes it clear that the minimum reliability needed rises with intended use. For experimental treatments in a clinical trial, "a reliability of 0.95 should be considered the desirable standard" (pp. 245–6). The benchmark of 0.7 is widely used in social science, although Nunnally indicates that values closer to 0.8 are better suited for basic research (see also Lance et al. 2006). On the basis of the Cronbach alphas (2 of 3 at ~0.8), and in conjunction with the other assessments of the index described herein, we confident we have a reliable index.

3. Generalized linear models allow for the dependent variable to be distributed non-normally, which ours is. The link function is a means of transforming the expected value of the non-normal dependent variable to the linear independent variables. A Gaussian link is an identity function; it is the default setting and is typically used in such models. Do-files for each year available upon request.

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Chapter 13

Implications of the Greek Crisis Nationalism, Enemy Stereotypes, and the European Union

Zinovia Lialiouti and Giorgos Bithymitris

This chapter discusses identity issues and their framing in the context of the Greek crisis. We explore recent developments in Greek nationalism, namely changes in the national self-image, the perception of enmity, and the ideological processes that have affected Greek political culture and its relationship with Europe. The conceptualization and discursive articulation of an "us-and-them" dichotomy in current public discourse is at the center of our study. To this end, we discuss empirical material collected from various sources (political discourse, party programmatic declarations, mass media, and opinion polls). Our approach blends together qualitative and quantitative analysis (*Standard Eurobarometer*, European Commission 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2013). The temporal focus of our research, while covering the entire period of the Greek crisis (2010–2014), is centered within the timeframe of the 2014 Elections for Members of the European Parliament (January–May 2014). Our principal hypothesis is that the 2014 European elections highlight perceptions of self and otherness, as well as enemy stereotypes, and are of significant for two reasons: (i) they were the first EU elections taking place in the context of such an acute economic and social crisis, (ii) the elections took place at a critical political phase. Following four years of deep recession and austerity policies, the government was able to achieve a primary surplus and Greece returned to the bond markets. The coalition government constructed a "success story" narrative based on these achievements and argued that they marked the beginning of the end for the Greek crisis and the country's return to normalcy. By contrast, the opposition emphasized the enduring social problems, high unemployment and poverty rates, and insisted that the crisis was far from being over. The election period was a test for both interpretations.

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