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THE GRECO-GERMAN AFFAIR IN THE EURO CRISIS

Mutual Recognition Lost?

Claudia Sternberg
Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni
Kalypso Nicolaïdis

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The Greco-German Affair in the Euro Crisis

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To Alma and Ada, both born as we were writing this book, José and Stelios, Kalypso's German and Greek parents, and Kira's teachers and family in Athens, for teaching her to stand in other people's shoes

Preface

This small book is a call for transformation. Transformation of mindsets and behaviours. Transformation is the way we gaze at others close or far away, starting with the neighbours with whom we share our small crowded tip of the Eurasian continent. It is also the product of trans-European friendships. We all three are somewhat hybrid women, whom the philosopher Anthony Appiah would call rooted cosmopolitans. Between us, we cover seven European languages and almost as many nationalities. We may yet qualify as citizens of the world but we also believe that struggles for recognition start at home. We hope that the story we tell in the following pages might contribute to the slaughtering of one of our worse European demons: demonisation.

London, UK — Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni
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July 2017

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Contents

Abbreviations

ANEL	Independent Greeks (*Anexartitoi Ellines*), Greek right-wing political party
CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*), German conservative politcal party
CSU	Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern*), German conservative political party and the CDU's Bavarian "sister party"
DEH	Public Electricity Company (*Dimosia Epicheirisi Ilektrikou*)
DIMAR	Democratic Left (*Dimokratiki Aristera*), Greek left-wing political party
ECB	European Central Bank
ELA	Emergency Liquidity Assistance
ELAS	Greek People's Liberation Army (*Ellinikos Laïkos Apeleftherotikos Stratos*)
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
ESPA	National Strategic Reference Framework (*Ethniko Stratigiko Plaisio Anaforas*)
EU	European Union
FAZ	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, German newspaper
FDP	Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*), German liberal political party
IFO	Institut Ifo Institute for Economic Research (*Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung an der Universität München*, acronym is for 'information and research', or *Information und Forschung*)
IMF	International Monetary Fund

LAOS	Popular Orthodox Rally (*Laïkos Orthodoxos Synagermos*), Greek right-wing political party
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
ND	New Democracy (*Nea Dimokratia*), Greek centre-right political party
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (*Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima*), Greek centre-left political party
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), German centre-left political party
SYRIZA	Coalition of the Radical Left (*Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras*), Greek left-wing political party
SZ	*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, German newspaper
TAZ	*Die Tageszeitung*, German newspaper

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CHAPTER 1

The Setting: The Greco-German Affair on the Euro Stage

Abstract This opening chapter introduces the object of the book's empirical enquiry, referred to somewhat playfully as 'the Greco-German affair' during the Greek debt crisis. The authors discuss their methodology and the relevant literature and explain the import of the concept of mutual recognition for their study. Even after the devastating impact of the Euro crisis, they argue, the EU's transnational set-up remains distinctive in its tentative move towards a demoicracy, which entails an ongoing experimentation with the promise and limits of mutual recognition, and with the challenge of building binding trust among the European peoples.

Keywords Mutual recognition · Demoicracy · Trust · European integration · Euro crisis · Greece · Germany

Few would question that the European Union almost drowned in a tsunami of crisis since the initial wave of global financial mayhem in 2008. Many would argue that the so-called Euro crisis ceased to be an existential threat in 2012. Others say that the EU has been mortally wounded and is heading towards disintegration, a free fall from one crisis to the next, with Brexit only a symptom of this ominous state of things. Has the EU turned a corner or is it still heading for the abyss? As we finish writing this book, one thing is certain. The crisis has redrawn the boundaries of gain and pain in Europe, and changed the nature of EU politics

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in the process. Publics are angry, frustrated and emollient. No wonder that in such an atmosphere old relationships we took for granted are put into question, old wounds fester back to the surface, and people take refuge under their national umbrellas.

1.1 The Foundation of European Demoicracy

We believe, however, that all is not lost. That the people living through these times of trouble did not start from scratch. They have a history together, the kind of baggage that makes relationships flare up, intensify and reset. We decided to write this book through our intercultural lenses to better understand what pulls us apart and what brings us together.

In doing so, we use the prism of mutual recognition, a multifaceted social and philosophical concept that in our view best speaks to what has been lost in Europe and what we hope can be recovered. Recognition implies knowledge of each other, imbued with respect, acceptance of our difference, and a desire to engage with these differences for the sake of some amorphous ambition that we call togetherness. To speak with Ricœur, recognition involves both identifying someone as themselves and not someone else in an *epistemic* sense, and *acknowledging* them in their identities and values. *Mutual recognition*, which conditions and is conditioned by *self-recognition*, implies the reciprocal acknowledgement of two parties as well as the granting of respect and human dignity—and this is how it can transform an unequal relationship.[1]

If we did not fear sounding too grand, we would argue that a crisis of the body politic is also a crisis of the soul. If the European project was supposed to be anchored in the mutual recognition of European peoples, recognition of their respective concerns, needs and suffering, it is safe to say that such recognition has always been partial and timid at best.[2] With the crisis though, we have witnessed a reversal, a return to old demons and denials of recognition between the same peoples who had been supposed to engage in togetherness in the previous decades. In the process, we have reshuffled our understandings of who we are, and who our European Others are, of what we need, want and deserve as the peoples constituting the Union. The crisis has shaken up our understandings of what kind of a Union we share and why. It has forced us to renegotiate the rules of our living together, the acceptable balance between interference in each other's affairs and deference to each other's ways—brief, the rules of recognition in Europe. One can think of this process as the

deeper sociocultural foundation of managing the political economy of monetary union.[3] As yet, we are far from achieving an even preliminarily sustainable equilibrium in this renegotiation.

Why is this so hard? In part because the Euro crisis has brought to light a fundamental tension built into the very nature of the European project. On the one hand, the project was built around the aspiration to bring into being an entirely new kind of political animal. One way to characterise this entity is as a '*demoicracy*' where the European *demoi* (in the plural) and citizens rule together but not as one.[4] In this sense, the EU is a third way which tries to provide an alternative to the equation between demos and polity that we find in both a federal state and in an association of states. The aspiration towards the kind of mutual recognition that can support such deep cooperation among demoi is at the heart of such a construct, as both a legal norm of cooperation and as a broader state of mind meant to imbue the body politics of the countries involved.

On the other hand, this demoicratic ambition has increasingly clashed against its nemesis, that is the propensity shared across Europe to deny others such recognition, a propensity that seems imprinted into Europeans' DNA and is going back to our long history of wars and pogroms, culminating in World War II and its aftermath, when neighbours continued to slaughter neighbours and entire communities took revenge on other communities long after peace was proclaimed by governments.[5] This is why, what the Europeans have achieved in building their Union around the aspiration of mutual recognition, even if often imperfectly and with much trial and error, is no small miracle. Beyond its standing as a form of governance, norm, and as a legal principle, the hope was that it was also becoming an increasingly shared ethos for majorities among the peoples of Europe.[6]

And this is where the effects of the so-called Euro crisis on the fragile progress towards mutual recognition between the peoples of Europe are particularly devastating. Any apparent progress towards mutual recognition that we had witnessed in the last decades suddenly seemed to move into reverse gear. In the midst of difficult choices with enormous redistributive consequences, long-standing but dormant conflicts of identities have festered back to the surface, reviving old tropes of prejudice and othering and touching on some raw collective nerves. In these ways, the crisis has undermined the EU's *raison d'être* and its key legitimating narrative of peace through mutual engagement across Europe and beyond.[7]

1.2 The Greco-German Affair and the Battlefield of Stories

The scars are nowhere more visible than in what we refer to in these pages as the Greco-German affair, which unfolded with much public drama and private angst in the shadow of the Greek sovereign debt crisis. Many watched in dismay as the Greeks and Germans—or their yellow press and, perhaps (but not always) less explicitly, their democratic representatives—flouted each other as power-grubbing Nazis and as lazy crooks, to mention but the tip of the iceberg. Yet, the patterns we observe between Greece and Germany are also at work elsewhere, so that this special relationship provides a kind of "othering benchmark" for the various divides that have emerged North vs South, East vs West, rich vs poor, disciplinarians vs disciplined, paymasters vs spendthrifts etc. Who can doubt that the British vote to leave the EU in June 2016 was also about a sense of being dismissed and bypassed by large sways of the British public—Brexit, too, can be read in the shadow of mutual recognition.[8]

European struggles over demands and denials of recognition have occurred not least on the battlefield of the images and stories that have come to populate our screens and our newspaper pages. Although we draw on relevant sources up to the date of publication, we concentrate on those found in the two countries' print media between 2010 and 2015, from caricatures of Angela Merkel or Wolfgang Schäuble in Nazi uniforms to the infamous *Focus* magazine cover featuring the ancient statue of the Venus of Milo raising her middle finger.[9] Such images and the stories around them, we believe, hold a key to understanding how a crisis that started with gross over-indebtedness of public and private actors in Europe seeped into the depth of our collective continental psychology. For this reason, we approach the sociopolitical theatre of this Greco-German affair from the perspective of key or recurring storylines, narratives and visuals in its newspaper coverage.

Our method is simple and intuitive. We sought to interpret what we see as discourses bound up with the construction of Selves, Others and Europe, and their underlying recognition dynamics, in a constant back and forth between the Greek and German material.

We gathered material as widely and systematically as we could from a mix of print publications and their online outlets covering the political spectrum. We compiled our German corpus from yellow press dailies

(mainly *Bild*), serious regional dailies (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Zeitung*), and weeklies providing investigative journalism (*Spiegel* and *Focus*) or intellectual analysis (*Zeit*), running word searches ('*Griechenland*' and '*Euro*') in their own online archives and on Lexis Nexis, and reviewing cover pages for the days and weeks around the key events specified below. We collected our Greek sources by reading all cover-page articles that referred to Germany or the German leadership during the weeks before and after the key events listed below in the centrist newspaper *Kathimerini* and the left-wing newspaper *Avgi*,[10] and by doing word searches in the online archives of other daily newspapers such as *Ta Nea*, *Proto Thema*, *Real News* and *Avriani*. We started in fall 2009 when the first signs of the impending Greek economic crisis became widely obvious, over to April 2010 when Greece's government debt was downgraded to 'junk' status, to the two bailouts between 2010 and 2012, the two Greek elections in May and June 2012, and Chancellor Merkel's visit to Greece in fall 2012. We further studied the coverage of the Greek legislative elections of January 2015 that resulted in the first Syriza coalition government, and finally the Greek referendum in June 2015 and the new legislative elections of September 2015 (see timeline of key events at the end of this book). We also draw on our eclectic readings as invested citizens, as well as on the many conversations we had on the crisis in our varying functions as researchers, teachers, academic facilitators and friends, daughters, neighbours, etc.

Our analysis is interpretive in the sense of being concerned, empirically, with meaning.[11] It is organised around a number of key discursive dynamics. We interpret them with a view to what they reveal about the deeper structures and challenges of mutual recognition, in relation to a number of relevant academic debates as well as in the light of their cognitive, cultural and intellectual context. Ours is not a study of public opinion, nor do we ask how widespread such discourses were or which narratives prevailed at which moments in time. It is also not an inquiry into quantitative variances between our countries, or between different publications. Rather, it is a qualitative study of narrative dynamics of meaning-making and social construction.[12]

Our analysis builds on an array of critically important contributions regarding the discursive dynamics underpinning the Greco-German relationship during the crisis.[13] It may not be as scientific as many of them, but we hope instead that we have been able to present a wide gamut

of salient discourses, in as nuanced way as possible in part to show that the simple binaries that prevailed at the time—'Northern Saints' vs 'Southern Sinners'—were not the only game in town.[14] In our account, if many journalists or politicians chose to resort to offensive and stereotypical depictions of the Other during the crisis, this was not for a lack of alternative discursive options.

What is more, we are especially interested in the interaction between the Greek and German coverage. By considering the Greek and German materials together, we show how waves of stereotypical portrayals interspersed with periods of more sober or positive coverage led to a fascinating back and forth between the Greek and German press reflecting a deep-rooted concern and engagement with what was said on the other side.[15]

Importantly moreover, unlike most existing work, our book does not operate in the realm of *explaining,* but rather in that of *exploring,* through an essayistic reading of the affair as seen through the prism of mutual recognition. That is to say, we do not offer and assess causal explanations of how certain representations affected policies or institutional change—although the material we present may serve as a source for others to develop causal explanations. After all, the stuff our stories are made of certainly shaped the bargaining space for our governments and negotiating teams.[16] More importantly, our reading can serve the reader interested in probing the soul of European politics.

It is not our wish to suggest that mutual recognition is the only or the best lens through which the Euro crisis should be understood. Our countrymen have "confronted" each other in the last eight years through a multitude of prisms, which together compose the kaleidoscope of European affect. Denials, demands and also the occasional practice of recognition were one element of this. They have formed a key dimension of what Kathleen McNamara has called 'the politics of everyday Europe', and our proposition is that mutual recognition should become part of the 'broader cultural vocabulary for politics in the EU'.[17] For dynamics of mutual recognition run through the entire tapestry of our manifold interactions, involving representations, othering, the formation of identities, but also struggles over wealth and power (for we know that struggles in the realm of culture, ethnicity, or gender are not just about symbols).[18] They play an important role in shaping constructions of the EU and EMU as legitimate or illegitimate and, even more fundamentally, contribute to re- and de-constructing the social and political order of our demoicracy.[19]

Perhaps understanding the crisis in the light of mutual recognition can help to revitalise this order, unearthing dynamics of hurt and counter-hurt and altering them by bringing them into the light of thought and talk.

The book's chapters follow the metaphor of mutual recognition in the EU as a game. In the rest of this introduction, we discuss further the benefits and challenges of grounding our story in the idea of mutual recognition and its variants. In the rest of the book, we present in turn: the 'players' of the game (Chapter 2), analysing representations of Greek and German Selves and Others and how they are interrelated; the 'name of the game' (Chapter 3) that is the European project itself and the ways in which these dynamics have affected how people understand and appraise it; and the 'ethos' of this game (Chapter 4 or Conclusions), or how promises of mutual recognition might be recovered even in the face of powerful denials.

1.3 Mutual Recognition and Its Denial

Mutual recognition has many meanings, from a philosophical concept of how individuals and groups relate to each other, to a diplomatic norm in international relations and founding pillar of international law, to a technical trade norm, legal principle and mode of governance in European integration. The use of the term can be precise or general, ranging from a way of organising political interaction to a state of mind or ethos.

Essentially, mutual recognition in all these spheres is about how we deal with our differences by navigating between two alternatives, bar resorting to conflict. One is the eternal temptation to eliminate these differences through convergence and harmonisation so that we become more similar. The other is to park each other in our mental and physical ghettos so that we do not need to engage much at all, except at the extreme to annihilate each other. Mutual recognition involves accepting to live and interact with each other's differences, without either trying to make the other side be like oneself, or simply stopping at the fact of difference and withdrawing into separate spaces.[20] But once we accept that we should tread somewhere between these two alternatives, the challenge is how exactly to do it. Recognition entails a fine balance between arm's-length respect—the traditional notion of tolerance—and more involved engagement, even interference. After all, recognition is not a passive acceptance of the Other but an unwritten contract about what to do about these differences, and how much interference we accept from each other.

While this book is not theoretical but empirical, we do hope to demonstrate that theory can help a great deal in understanding the story we want to tell. Political theories of recognition go back to the Hegelian notion that it is through social feedback, and recognition by others, that we recognise ourselves and develop our identities.[21] Recognising someone involves not only admitting that she has a certain feature, but also embracing 'a positive attitude towards her for having this feature' as well as 'obligations to treat her in a certain way'.[22] Such empathy means not only understanding the other side but also bringing this understanding back to our own action, meaning that recognition starts with empathy but also entails translating this affect into actual positions and actions.[23] In effect, human agency follows *inter alia* from a continuous and dynamic process of mutual recognition between persons and groups. If recognition is denied, or social feedback is too negative or one-sided, persons will have difficulties to 'embrace themselves and their projects as valuable'.[24] Unlike other moral theories, recognition theory does not start from abstract principles of justice, but from 'the empirical needs of human beings for recognition in the form of legal respect, social esteem, and love'.[25] This notion of recognition as a 'vital human need'[26] leads to a theory of social conflicts, whereby resistance is driven by the moral experience of not receiving what is taken be justified recognition.[27]

In this book, we build on a nascent literature, which transfers insights from the study of interpersonal or social conflicts in terms of denials, demands and struggles for recognition to the study of relations between states.[28] This move starts from the assumption that states do not merely strive to maximise their material interests, welfare, security, or power, as assumed by neorealists, but that their behaviour can also be understood as struggles for recognition in a global realm governed by hierarchy and asymmetries of power.[29] This leads them to act and interact in specific ways that escape traditional International Relations paradigms.[30]

To be sure, mutual recognition matters between states simply because these states would not exist as actors in the international system if they did not engage in very basic forms of diplomatic recognition, which starts with the mutual exchange and stationing of diplomats on each other's territory. Reciprocal treatment as subjects of international law is constitutive of statehood or membership in the club of states.[31] On this basis, recognition played a key role in making 'international law possible in the first place', starting on the European continent, and then extended to the rest of the world mainly through imperial expansion.[32]

Historically, it was the *mutual* recognition of European states as subjects of international law, and their reciprocal treatment as *equals* before it, that made it possible to sacrifice part of their sovereignty and restrain their actions by submitting to this law. This self-curtailment of sovereignty was prepared, and made possible, by the *practice* of mutual recognition. As states interacted over time, they gradually established standards of accepted and acceptable conduct. The rules of the emerging 'international society' were codified in international law from the mid-nineteenth century. States thus made sacrifices regarding their unrestrained sovereignty in the name of behavioural norms they had participated in shaping.[33]

However, beyond the basic political and legal fact of diplomatic recognition, we must of course be careful in assuming that the political theory of recognition characterising relations within societies is applicable to relations between states. After all, states have no unified consciousness, single memory, or subjective will.[34] Clearly, collective actors such as states, who arguably cannot have autonomous collective intentions and attitudes, cannot be considered subjects, or objects, of recognition in the same ways as persons or specific human groups characterised by common attributes.[35] A narrow, strictly mutuality-based understanding of recognition holds that only subjects of recognition can be proper objects of recognition whereas a 'wide understanding' by contrast does allow for many objects of recognition that cannot themselves be subjects of recognition'.[36]

We apply such a wider, or even metaphorical, understanding of mutual recognition that is not limited to the strict Hegelian sense concerning how we gain self-consciousness through feedback from others, which requires us to be subjects. Instead, recognition here is used in the sense of expecting certain kinds of behaviour in interactions in return for granting it ourselves. We understand nations as 'communities of storytellers', who tell themselves stories about themselves and their relations to others, and test these stories on nations around them in a profoundly theatrical process.[37]

1.4 Rebuilding Trust

Part of our conceptual challenge here is to ask what may be unique about the transnational setting that is the EU. If the EU has been a demoicracy in the making, this has been because of and through its on-going

exploration and experimentation with the promise and limits of recognition. Implicitly, the initial sacrifice of sovereignty entailed in the commitment made to European law is grounded on the recognition of other states' deep compatibility with one's own. The EU's anti-hegemonic credo specifically meant that the relative size or power of these states should not matter in such calculations about relinquishing some sovereignty. Over time, this basic initial 'recognition contract' evolved into a legal norm for the single market and even a 'mode of governance'. As an alternative to harmonisation, mutual recognition gives up on predicating exchanges on new supranational norms and standards. And as an alternative to 'national treatment', it means agreeing to let the home member-state where a product or service originates regulate it wherever it moves.[38] Thus, mutual recognition involves a *horizontal* transfer of sovereignty, itself mandated and supervised by supranational law and authority. This surely constitutes a radical move which delinks the exercise of sovereign power from its territorial anchor through a reciprocal allocation of jurisdictional authority to prescribe and enforce laws.

In truth, as we have argued extensively elsewhere, what has been applied over time in the single market ought to be described as 'managed mutual recognition' where recognition serves as the default approach even if it is conditional (it coexists with some harmonisation) and partial (some residual host state control or national treatment remains).[39] As the reliance on recognition spreads in the EU to areas like justice and law enforcement, arrests warrants and so on, it has been crucial to ask what prior conditions were necessary before engaging in mutual recognition and if these conditions did not obtain, how much recognition was really advisable. Unsurprisingly, the fundamental problem with the widespread reliance on mutual recognition, however 'managed' and circumscribed, is that it requires a level of mutual trust that is not always present between the actors engaged in its application.[40]

Arguably, given that others' intentions are always opaque, trust needs to be predicated on identifying and strengthening the ties that bind.[41] In other words, the fabric of human intercourse is less often made of *blind* trust and more often the product of *binding* trust between individuals, groups, organisations or indeed countries.[42] Trust of the first kind may only superficially be seen as deeper in that it is most often predicated on separateness at best, mutual ignorance at worst. But if trusting the Other is to seek to bind her to one's expectations, such trust requires prior and continued knowledge about such Other. Binding trust is not

only performative, based on what you do, but also constitutive, based on who you are—or who you should be—and involves therefore both an act of delineation of that Other with whom I accept to interact and a peek inside her boundaries. International regimes and institutions can be seen as elaborate mechanisms for mutual monitoring, a consensual form of reciprocal spying predicated on residual amounts of trust, trust that we will each refrain from cheating in the blind spots of our commonly agreed standards'.[43] In this perspective, European integration can be seen as the most advanced experiment in trying to make a mutual recognition regime sustainable between states by entrenching binding trust over time through a constant negotiation of the balance between connection and autonomy, acceptable intervention in each other's affairs and the necessary deference to each other's systems.

The Euro crisis, we propose, has marked a critical juncture in the process of building trust among the European *demoi*. It has demonstrated more vividly than ever that legal patterns of recognition between states on the one hand and patterns of recognition between the *peoples* of these states on the other are deeply connected. If the EU is in crisis, it is also because its agents and decision makers have failed to truly reflect on the sociocultural or human, emotional, affective conditions of possibility of mutual recognition as much more than a mode of governance. It is not possible to engineer a legal and regulatory system shaped around mutual recognition without the entrenchment of a broader recognition mindset among European citizens. How can we compromise over our respective material interests (debt repayment, banking reform, places for refugees) if we do not take in why something matters more or less to people in other countries, what makes people tick over there while leaving us cold over here, what explains *their* reluctance to see it *our* way and so on?

The Greco-German affair has not only been a horizontal game but also a multilevel game. Recognition patterns between "the Germans" and "the Greeks" are woven between the hugely diverse populations of both countries. The Euro crisis both created a trans-border political arena for struggles for recognition and exacerbated such struggles within the domestic realm. Honneth, Taylor and others' accounts of recognition politics and multiculturalism have examined the appropriate balance between the recognition-related rights of cultural minority groups versus the rights of individuals within them.[44] The Euro crisis and the surrounding media constructions have been marked by the creation, recreation and re-negotiation of the boundaries of various imagined

collectives, including those of the European demoi, but also those of subgroups of Greeks or Germans who were united across borders not least by the shared experience of demanding or granting, being denied or denying to grant recognition. Old national dividing lines have been overlaid by increasingly important ones of class, or of victim versus perpetrator status. The founding myth of the EU, central to its legitimation, of the pursuit of a 'European common good' through cooperation has come under serious fire—adding a whole new urgency to questions of how to mediate between clashing interests and sensitivities at all levels of integration.[45]

In short, the story we tell in this book will touch on topics that will be familiar to our reader, or anyone who has followed the drama unfolding in Europe since the 2008 gong. Clearly, we have moved for good from a Union dedicated to the political management of economic and strategic interdependence—where each democratic realm informs or constrains its political leaders engaged in such management—to a Union where we are all engaged in the trials of what should be called democratic interdependence. In this Union, democratic patterns affect each other directly and are in turn affected by the complex patterns of recognition. This is a brave new world where, against those who argue that the only solution to the challenges that follow is to forge a common European identity from the cauldron of crisis, we all need to learn to recognise the diversity of our motives. We hope that our story will contribute to this ambitious agenda.

Notes

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CHAPTER 2

The Players: Greeks vs Germans

Abstract Chapter 2 explores the multifaceted ways conjured up by Greeks and Germans to represent each other in the newspaper coverage of the Greek debt crisis. It is structured around five thematic patterns, each exhibiting a different kind of entanglement between the images of the Self and the Other: the emergence and contestation of the stereotypes of lazy but merry Greeks versus hard-working and miserly Germans; the different 'moral languages' invoked on each side; the psychosocial undercurrents of identifying the Other with one's own innermost demons; the politics and manipulation of memory; and the topoi of power and resistance.

Keywords Stereotypes · Rule of law · European solidarity · Fear · Memory · Power · Resistance

Let us introduce the players in the Greco–German game of mutual recognition at the time of the Greek sovereign debt crisis. How did they represent each other and themselves, and how did perceived ascriptions by the Other reflect back on their self-image as well as their representations of that Other? What impact did the crisis have on such perceptions and representations?

We pay special attention to stereotypes in the players' mutual representation, break them up into different layers and situate them in the webs of cultural and historical meanings that condition their

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interpretation by different sections of the Greek and German societies. But we question them too. Was Greece always the swindler and Germany always the imperialist in the other country's newspapers? Was no common ground projected at all? And if there was some diversity in the portrayal of the Other by the media of each country, if there were some seeds of seeing the Other in greater complexity, was this appreciated in the other country, or was it mostly lost in translation?

Surprisingly perhaps, we found that even the most lurid and incendiary texts often toned down their insulting stereotypes with more nuanced representations. What is more, our analysis indicates that even stereotypes may, somewhat paradoxically, be important steps in making mutual engagement, and ultimately mutual recognition, possible. For, to recognise someone requires knowing them on some level, in addition to feeling reasonably at ease with who we think we are ourselves. We produce such knowledge of one another and of ourselves partly through stereotypes, by producing as well as contesting them. Perhaps it is part of being human that stereotypes have to be produced before they can be broken up and replaced by more nuanced understandings.

Moreover, even tropes of prejudice and othering can ironically work to project a vision of a common core. This is because our ontological knowledge of Selves and Others is essentially *relational*, because in each country Selves and Others are defined in relation to each other, and because these representations feed back onto each other. In other words, our conceptions of the Self and the Other are mutually constitutive both within national borders and transnationally. As in an infinity mirror cabinet, our own faces and the faces of our Others overlay each other and ultimately blur into one another on some level. In our Others, we recognise ourselves, and in ourselves, our Others. But at the same time, with recognition comes separation. The three faces of recognition mentioned in Chapter 1 fundamentally overlap and condition each other: *epistemic recognition*, or the recognition of someone as someone is presupposed by, and presupposes, both *self-recognition* and *mutual recognition*.[1]

This chapter is structured around five topoi or thematic patterns which stood out in how the Greeks and Germans confronted their national Selves and Others. We start by considering the core stereotypes, contrasting the lazy but merry Greek to the hard-working but miserly

German. Next, we explore different 'moralities' at play in invocations of values such as law-abidingness, solidarity and decency. We move on to psychosocial undercurrents of identifying the Other with one's own innermost fears or aspirations. This leads us to the politics and manipulation of memory. Finally, we investigate what roles the topoi of power and resistance played in the debates.

2.1 Of Greek Squanderers and German Misers

La Fontaine's tale of the cicada who sang all summer only to find herself penniless come winter and promptly went to see her neighbour the thrifty ant provides the most basic prism through which Germans initially made sense of the demands that were made on them by Greeks as they woke up to the enormity of their sovereign debt. German press coverage of all things Greek was marked prominently by a wide variety of images and storylines depicting immense Greek private wealth, overspending, laziness and, on a more positive note, a distinct fascination with Greek *savoir vivre*. Stereotypes of the other side served to construct and reconstruct oneself, as many Germans dwelled almost obsessively over images of luxury yachts, party scenes, private mansions with swimming pools such as the one *Der Spiegel* used to illustrate an article on the crisis dividing Greek society (Image 2.1), or alternatively images of Greek scenic, culinary, female or social beauty symbolising the good life.[2]

The Good Life

The idea of a 'poor country with very rich people'[3] took hold of German imagination, strengthened by a survey comparing household finances in various Eurozone countries (ECB 2013) and finding household assets to be higher in Southern Europe than in Germany—which made a big splash in the German media, not least because of the misleading inference that Southern Europeans were 'on average much richer than the Germans'.[4]

Several German journalists seemed to try to arouse contempt and anger at such undeserved bounty, but the feeling was mitigated by some degree of envy. What had the Greeks done to deserve their ludicrously generous state pensions and low retirement age or more annual leave than the Northerners, including the Germans?[5] After the German retirement age had just been increased after much debate, *Bild's* cover

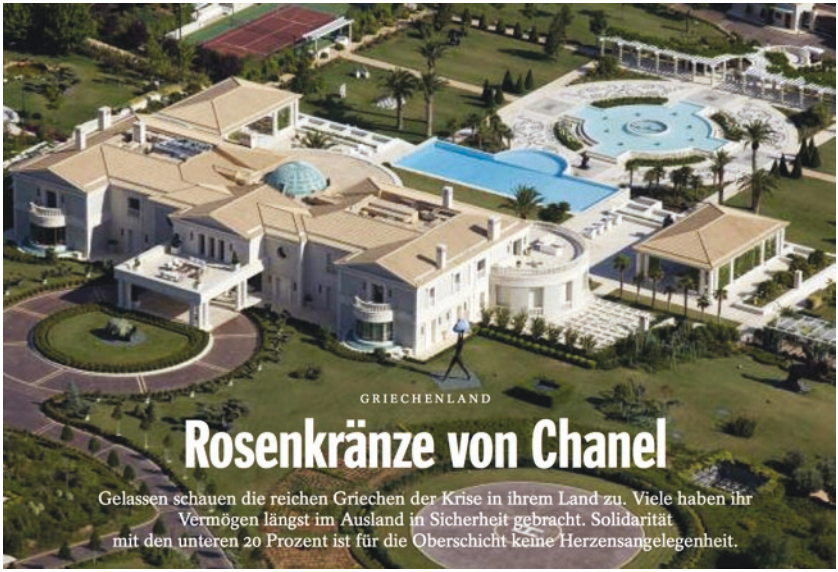

Image 2.1 *Der Spiegel* 20/11/2012 (Nr 46/2012): 'Greece—Rosaries from Chanel: The rich Greeks are watching the crisis with equanimity. Many have taken their assets to safety abroad long ago. Solidarity with the lower 20% is not a matter of the heart for the upper class'

catch line 'Why are WE rescuing this Greek billionaire?'[6] did resonate.[7] The Greek media did appreciate the issue of asymmetries, as when *Kathimerini*'s Germany correspondent cited two German pensioners, speaking to the Greeks 'with the tenderness of a parent scolding Europe's naughty child': 'How can one not get angry when you go on strike at the first increase of the pensionable age, while in Germany it is considered already certain that we will retire at 67?'[8]

Representations of the Greek *dolce vita* fuelled an underlying German fear of helping someone ultimately better off, or happier and more attractive than oneself, while missing out on the good life oneself. The headline of a *Spiegel* cover featuring an old man on a donkey with euro notes spilling over from his saddle baskets read: 'The Poverty Lie: How Europe's Crisis Countries Are Hiding Their Assets' (Image 2.2), and the accompanying article 'Poor Germany!' asked: 'how just are the Euro-rescues, when the people in the receiving countries are richer than the

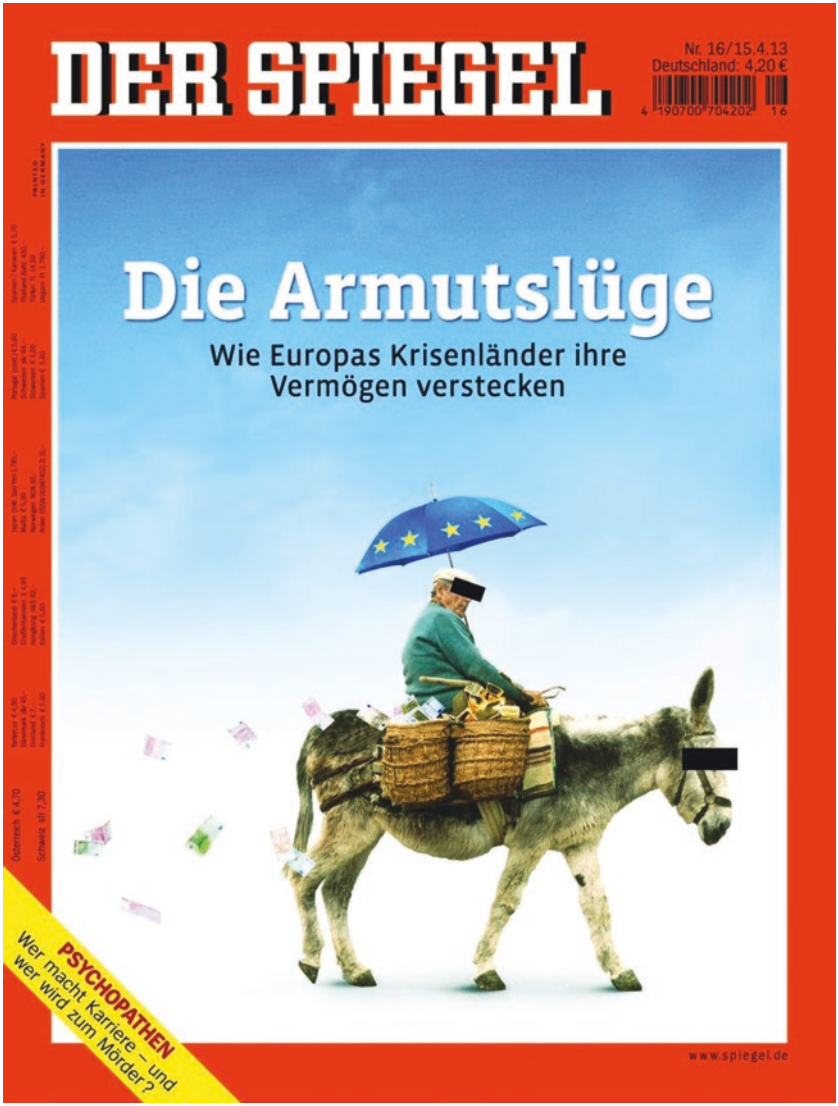

Image 2.2 *Der Spiegel*, cover 15/04/2013 (Nr 16/2013): 'The Poverty Lie: How Europe's Crisis Countries are Hiding their Assets'

citizens of the donor countries?'[9] In other instances, this line of argument was applied not only to Greek citizens, but also to the state, as when an op-ed in *Die Zeit* by an economics professor asked: 'Why help Athens? The Hellenic state disposes of sufficient assets'.[10]

A deeply entrenched, but no less trite, German image for Greece comes from the 1974 pop song 'Greek Wine' by Udo Jürgens, which is quite possibly known to nearly every German—a ballad of a lonely and melancholy German being invited by a group of 'men with brown eyes and black hair' to join them in drinking this 'blood of the earth' to the tune of 'foreign and Southern' music. We hear him revelling in his longing for a lost home, community and an Arcadia of affordable 'small happiness'. Now, according to a *Bild* comment, 'It looks like it will be above all us Germans (who else?) who fill up the Greeks' glasses', and who will enable the Greeks to continue their enviable existence.[11] As in the song, German scorn was now still often tempered by an implicit admiration for the Greeks' ability to get away with a less stern approach to life, work and finances, managing to pull it all off in the end: 'Drama, pathos, last-minute panic—that can do the trick. This is what happened during the modernisation of the 1970s when Greece aspired to join the EC. Or the Olympic games of 2004, which the Greeks pulled off splendidly. They can absolutely do it'.[12]

Conflicted Cheapskates

If German images and discourses around the Greeks' good life and wealth betrayed this classic mix of admiration and envy, they also reflected a reconstruction of German collective self-perceptions as uptight, miserly Scrooges. To be sure, many Germans resented such a collective representation, aghast at all those who conversely embraced it with pride. '*Geiz ist geil*' (stinginess rocks), the exceptionally successful advertising slogan of a big electrical retail chain had, in the early to mid-2000s, captured the mentality a whole country of savers and become part of the mainstream public vocabulary before loosing its appeal.[13]

At the same time, the German stereotype of lazy and wasteful Greeks went hand in hand also with the reassertion of the old, equally commonplace and equally ambiguous, German self-perception as a nation of hard-working people. Again, clichés about Greeks betrayed and promoted a certain German uneasiness with the self-ascription of being overly serious, correct and industrious. A sentiment made worse by the

dreaded impression that everyone else saw Germans that way too. What is worse than a world where 'those behaving correctly are duped' (*Die Korrekten sind die Gelackmeierten*) and wind up as correct but naïve idiots in the European game?! All while Greece was being rewarded for manipulating its accounts for years.[14]

Inequalities and Suffering

However, some of the German, and much of the Greek, coverage did seek to counter the depictions of rich and lazy Greeks by highlighting the suffering of most ordinary citizens and the impoverishment of growing sections of society stemming from the behaviour of its moneyed elites. Greeks predictably objected to projections of Greek affluence as characteristic of society at large. With much higher unemployment rates and lower per capita income, stressed the Greek press, Greeks were on average relatively poor by European comparison, and certainly not as well off as the foreign media stereotypically portrayed them to be. Germans needed to understand that Greece was a country with high inequality: beyond the rich Athenian neighbourhoods of 'Kolonaki, Kifisia and Ekali there is another world of toil and day-by-day work, where people bleed to send their children to university and don't find a bed when they are sick'.[15] On these grounds, 'the ease with which Greece is treated at the European councils and the international press as spendthrift and indifferent about the public debt' was widely felt to do 'injustice to the majority of hard-working Greeks',[16] who may have failed on the competitiveness charts for many other reasons than being overpaid.[17] The leader of the then small left-wing party Syriza, Alexis Tsipras, encapsulated these discourses when he asked 'to whom the German finance minister referred' when he talked 'about the bliss of the Greeks': 'The 800,000 unemployed? The over 1,000,000 in precarious employment? The employees earning an average of 1000 euros, which is less than half of the corresponding German salary? The pensioners taking home an average pension of 600 euros? The 22% of Greeks who live under the poverty threshold?'[18] Another way of objecting to crude generalisations about the behaviour and experiences of Greeks was to go on the offensive, as *Real News* did when running a photograph that featured a *Bild* journalist, whose reports had perpetuated ideas of Greek extravagance, being in an unmistakable state of debauchery and inebriation in 'nighttime Athens'.[19]

In fact, and contrary to the dominant perception in Greece, much of German reporting was infused with sympathy for 'the suffering of the simple people in Greece' as a result of the austerity policies.[20] The media prominently covered increasing Greek pauperisation, widespread lack of access to medications and health or even maternity care (leading to reliance on Doctors Without Borders), mass unemployment and especially youth unemployment, as well as creative grass-roots initiatives such as the delivery of lacking services locally. Basic welfare state functions were described, over and over, as failing, as provided as charitable favours rather than entitlements to the increasing numbers of those left without income, insurance or papers.[21] Witness *Die Zeit*: 'In Athens the lights come off; the winter is imminent, and many Greeks have no more money for electricity and fuel. The parties have ruined the state and the economy. What is to become of Greece's youth?'[22] Or see *Bild*, which ran a story on impoverished Greek parents increasingly resorting to extreme solutions such as giving up their children to orphanages.[23]

These examples illustrate a further important pattern in the German coverage. While German representations of Greek wastefulness did at times extend to ordinary citizens, they more dominantly targeted the Greek government, political class and administration, as well as the moneyed elite. As many German journalists saw it, ordinary Greeks were the victims of their immoral and incompetent elites.[24]

The Age of the Lobster Pasta

Many Greeks would have agreed readily with their German counterparts that their government had engaged in unsustainable spending using borrowed money. In fact, many Greeks referred to the pre-crisis years as the 'age of the lobster pasta', which became an emblem used to describe this period as a time of reckless spending and effortlessly acquired, unsustainable prosperity.

The Greek press frequently used the phrase against Greek economic and political elites presented as a group of unproductive spendthrifts. For example, Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras warned foreign politicians and journalists that 'when you talk about bliss, you should refer specifically to those who refuse to put their hands in their pockets and contribute to an exit from the crisis'. In direct parallel to narratives found in the German press, Tsipras went on to describe these people as 'owning villas in Ekali and Kavouri that belong to an offshore

company, four cars that belong to another offshore company, and a yacht that works as a touristic enterprise, but that is unfortunately not going well and is therefore not taxed'.[25] Tsipras defined this capitalist elite in vague enough terms to call on practically everyone in his target audience to join the struggle against it, under the banner of the "suffering people". The Greek media also widely blamed Greek politicians for bringing about the crisis in the first place, not least through ruthless public overspending; this bunch of good-for-nothing squanderers used taxpayers' money to 'finance their extravagant clientelistic policies, having decided to transfer the burden and responsibility to those who would govern next'.[26]

Still, a substantial part of the Greek press did include *all* levels of the Greek society in the ascription of the "lobster pasta nation", extending the criticism of wastefulness and having lived beyond one's means far beyond the elites alone. An emblematic and extremely controversial early intervention in public dialogue that implicated society at large in the recklessness of the pre-crisis years came from the long-time PASOK politician Theodoros Pangalos, who said in parliament:

> The answer to the outcry against the political personnel of the country that comes from people who ask 'how did you waste the money?' is the following: we appointed you in public-sectors jobs. We wasted the money together, in the context of a relationship based on clientelism, corruption, bribery and debasement of the very notion of politics.[27]

Regardless of what one thought of Pangalos' statement, which to this day arouses fury among commentators from across the spectrum, the idea that Greek society was not wholly innocent was widespread. For instance, Greeks even more than Germans bemoaned the fact that the country had more Porsche Cayenne cars per head than any other in Europe.[28] Several Greek journalists argued that Greek society at large benefited from clientelistic relations with corrupt politicians who were elected time and again, and exploited the loopholes offered by the Greek labour market or tax system, to the detriment of the economy as a whole. A *Kathimerini* journalist, for example, commented in the following way on a 1988 ministerial decision to grant public sector employees who worked with computers six extra days of paid annual leave, a provision that was retained in Greek law until September 2013:

> It is with crazy things like this that we used to cook the lobster pasta that we enjoyed. These are the things we used to borrow for […]. Everyone has been talking for so many years about the "big interests", but it is the many, the small and allied interests from the grass roots that proved undefeatable. It is under their weight—that is to say, under our weight—that we collapsed.[29]

A common metaphor was that of Greece waking up after a long and "lavish party", now needing to "sober up" and "tidy up": 'our homeland […] looks like a group of "nice guys" who have spent an unforgettable night at the bouzoukia' (Greek popular nightclubs). Once the bill comes and the drunkards realise they have no money to pay, they find out that they need to 'wash the dishes in the shop kitchen, sleeves up'.[30] The similarity to the imagery found in some articles of the German press is indeed striking. Calls for rediscovering self-restraint and sobriety would demand cutting 'wastefulness' in public sector spending as well as entrenched entitlements such as permanency in public sector employment.[31] But the story was not just about the state. Individual expectations regarding such perks would also have to be adjusted: 'the time when Greece acted like a spoiled teenage girl with other people's money and had established her profligacy and immunity from control as inalienable rights, has probably ended'.[32]

Blame Games

Beyond these voices in Greece that found a large part of the blame for the crisis within the country, there were of course also those who rather sought outside enemies to blame.[33] The Euro crisis provided a great many candidates for the role of external bogeyman, ranging from Brussels, the Troika, the IMF, the Commission and the credit-rating agencies—all largely replacing the USA as the traditional main object of Greek anti-Westernism. With time, however, and as some of the difference of views began to emerge between them, criticism became increasingly targeted on Germany itself.

There were shades of criticism of course, from emotionally charged accusation to carefully reasoned analysis. But still, critics of Germany seemed to echo each other across registers on three interrelated themes.

First, on the left, Germany was accused of 'dogmatic entrenchment in support of the neo-liberal orthodoxy'.[34] The external imposition

of neoliberal recipes and 'fierce austerity' was represented as sapping advantages acquired by Greek workers and employees through decades of struggles.[35] Even in reform-oriented newspapers, many blamed the German government, and above all Chancellor Angela Merkel and Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, for imposing an excessive and punitive degree of austerity on Greece that was thought to miss any aim of 'national survival and recovery'.[36] Beyond the fate of Greece itself, Schäuble and Merkel were vilified, personally as well as allegorically, for the ills of the European and international financial and economic system and for scheming to impose neoliberal fiscal discipline on the whole of Europe. When Schäuble explained in an interview that 'Greece has been living for years beyond her means' and would have to 'make savings and help herself,[37] *Avgi* accused him as well as 'the markets' and 'the Commission' of turning Greece into a 'laboratory of experiments for the disciplining of all European societies' and of making a 'bad example' out of Greece so as to 'convince European citizens to accept the harsh measures that lead to "growth with unemployment"'.[38] *Avgi* sent the message loud and clear to Merkel in her 2012 visit to Athens, by calling upon 'everyone' to go to Syntagma Square and 'welcome' Merkel with protests 'against the harsh austerity'.[39]

Second, the Greek press also charged Germany for inducing borrowing and deficit spending on the part of the weaker countries by maintaining a huge trade surplus and 'not spending more herself'. Seen like this, 'Greece's "prodigality" appear[ed] to be the other side of the coin of Germany's "prudence"'.[40] Pro-reform commentators also pointed to the logical correlation in the Eurozone between current account surpluses and deficits.

And third, some narratives went, Germany did not even gain such competitive advantage fairly but through its 'social dumping' policies of the preceding decade: 'exploiting the battered workforce of former East Germany, the Schröder and Merkel governments decreased workers' incomes for seven years'.[41] This not only led to 'German surpluses and Mediterranean deficits' but also entangled the Eurozone countries in a 'race to the bottom, encouraging salary cuts, part-time employment, and flexibility'. Unsurprisingly, 'Germany won the race'.[42] If that was the case, 'why should we decrease the salaries of deficit countries instead of increasing the salaries in surplus countries?'[43] Why, in other words, should unfair advantage be compensated for through further unfair emulation?

To sum this up in neutral terms: even if Greeks did have a party, the German government failed to respect the basic requirements of proportionality (refrain from killing the patient), reciprocity (admitting shared responsibility) and fairness (adjusting in socially fair ways). How did these criticisms chime with the German side?

Greece, Relentless Mirror

Ironically for the Greeks, the Germans often perceived their own experience of social cutbacks not as reprehensible but as giving rise to a certain sense of entitlement: the recipients of European support should be subject to the same discipline. Some in Germany took for granted that their country's current strong position was due to prior austerity measures and held this up as a glowing example for the now struggling European economies. *Der Spiegel*, for example, juxtaposed a report on the suffering and unemployment ensuing from the labour market reforms imposed on Southern Europe with an account of how Germany had solved its equivalent problem of unemployment by rearranging—and effectively cutting down—its welfare state.[44] This, for the Germans, was not unfair advantage but an admirable achievement. Reciprocity was invoked but not in terms of balanced adjustment *now*, but *across time*. The Germans had paid a high price themselves for their current wealth and were not prepared to grant their fellow Europeans and easier ride than they had had themselves. Just like Greeks suffered today, Germans had suffered yesterday.

On the other hand, German public debate, as its Greek counterpart, did uphold the role of the EU in the debacle. Greek overspending was commonly portrayed as a consequence of cheap borrowing due to EMU, which led to a 'boom on tick', ever rising salaries, generous redundancy protection and a reduced pressure to carry out painful labour market reforms.[45] The narrative was that Greece, whether the state or citizens, had effectively received an invitation to overspend since joining the Euro.[46]

Remarkably, the German political and opinion-making elite, including Angela Merkel, willingly concede that 'we, too, live on borrowed money'[47] as with the case of German politicians buying votes.[48] The problem of public overspending, bemoaned by so many German press commentaries on Greece, was attributed, in a quirky *Zeit* article, to the

whole of Europe—earning Greece the distinction as essentially part of Europe:

> The Athens stage shows the Europeans how states can degenerate to the point where politicians hardly dare pronounce uncomfortable truths. Where citizens flee into the private sphere and complain that the state does not function. Where governments drown future generations in debts, as austerity here and now costs too many votes. All of this the West Europeans are getting to know as well, not only in Italy. Greece belongs to Europe—at the moment it is our relentless mirror.[49]

Arguably, and after six long years of mutual recrimination, such projections of common ground were to provide the basis for more constructive discussions. And throughout the period, we find seeds of the recovery of recognition as the other side's predicament hits embarrassingly close to home. Despite the fact that othering occurred and it was real, many in Germany continued to express empathy for suffering in Greece. Germans heatedly debated the desirability and moral defensibility of the policies imposed on Greece, debates which were to reach another climax around the 2015 referendum and elections leading to Syriza-led coalitions.[50] At the same time, many in Greece engaged in honest, soul-searching discussions about Greece's own mistakes, the ways in which the German government's policies were right or wrong and the things that Greece could learn from Germany. There was clearly more to mutual perceptions than casting victims against perpetrators.

2.2 Swindlers vs. Hearts of Steel: Moralities of Rule of Law, Public Spirit, and Solidarity

Turning to another category in the stereotypical register, we find a mutual ascription which we capture as swindlers vs hearts of steel, or conmen vs tin men. To the German side, the Greek traits of laziness and irresponsibility seemed compounded by a broader pattern of moral decadence having to do with a widespread lack of public spiritedness, a lack of identification with the state and a disregard for rules, the rule of law and the common good. Nepotism, tax dodging, account-cooking and lax attitudes towards contractual commitments were all manifestations of this mentality, as well as most prominently the kind of widespread

corruption usually observable outside the West, corruption among elites and across different sectors of society.

Greek Diseases

This picture of moral indulgence and even depravity was fed, for instance, by a recurrent story, endlessly repeated on the news cycle, of 'phantom pensions' claimed and paid out for long departed relatives.[51] Moreover, in early 2012 *Der Spiegel* took stock of the meagre results of the Greek anti-corruption fight as observed by a mission of OECD experts,[52] and later that year, *Bild* reproduced a letter to Angela Merkel by the leader of a small Greek party, Thanos Tzimeros, who asked her not to 'give a single euro more' to Greece's politicians without forcing them to change their behaviour, as 'they will steal it'. Tzimeros supported his claim by describing numerous cases of corruption, while blaming the state and the 'party mafia's' corruption for 'destroying the country' and its 'great potential of young and intelligent people'.[53] The message was powerful. Even Greeks, Greeks above all, denounce the same fundamental flaws.

The same could be said about variants on corruption, such as nepotism, where the widespread allocation of jobs, commissions, funds and so on to friends and family mirrored a political class where power had been shared for several decades by two family dynasties.[54] As for tax evasion, too, a *Bild* reporter referred to it as 'the Greek disease', illustrating his claim with his own experience of cab drivers, fuel station attendants or newsagents, all refusing to provide receipts for his purchases.[55] *Der Spiegel* joined in on the litany of the all-pervasiveness of tax dodging practices, for instance, by covering a crime novel on murdered tax dodgers, or reporting that even the Orthodox Church was insisting on its tax exemptions, thus 'exacerbating the crisis'.[56] All these means of self-enrichment were seen as criminal in their contempt for common welfare, not only through their direct effects but also with a view to their effect on morality and respect for the rule of law.

The German press often saw Greek insistences on reneging on the commitments the country had entered in exchange for the bailouts as further evidence of duplicity. For example, the disturbing ease with which some Greeks treated breaches of the European rules of the game became apparent in the context of the 2012 Greek legislative elections, when 'Tsipras said that his main objective was to cancel the "barbarous"

agreement of the country with her creditors, because Athens' obligations towards the lenders were rendered "null and void" by the election'.[57] Such critiques were widespread in 2012 when the first default scenarios were seriously considered, and were to gain currency again when Syriza came into government. They coincided, however, with a considerable intellectual fascination with the latter's open claim that its grounds for questioning Greece's international commitments were legitimate as part of a fundamental critique of the capitalist international economy, a position which could be seen as both principled and utterly self-destructive. Either way, could the German media disagree with many Greeks' surprise at Schäuble's declaration that 'Greece is not implementing the Memorandum'?[58] Was this not an obviously unfair accusation, when everyone, starting with the German press, had reported on the hardships brought about by the Troika's plan? While economists were to debate for many years the reasons why the austerity measures implemented in Greece cut so deeply into its growth rate, there was little doubt that some implementation there had been.

Only Greeks?

Of course, German representations of Greek mentalities towards the rule of law were not black and white. Take for example the German references to the proverbial Greek 'lack of public spirit'.[59] If the average citizen failed to take into account the common good of society as a whole, whose fault was it? Take capital flight, whereby 'those who can afford it have taken their savings abroad; they now lie on the accounts of Swiss banks or in London properties. The money is in safety, the country is doomed'.[60] If this was about tax evasion, the German case stands. But if individuals were simply taking their savings to safety, was it not the government's fault for squandering safety in the first place? Or take cuts in public spending. In the words of a *Bild* commentator, 'Everywhere in Athens the crisis is issue number one. But to cut, slash, curtail state services? The Greeks say; OCHI—ME MOY DEN. No, not with me'.[61] Under the moralising and indignant tone, we read a subtext, whereby *Bild* readers could relate all too well with the refusal to pay the price for the mistakes made by a failing and corrupt political class.

Self-restraint in criticism could turn into outright self-criticism hitting much closer to home.[62] First of all, Germany, it did not go unnoticed in the German press, did 'demand a more binding character' for

the rules of the game, 'but was itself one of the countries that liked to adjust' these rules 'to its own benefit', for example in the question of current account surpluses, where Berlin lobbied in favour of raising the ceiling so as to avoid action against it by the European Commission.[63] What is more, it was no secret that German companies were actively participating in the 'established practice' of bribery across the world, and had actively promoted a 'corrupt system that had pushed the Greek state into bankruptcy and that now Europe's tax payers have to answer for'.[64] German banks, too, had irresponsibly bought risky bonds.[65] Of course, self-criticism could also be directed against domestic opponents, as when in May 2017 the fiscal spokesmen of the SPD parliamentary group, Johannes Kahrs, turned the hypothetical fraudster blame away from Greece, and against Schäuble: 'Schäuble cheats and fudges'. The minister, Kahrs explained, had made the IMF's participation a condition of 'Greece's rescue' but was now refusing the debt relief demanded by the organisation.[66]

Last but not least, there were abundant aides-mémoires in the German coverage, too, of how Germany had broken the Stability and Growth Pact.[67] Less frequent, but still present, were reminders that the 'greatest debt sinner of the 20th century' was in fact Germany itself, which arguably owed its current financial stability and wealth to the USA as well as the victims of German occupation—not least Greece.[68] But such admissions remained all too rare in the eyes of Greeks, for whom the forced loans to Germany in 1944 remained a quasi-obsessive theme in at least part of the press coverage.

These themes also resonated in the Greek press. Accounts of German businesses as well as politicians being involved in corruption scandals bolstered accusations that Germans applied double standards in their denunciations of Greek corruption. Greek journalists regularly reminded their readership that some of the biggest corruption scandals in Greece involved Siemens, a German company,[69] to the extent that 'corruption' is probably the first word that a Greek would associate with the word 'Siemens'. In addition, Greek newspapers did not fail to note that a series of other German companies were implicated in corruption scandals also involving Greek politicians, with bribes having been paid for German military equipment sales to Greece.[70] This explained, to them, the German politicians' failure to demand government cuts on military equipment expenditure while insisting on every other sort of austerity cuts.[71]

A Liar Will not Be Believed

Notwithstanding sporadic admissions of shared guilt, the German media never let go of the number one exhibit for the Greek conman narrative, namely the fudged 'Greek statistics' that had sparked the crisis in the first place.[72] German commentators employed a strongly worded moral register to denounce the way Greece had 'systematically swindled its way into the Euro with systematically forged numbers'.[73] 'If I as head of a small—and medium-sized enterprise had behaved as Greece has in manipulating its accounts', the President of the Federal Association Wholesale and Foreign Trade, for example, pointed out, 'I would have rendered myself liable to criminal prosecution'.[74] Moral incriminations echoed a German proverb, itself a take on Aesop's fable, that there was no believing a liar even when he spoke the truth.[75] As *Bild* put it to the Chancellor in an interview: 'Greece has blagged its way into the Euro with systematically forged numbers. Why should one believe Greece now that they really will durably economise and pay back the credits?'[76] The idea that Greece could never be trusted again was a major reason for the 'suspicion' that characterised the lenders' relations with Greece particularly during the early phase of the crisis—along with wider public indignation that Greece was to receive new money despite not having met its austerity conditions.[77] The loss of trust, the 'most important currency of cooperation', between Greece and the rest of the Eurozone often served as the backdrop for the conditionality imposed on Greece, as when Merkel justified the as yet 'unprecedented' conditionality of the June 2015 bailout arrangement in this light.[78] The federal government's relentless motto according to which 'there will only be money if you do what we demand from you' was the only moral thing to do if Germans and other Europeans were not going to be fooled again.[79]

Put in a more charitable light, if Greeks were to escape Aesop's pithy maxim, they needed to 'stand by their word', for the 'breaking of agreements' was 'precisely what had led to the crisis'.[80] The mantra mattered since it was about assigning blame and therefore responsibility. Greece had brought this crisis on itself by lying and cheating and was in no position to dictate the conditions of how the other Eurozone and EU members would rescue it at great expense to themselves. Standing by one's word or *pacta sunt servanda* was an imperative which justified all manners of imposition on Greece if only because letting Greece off the hook would be unfair to Spain and Portugal, who were more readily standing by their word.[81]

The Two Greeces

On the other hand, Germans like Greeks often employed a competing trope of the "two Greeces": the Greece of wasteful squanderers and immoral elites, against the Greece of decent, upright and ethical citizens, who we should see as victims. Ordinary Greeks were carrying on producing, making ends meet and living a life of hard work and decency, while being governed by hopeless politicians and bearing the brunt of a failing and in effect bankrupt state as well as grim austerity measures.[82] Perhaps then, the average Greek was to be absolved, having fallen prey not only to inept governance and the 'old jog trot' reigning in the bureaucracy, incapable of getting structural reforms right,[83] but also to the 'unabashed self-enrichment' of the rich, 'corrupt politicians' and other criminal individuals, even within the Orthodox Church.[84]

As one may have expected, this counter-discourse of the two Greeces was most popular in Greece itself, a Greece redeemed by the existence of the "good" Greeks now paying the price for the wrongdoings of the "bad" ones. The most straightforward definition of the two Greeces focused on the same simple distinction between the corruption and self-seeking behaviour of the elites and the smaller-scale misdemeanours of the common people. In the early phases of the crisis, *Avgi* published the headline 'we are paying for the mistakes of decades',[85] but directed its blame for making those mistakes against politicians, big business and the very rich. For instance, according to *Avgi*, Tsipras claimed that 30% of the economy was dominated by the very rich who exploited legal loopholes 'generously granted by the governments of recent decades' to dodge paying taxes on their properties used commercially or as 'countryside villas', while the remaining 70% of the middle and lower social strata had to bear the brunt of taxation. This, Tsipras informed the then government, made 'people laugh when they hear you talk about cracking down on tax evasion'.[86]

Calls for punishing the guilty and cracking down on corrupt practices were even louder in Greece than in Germany. One headline of *Real News* read: 'the citizens who are being tried hard demand…The Guilty To Prison!' The cover page did not specify explicitly who 'the guilty' were, but the clear implication was that they belonged to the domestic political class.[87] Commenting on the Papandreou government's early aspirations to solve Greece's public finance problems through structural changes

and a crusade against corruption in particular, a *Kathimerini* journalist warned:

> the aim is expedient, but it is good to remember how this corruption came about: who tolerated it, who fosters it, and who exploits it. The political elite of the country banks on the long-established system of clientelist relations, where all sorts of favours (in hiring, payments, and impunity) undermine meritocracy, the smooth functioning of the public sector, and any hope for a fair remuneration system. This creates a vicious cycle that entraps those who want to do their job properly (and they are many), who stumble upon all those who only do what is in their interest.[88]

As a result, we find a great deal of pessimism in our early Greek sample, according to which in the same way as 'no government dared to touch these wrongdoings in the past',[89] the Papandreou government would prove to be unwilling or unable to effectively tackle corruption at present. In the years to come, many pro-reform journalists never tired of calling for a change of attitudes both among the political class and among the common people—as opposed to more systemic change *à la* Tsipras, according to whom 'for corruption to be tackled and for the problem of the economic crisis to be solved, a change of the economic model is required'.[90]

But Greek sources also often stayed clear of the temptation to peddle the narrative of the two Greeces and the simplistic people vs. elite dichotomy. Far from being the domain of only "the few", the problems which had engulfed the country permeated Greek society more deeply and called for a far-reaching change of mentality. This way of seeing the crisis as an opportunity to "reset" Greece chimed with the concerns expressed in the German press on Greek corruption, tax evasion, nepotism, disregard for the common good and disregard for the rule of law. *Kathimerini*'s editor, for example, described Greece's prosperity and self-confidence in 2004 as a 'palace built on sand':[91]

> Instead of seeking knowledge, we learned to progress in the universities through syndicalism and 'connections'. […] We learned the art of taking advantage of the funds of the dumb Europeans by pretending we are farmers to get the subsidies, while in reality we were at the coffee shop. We got used to deception and bribery at the tax agencies, the urban planning departments, and wherever else it was needed.[92]

In a similar vein, a commentator in *Avgi* blamed Greece's demise on 'the destruction of human creativity with a short-sighted and parasitic attitude towards help that came from the European convergence programmes', a 'party system that remained nepotistic and only minimally democratic', a 'syndicalist movement that exhausted its assertive power by pursuing the interests of small groups' and 'the fixation on acquired advantages that didn't have a corporate character, but functioned as privileges of minorities'.[93] Greeks were often the first to denounce special interest groups and individuals who relentlessly offered self-serving resistance to change, such as '150 protesters' who 'paralyze an entire city'.[94] 'There is a limit', *Kathimerini* affirmed, 'to the behaviour of any pressure group or special interest faction. Under today's conditions, overstepping this limit practically means that you are throwing your homeland a step closer to the abyss'.[95]

The resonance of such concerns with the German disquiet on the lack of public spirit in Greece was obvious. But the difference seemed to be about magnitude. While German journalists usually seemed to imply that a majority of Greeks were shirking their responsibility to help their country in crisis, Greeks were less prone to generalising, attributing the lack of public spiritedness to a minority of interest groups in a Greek society that was overall making sacrifices to safeguard a better future. Perhaps this difference was due to the selective reporting by the foreign media of activities such as strikes, demonstrations and riots in Greece, which was widely perceived by Greece as being out of sync with reality. Tendentious quotes of 'ordinary citizens' such as those adduced by *Bild's* reporters certainly did not help in tampering the generalisation.[96]

Playing by the Rules

In addition to the discourse about the lacking public spiritedness, the Greek press also expressed concern that many Greeks failed to understand that it was unacceptable not to play by the rules, in domestic life and politics as well as in international politics. But Greece would no longer get away with rule-bending behaviour, as evidenced by oft-quoted pronouncements of European officials such as 'the game is over, we need serious statistical data',[97] or the hardly concealed threat 'if a member of a team doesn't want to respect its rules, then they should better abandon the team'.[98] *Kathimerini*'s editor captured the essence of Greek dismissiveness on the rule of law by branding it an 'internationalized version' of the frequent student occupations of Greek universities, of street

blockades and of the "I don't pay" movement (refusing to pay toll and public transport fees on the grounds that they are overpriced):

> We threaten that we won't pay our debts and that we will run a protest show, hoping that our partners will get scared and give us money without conditions. Can this recipe work? The international community, from Berlin to the IMF, hasn't learned to operate like that. They make agreements and expect the observance of their terms.[99]

This sort of behaviour or strategy would not 'work' beyond Greek borders. Instead, Greeks should strengthen the rule of law in wider societal practices as well as internationally. Disagreements came to a head when after the May 2012 parliamentary elections, attempts to form a government failed and some politicians started to brand Greece's debt as 'illegal' and the second memorandum of understanding for Greece as 'invalid', since they had been imposed on Greece unfairly. *Kathimerini* called these claims 'amazing' and 'crazy'—above all since the debt had been amassed over the years by a democratic regime. The paper's editor welcomed as 'one of the good consequences' of the politically inconclusive election result that the notion of the 'illegal debt' was now being publicly challenged and debated, dismissing it as publicist populism eying audience and circulation rates. *Kathimerini* called it 'absurd for a country like Greece to think that it could freeze or cancel decisions that have already been taken'. Failure to comply now would only make the country look 'untrustworthy' and weaken its negotiating position.[100]

Solidarity

While these Greek views echoed the German pronouncements on trust, contracts and commitments discussed earlier, and exhibited a shared concern with the rule of law, there was also a Greek comeback, a way of putting both countries on the same morality plane, namely pointing to an equally reprehensible vice on the German side: the vice of heartlessness, and the lack of team spirit and fair play that Germans were accused of displaying at the European level. After all, Greeks could claim that the language of the rule of law was not the only moral language in Europe; indeed, they could argue that their own solidarity concern, grounded on basic human decency, was at the very centre of the European project and should constitute the prime moral requirement of crisis management.

Germany's (and Europe's) failure to show solidarity was discussed in a dramatic tone in much of the Greek coverage. When Schäuble declared that Greece had to 'help itself', indignant coverage seemed to imply that he only had the interests of German (and other European, but not Greek) taxpayers in mind.[101] The measures required by German and European officials in successive memoranda were described as 'antisocial',[102] a crushing 'shock therapy'[103] and a 'slaughter[ing] of people'.[104] The consequences were devastating: 'Social despair, political deposition […] six out of ten Greeks declare that they are exposed to poverty'.[105] In other words, 'society has cracked. The shattering of the electoral map and the ensuing lawlessness are predictable outcomes'.[106] It seemed that 'nothing' could 'shake' Angela Merkel's neoliberal orthodoxy and her 'faith in fiscal orthodoxy and the Pact of Stability and austerity, which she imposes on the Eurozone together with Sarkozy'.[107] When *Avgi* quoted her at the time of the first Memorandum deal in 2010 as having said that 'the future of Europe and Germany [was] at stake', the editors replied: 'Who cares about the future of Greece?'[108] Each of her pronouncements was seen as evidence of her unfeeling negligence towards the Greeks. Not surprisingly, since Greek journalists emphasising this side of the equation typically downplayed the public spiritedness side, their demands for solidarity often overlooked the reciprocal.

In fact, as we suggested earlier, the German press and wider public debate at large did express deep sympathy with the Greeks and beyond, a desire to honour Germany's 'obligation to solidarity'.[109] By 2012, as the Euro crisis reached a turning point from emergency to management mode, even Angela Merkel openly recognised obligations of German solidarity with Greece.[110] More generally, in the shadow of the Greek plight, a new discourse began to complement traditional EU narratives focused on European solidarity as a matter of moral obligation. In Germany, there was a tendency to rely on historical responsibility—e.g. to stand by those struggling for peace and democracy—perhaps because it was easier to justify transfers in the name of Greeks of yesteryears:

> There is a moral obligation to solidarity among us Europeans; it has been in the Basic Law [the Federal constitution] for twenty years. The main reason for receiving Greece into the EU was to support Greek democracy after the Greeks had managed all by themselves to remove their military dictatorship. Today solidarity with the Greek people is as necessary as then.[111]

On the other hand, the argument from fairness was in fact a double-edged sword since it could be invoked equally to support the application of strict disciplines towards Greece on the grounds of equal treatment with Spain, Portugal and Ireland as well as supporting the theme we discussed above of "why should we pay for the rich Greeks".

Leftist (as opposed to ethical or moral) arguments for solidarity were also used in Germany. Such arguments typically made reference to the polarisation of Greek society into winners and losers from the crisis, which mirrored in part that between bad and good Greeks discussed earlier and played an important role in the German press representations of Greece. The Troika reforms, not just trade unionists warned, made the rich richer and the poor poorer.[112] This, to many German commentators, constituted a central reason for viewing austerity and excessive conditionality with a good deal of scepticism and for showing solidarity with the "losers" in the story. As in Greek reporting, we see transnational dividing lines emerging not only along class lines but also along increasingly divergent views within EU member-states on how to cope with the widening pools of losers of globalisation and Europeanisation.

Some Greek journalists did acknowledge the many German displays of solidarity. *Avgi's* acknowledgement of this solidarity rarely went beyond reports on the political support that the German far-left party *Die Linke* offered to Syriza. Emphasising transnational class and economic-ideology lines rather than national lines, *Avgi* portrayed *Die Linke*'s Members of the Bundestag and the European Parliament as among Greece's most ardent international supporters[113] and as 'our Germans', who 'stand in solidarity with the Greek workers',[114] but rarely problematised how a wider concept of solidarity encompassing larger sections of the German and Greek societies could materialise. On the other hand, and contrary to prevailing impressions on the German side, some Greek papers did also recognise expressions of German solidarity more broadly beyond the left. For example, in covering Merkel's visit to Greece in October 2012, German newspapers focused mainly on the anti-Merkel demonstrations that took place in the centre of Athens including the display of anti-Nazi symbols. We will return to this theme shortly. Suffice it to say that such crude anti-German manifestations only constituted a very small portion of what was said in the Greek press about the German government at the time. While some journalists expressed mild discontent about the 'careful' and 'measured' tone of her statements stopping short of bolder promises, Merkel's trip was widely welcomed as a gesture of solidarity

and a strong message of support for the new Greek government.[115] The day after her departure, *Kathimerini* printed a large picture of the Chancellor confiding to the smiling Greek Prime Minister that 'she [saw] light at the end of the tunnel'.[116]

In conclusion, Greeks and Germans seemed at first sight to use different languages of morality that invoked alternatively the rule of law, public spiritedness, human decency or solidarity. These different moralities served as means of othering and stereotyping. Yet, they also served to create nuances and project a more complex picture of the Other, creating considerable space for identification, empathy and solidarity with those on the other side exempt from moral reprimand. After all, even a cursory look at publications on the other side reveals that, contrary to the possible reactive association of the language of the rule of law with Germany, and the language of solidarity with Greece, commentators from both countries in fact invoked all the moral languages analysed in this section. The more complex rifts acknowledged as running through the collective of the Other helped to replace cross-national divides with ones of class, moral probity and victim versus perpetrator status, thus highlighting new commonalities across the boundaries of European demoi. Languages of solidarity in particular helped to project such commonality, acting as special bonding agents against the backdrop of the cruder opposition between swindlers and hearts of steel.

2.3 Greece Mirror of German Demons

If the Greco–German affair starts with representations and misrepresentations of the other side, these are not necessarily about that Other, but ultimately about oneself as this Other comes to serve as the projection screen for one's own innermost insecurities and fears. We found that on both sides, the fear seemed to boil down to a loss of control, the spectre of disasters past. This shared psychosocial *Angst*, to be found in implicit undertones that only allow for very tentative readings, was more clearly discernible in our German sources, on which we focus more in this section. In the Greek corpus, it featured more indirectly, but was arguably hidden somewhere in the proclamations of resistance in the face of external domination and of agency in the face of a growing loss of mastery over an intractable situation, to which we shall turn subsequently in this chapter's remaining two sections on the politics of memory and the *topoi* of power and resistance in the debates. Of course, Greek bravery may

also have had to do with their worst fears actually coming true on a regular basis, without the luxury of dwelling on anxious anticipation for long.

Bankruptcy Greeks

In our German sources, then, many of the representations of Greece's situation spoke to a spellbound fascination mixed with underlying deep-seated collective fear of the possibility of unravelling. Such collective fear was conveyed not least by *Bild's* shorthand of *'Pleite-Griechen'*—'washout', 'bust' or 'crash Greeks'—standing for the country's sovereign debt and resulting social and economic crisis overall.[117] This label connoted the idea of an individual caught in an irresistible downward spiral inexorably propelling him into financial disaster and social disgrace, at the mercy of his debtors or "the banks". Eliciting both sympathy and criticism on the part of its readers, *Bild* free-rode on the success, and the established stereotypical associations, of the reality TV show *'Raus aus den Schulden'* [Out of Debt], in which a private default advisor takes indebted individuals under his wing, convincing most drastically to curtail their lifestyle and spending habits.

Sensationalism often goes hand in hand with *Schadenfreude*, this most German expression for a most universal feeling. Clearly, revelling in the misfortunes of someone is about deeper-rooted fears for oneself: 'We do not all want to become Greeks'.[118] *Bild's* initial report when the first Greek bank collapse loomed in April 2010 was replete with scaremongering and exclamation marks: 'Trust gone! Europe is trembling! The markets are under the sway of blind horror. Fear is going round'.[119] As for the German press coverage at large, *Bild's* editors seemed to bask in the magnetising expectation of disaster—of the kind that cannot just be witnessed from afar as if oneself, the observer, could not but be swept along in an irresistibly widening downward spiral. Many early accounts of the Greek debt crisis conjured up the spectre of a 'domino effect' or 'chain reaction' on the whole of the Eurozone as 'Peeks into the Abyss' revealed dark images of stock market and financial crashes, the 'annihilation of the assets of billions', the record unemployment and political tragedy all too present still in Germans collective memory.[120] Despite assurances that deflation posed a more serious threat than inflation this time around, the Euro crisis as a whole played into entrenched collective German fears of economic catastrophe and the 1923 trauma of hyperinflation—a 'collective psychosis' still alive after almost a century.[121]

This time around, however, the downfall would not just be Germany's but rather include the whole of the Eurozone and EU member-states. *Bild*, along with most of the German press, painted the Europeans as united in their panic at stock markets and the euro 'nose-diving'—all the while acknowledging that the Greeks were particularly hard hit, having had to move their savings abroad and even losing 'faith in the survival of their country'. If this *Bild* author, for instance, assumed a dividing line, this was not one between Greeks and Germans, but one between those who had nothing to lose in terms of savings anyway and those who did—and the author expressed sympathy with both.[122]

In this light, the EU's actions regarding Greece came to be attributed as much to its 'psychosocial condition' as to objective material facts. *Der Spiegel* went as far as attributing the European Council's decision to rule out the option of dissolving the currency union to a simple fear of uncontrollable consequences: 'one might say, their fear of a financial and social crash, the look into the abyss of Nothing'. It was, in essence, a 'fear of death' the author went on to argue, citing Georges Bataille.[123] The author could have equally referred to Judith Shklar's liberalism of fear or the idea that the ultimate role of state authority should be the alleviation of sources of fear for the citizenry.[124]

Indeed, there seems to have been a hypnotising fascination in the German press coverage with Greece's catastrophe. As for the ambiguity of moral judgment combined with envious admiration of Greek *savoir vivre*, German representations of the political effects of the crisis in Greece were caught in a paradoxical tension between (repressed) esteem and repulsion, a fear of what the Greek story was revealing about what Germans could not or would not be—easy going, charming on one hand or at least magnanimous and generous on the other. Misrecognition here, or downplaying Greek qualities, became crucial in redeeming oneself and papering over these perceived character flaws.

Traumas Resonating

This mix between fascination and anxiety also accounted for the endless reproduction of still and video images of violent protests in Greece.[125] Violent clashes, 'severe unrest',[126] 'total escalation' or even a 'revolution' were reported or foreseen in reaction to the austerity measures or to the eventuality of a failure to provide the next credit tranche. Those who had 'nothing left to loose because they have already

lost everything' were out in the streets and increasingly 'talking of a revolution'.[127]

Indeed, German fascination with the implosion of order and popular uprising, especially on the left, carried an undertone of revolutionary romanticism on the part of Germans who rarely get to flirt with truly revolutionary actions—at least since the red Brigade.[128] This was ok at least as long as things did not get uncontrollably out of hand, hence the imperative for international action. This is what was meant when *Der Spiegel* captioned a photograph of flames, running policemen and gas mask-wearing rioters with 'The rest of Europe got scared'. And it also explains with what resolve 'Europe [was] determined to save the country, if need be without a plan'.[129] The harsh police clampdown on the protesters and escalating violence resonated with old, deep-seated collective German memories and traumas.[130]

But the fascination was sustained in spite of—or perhaps because of—this trauma, and the *Bild* picture series reproduced in Image 2.3, for example, reflected and spoke to both. German sources amplified what they framed as the radicalisation of politics in Greece and thereby political developments that perhaps more than anything could justify what can be interpreted as denying Greeks recognition as equal political partners. For instance, the May 2012 election in Greece, in which radical parties received more than 42% of the vote, was explained as a 'vote of anger'—and a sign of 'the political system disintegrating' and of the collapse of

Image 2.3 Excerpt from *Bild* picture gallery 'After Vote [in parliament on austerity plans]: Chaos in Greece' (30/06/2011, http://www.bild.de/politik/fotos/griechenland-krise/fg-18606070.bild.html [accessed 13/07/2017]). Individual captions: **(a)** 'The police are acting with tremendous brutality on the rioters. Eyewitnesses report how persons were beaten up'; **(b)** 'Total escalation! The rioters are throwing whatever they can find'; **(c)** 'The police are not controlling the situation any more, they are just trying to protect themselves and to keep the protesters away from the parliament'

the 'unwritten social contract' that had so far determined Greek politics. Having lost faith in the established parties and political class, the Greeks were 'running after' Syriza's 'pied piper' Alexis Tspiras and his promises built on sand.[131]

Even more disturbing to many German minds, Greeks were now falling prey to the 'Greek Neofascists'.[132] Much was made of the rise and success of the extreme right in a Greece, which now stood for what Germans had been socialised into fearing and or seeking to repress for generations. There was a sense that the Greeks were crossing a line, forfeiting their right to be treated in a certain way by doing the unspeakable in German eyes. The link to Germany's historical burden was obvious, as was parallel to how this part of the German national psyche and memory had been condemned to repression. Germans couldn't take their eyes off radicalisation in Greece but were at a loss on how to deal with it. And the Greek visual references to Nazi Germany, much amplified in the German coverage, hit this very nerve.

On the other side of our playing field, Germany, with its disdainful history and its now newly emerging position of European hegemony, did serve as a projection screen for the Greek demons of foreign domination and occupation, but also for fears of loosing one's identity and agency. At the same time, the German demon of World War II mirrored Greece's proud history of resistance. We will now turn to how Germans and Greeks re-remembered their pasts over their Euro crisis affair and then to how power and resistance played out in their debates. Can a past that divides also become a shared predicament because it constitutes a threat that can affect everyone?

2.4 Your History, My History

Two powerful images anchored the politics of memory in the Greco–German affair with particular force: the notorious *Focus* magazine cover featuring Venus of Milo performing the rude gesture[133] and the various Nazi references used in Greek media and demonstrations. Both imageries refer to the other nation's past. But there is a critical asymmetry in ascription. The slandered Venus and other references to Greece's history evoked a glorious past so as to denigrate a present decline. Greek Nazi references by contrast evoked an inglorious past so as to denigrate present pretensions of power. Uses of the past mirrored each other as inverse images.

The German coverage, and especially its visual illustrations, was pervaded by stereotypical references to Greece's history as the cradle of 'civilisation', including architecture, philosophy, democracy, drama and historiography.[134] They typically went along with assertions that Greece was the cradle of *European* civilisation and 'a central component of Europe'.[135] The cradle-of-Europe narrative in the German press often bolstered demands to help Greece now in the name of the past. It provided a central argumentative ground that the 'Hellenics must be kept in the euro zone under all circumstances' (here in the words of Schäuble).[136]

Heir of Antiquity vs Err of Antiquity, and the War of Clichés

Yet, as the Greek debt crisis unfolded, concurrent German references to Greece's glorious past took on an unspoken undertone suggesting sins of betrayal, questioning the worthiness of modern Greece to succeed the Ancients and casting the rest of Europe including Germany as the more rightful heirs. In the traditions of German humanism, *Bildungsbürgertum* and philhellenism, German national identity had historically laid some claim to this past themselves, as the starting point of German culture.[137] This take on history was made more plausible by the German contention to be the "better", as in more committed, Europeans including as the (unwilling) Eurozone's paymaster. Both understandings dented claims that Greeks somehow embodied Europe's essence, and mitigated any postulated obligation unconditionally to stand by Greece on these grounds.

More importantly, over the course of the crisis, German references to Greek civilisation came to be increasingly paired with labels of present decadence or the visual of a collapsing built environment. Albeit often with a sound degree of empathy, many of our sources dwelled on Greece's present predicaments, the various facets of the failure of the Greek state, political system, and elite, and the resulting multi-layered crisis of Greek society. The *Spiegel* reportage 'Greece: Crumbling Civilisation' used the allegory of architectural disrepair to zoom in on the 'dilapidation' of central Athens, now turned into a kind of a 'favela'—as a prism for the Greek 'demise of the commonwealth' and 'social bankruptcy'.[138] It described formerly elegant neighbourhoods as sites of street prostitution and homelessness, with Greeks moving

elsewhere, 'the neo-fascists hunting down immigrants', many in the police allegedly sympathising with *Golden Dawn*, and increasing incidences of violent crime as well as syphilis, tuberculosis and HIV infections. Another *Spiegel* cover took up the crumbling metaphor again, in this case displaying a disintegrating column to illustrate the cover story 'Goodbye Acropolis: Why Greece Now Has to Leave the Euro'. This time around, *Der Spiegel* ascribed responsibility to the Greek people as a whole for their own crumbling state since the 'majority of the Greeks', in the May 2012 parliamentary elections, 'decidedly rejected the austerity policy demanded by the EU'.[139]

The highpoint of German narratives of Greek decline, and of mendacious (or at the very best ignorant and sloppy) defamation in the German press, was *Focus* magazine's Milo cover and the shockingly slanderous accompanying article '2000 Years of Decline' (Image 2.4). The modern Greeks, it claimed, had little left in common with their superior ancestors; unlike the Ancients, they had not produced a single 'poet, composer, fine artist or philosopher of significance', owned no more than 'one single opera house and proper concert hall' and, unlike modern Italy, lacked any distinction even in matters of fashion, gastronomy and winemaking.[140]

Greek retaliation was swift if equally crude, as the *Focus* cover triggered a wave of reactions among Greek journalists and politicians as well as diplomatic protest. Indeed, the cover became a symbol of German crudeness for years to come.[141] For example, the President of the Greek Parliament Philippos Petsalnikos felt obliged to rectify that Greece had in fact 'received two Literature Nobel prizes in the last forty years', and retorted: 'What does Germany, a country of 85 million, have to show us? Did they produce a new Beethoven and we didn't realize it?'[142] Imagery associating Nazi symbols with contemporary Germany started appearing more frequently in the Greek media, while voices connecting the issue of Germany's unpaid war reparations with the Greek debt crisis became stronger. Neither was lost in Germany.[143] To be sure, the *Focus* cover and lead story were widely criticised in the German media as well—awakened to it not least as a result of the backlash from Greece and elsewhere.[144]

The *Focus* dispute reflected and reinforced a dynamic, whereby perceived offences from the other country were repaid in kind. The resulting 'war of clichés'[145] and populist stereotyping and othering

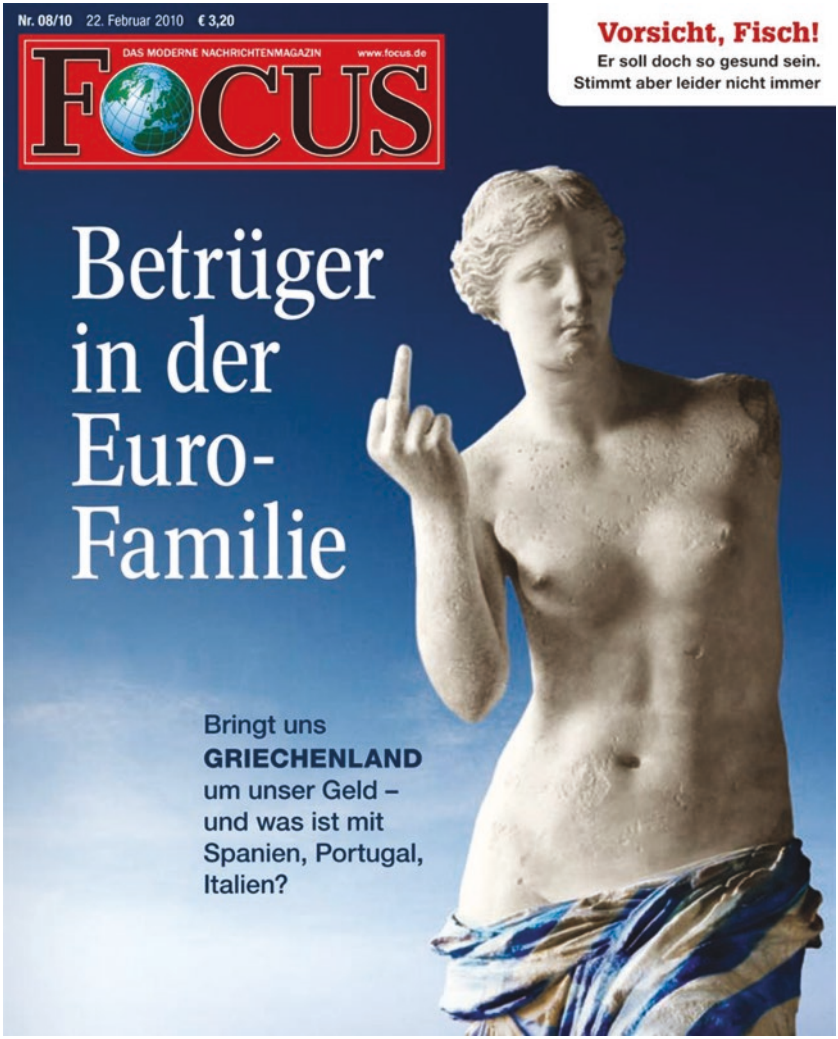

Image 2.4 *Focus* cover 22/02/2010 (Nr 08/2010): 'Swindlers in the Euro Family: Is Greece Mulcting Us—and What About Spain, Portugal, Italy?'

was recognised and criticised in both countries' debates. In the Greek papers, Greek references to Germany's Nazi past were often framed as responses to statements by German politicians and newspapers that were seen as anti-Greek. As an *Avgi* journalist commented, 'racist generalizations about all of us in general by specific German circles […] light a fire among local sources of foolishness, audacity, unsubstantiated arrogance, and evasion of difficult problems'. In other words, 'a nationalist turns other people into nationalists'.[146] Even *Bild*, showing some promise of halting this vicious circle, explained a photomontage by the Greek daily *Eleftheros Typos* showing the goddess Victoria on Berlin's iconic Victory Column holding a swastika as part of the 'squabble' triggered off by the *Focus* cover.[147]

Even though the *Focus* affair inflated the war of clichés, some Greek journalists and politicians had already been drawing connections between the Nazi period and Germany's current role in handling the debt crisis at least a month or two earlier, in the first weeks of 2010, and particularly in *Avgi*. Until the autumn of 2009, by contrast, references to Germany had been conspicuously absent from the Greek press coverage of the context of the incipient debt crisis. But then, Schäuble said in a *Bild* interview in late December 2009 (already quoted, but it is important to rehearse his precise phrasing here): 'Greece […] will not be able to get around making savings and helping itself. We Germans cannot pay for the mistakes of the Greeks'.[148] While *Kathimerini* reprinted these words in its cover article (on the *European Commission's* concern about Greece), commenting no further than on the German finance minister's 'particularly strict tone',[149] *Avgi* cultivated a remarkable wave of outrage at these words, creating at least some general resentment. It did so not least by actively linking the theme of German war guilt, forced loans and unpaid reparations and compensations, with how Germany was now handling the Greek debt crisis. Specifically, *Avgi* invited a number of veterans of the Greek resistance to comment on Schäuble's statement.[150] Manolis Glezos, famous in Greece for his role in the resistance and for having taken down the German flag from the Acropolis in May 1941, and who was then a Syriza MEP as well as chair of the National Council for the Claim of German Debts to Greece, declared: if 'the Germans can't pay for the mistakes for the Greeks', then 'the Greeks can't forget the crimes of the German army in Greece during the Occupation'.[151] Memory had become a pawn in a tit-for-tat game.

German Guilt, German Debt, German Responsibility

This statement encapsulated an entrenched understanding that underlay the use of Nazi imagery and references to World War II more broadly. This was a widespread sense that, due to history, Germany owed Greece, not only materially and legally in terms of the occupation loans and reparations, but also morally on grounds of German guilt or responsibility. As to Germany's *material* debt, Deputy Prime Minister Theodoros Pangalos reminded his audience in a BBC interview that the Germans 'took away the Greek gold that was in the Bank of Greece … and they never gave it back', advising the German government not to 'complain much about stealing and not being very specific about economic dealings'.[152] As to the deeper, *moral* or ethical debt owed by Germany to Greece, this was seen as a debt of both gratitude and guilt. New Democracy party spokesman Panos Panagiotopoulos, for example, asserted: 'if Europe is free and democratic today, this is because hundreds of thousands of Greek men and women struggled to end Nazism and fascism'.[153] A Greek Jewish survivor of World War Two, quoted in *Avgi*, found that Schäuble acted

> as if he were forgetting (a) the tragic mistakes of the Germans that the Greeks had to pay for willy-nilly during the Second World War; (b) the concentration camps, in which the prisoners were led to horrible death or to forced exhausting labour, which hasn't been compensated by Germany. […] Does the German Minister know what the Nazi transgressions, the flattening of cities and villages, the destruction of infrastructure, the amputations and deaths, have cost Greece?[154]

To be sure, the Greek discourse of Germany, or anyone else, owing Greece was subject to controversy and self-critical deconstruction in Greece itself, not least in response to the *Focus* controversy and the perceived effects of the debt crisis on Greece's image abroad. *Kathimerini*'s editor argued that 'in the end, no one feels they owe us because we are the chosen people. The world has thanked us for Pericles [i.e. the age of classical Athenian democracy] and the epical struggle of 1940, and now we are just another country that has messed up and can't cope'.[155] The extent to which the sovereign debt crisis threw into question this deep-rooted story about Greek national identity is reflected further in the verdict published in another *Kathimerini* article a couple of months

later: 'It isn't easy at all to grow up as a country with the fairy tale that everyone owes to you, and to wake up one day to suddenly discover that (a) nobody owes you anything and (b) you owe to everyone'.[156] Even if the sentiment was not shared across the country, this lament expressed a widespread disillusionment among Greeks, especially the younger generations.

Nevertheless, Greek references to German debt and corresponding Greek entitlements were clearly attempts at re-establishing a degree of symmetry of power between Greece and its creditors, in other words those who had the power to bail it out. *Avgi* welcomed that 'the issue of Germany's war reparations to Greece […] shook Greece's "good kid" attitude towards the European institutions and especially the German government'.[157] Instead, Europeans had to reconsider who owed whom what, and who was entitled to what in recognition for past sacrifices. From such a standpoint, indebtedness ought to be viewed as a more general currency in European history.

A concurrent implication in this search for historical continuities in the period 2010–2012 was of course the return of German hegemony, a theme that was starting to pervade European politics as a whole. In the Greek press, this sometimes took the form of repeated conflation between wartime Nazi Occupation and Germany's current 'peculiar, economic hegemony'.[158] This discourse used visual and narrative references to familiar historical events in pointing to the foreign origins of the current crisis. Among the blunter ones was an *Avgi* cartoon set in front of a crystal shop in 'Berliner Straße 19-38', on the window of which was written: '*Achtung, Achtung*: Greek Swindler'. The cartoon showed a German passer-by asking his wife: 'What happened? Did we begin the pogroms here in Germany again?'[159] Even more bluntly, *Proto Thema* featured a photograph of Merkel pasted in front of marching soldiers, against the title 'Merkel is designing a new Europe without Greece'.[160] And the historical comparison has continued to pop up. In July 2014, the Public Electricity Company's (DEH) trade union leader reacted to the government's decision to conscript the company's workers after they had declared a strike by tearing up his conscription note and placing it on 'the monument of the 11 heroes of the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) who fell on 13/10/1944, defending […] the factory of DEH at Keratsini, which today you, as lackeys of MERKEL, want to sell out to the big interests'.[161] In February 2015, following the election to power of Syriza, *Avgi* published the shocking cartoon of the German

Finance Minister in *Wehrmacht* uniform wanting to produce soap from the Greeks' skin, and fertiliser from their ashes, in explicit reference to the holocaust (Image 2.5). Finally, in July 2015, in the context of the extreme tension and polarisation after the referendum, *Avgi* published the headline title 'Germany is destroying Europe again', followed by the comment: 'Germany doesn't have the right to destroy Europe for a third time within 100 years. The civilised world doesn't have the right to let her. And Greece doesn't have the right to accept it'.[162]

The German press, and especially the tabloids, readily picked up on the Nazi and militarist imagery used in Greek protests as well as the media.[163] Posters with Nazi motifs in the protests in the early summer of 2011 were widely covered,[164] as they were during Merkel's visit to Athens in October 2012.[165] Under the headline 'Nazi always works', *Der Spiegel* reported that 'Greek commentators and caricaturists only cultivate[d] one enemy image [*Feindbild*]: the evil German who wants to establish a "Fourth Reich" in Athens'.[166] *Bild* in particular made a meal of the 'desecration' of the federal eagle at the German consulate general in Thessaloniki, running a photograph of a protester attaching a swastika to the national coat of arms: 'It is individual protesters. But don't they know that they are hurting the feelings of millions of Germans?'[167]

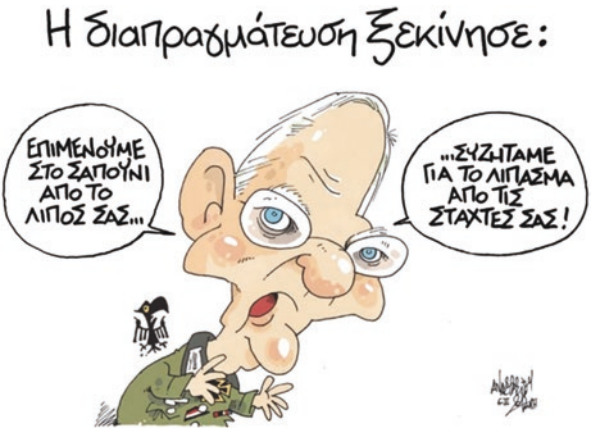

Image 2.5 *Avgi* 08/02/2015 (Tasos Anastasiou): Title: 'The negotiations have started'; Schäuble: 'We insist on soap from your body fat… We are discussing about fertilizer from your ashes!'

Note also how the tabloid called for the recognition of German sensitivities in bemoaning 'revolting protests against Merkel in Athens': 'Germany Does Not Deserve This!' (Image 2.6).[168]

This did not mean that German observers were insensitive to Greek historical wounds. On the contrary, the country's shameful occupation of Greece featured prominently in the German coverage, with Greek Nazi references serving a specific discursive purpose in the German debate. On one side of the debate, hitting a nerve in German sensitivities of guilt, they were picked up and echoed at face value to then be processed as part of a broader argument. By way of a stereotypical German reflex of collective self-flagellation, the German Ur-guilt complex and the taboos of the Nazi past as well as xenophobic excesses since then could be instrumentalised to incriminate opponents of the bailout policy, and those even considering the option of a Greek exit from the common currency: 'Greeks-out reminds me of the nastiest rallying cries'.[169]

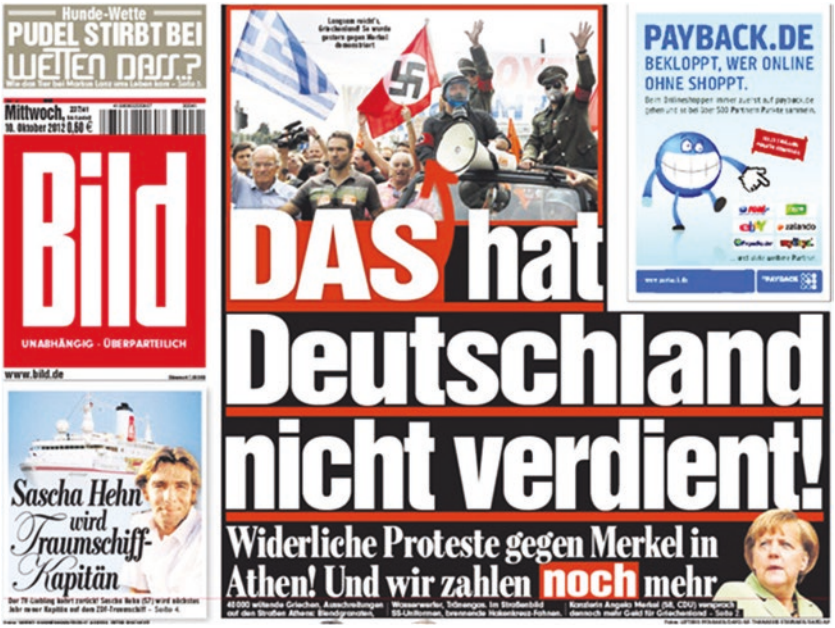

Image 2.6 *Bild* 10/10/2012: 'Germany Does Not Deserve THIS! Revolting Protests Against Merkel in Athens! And We Are Paying Even MORE'

Indeed, most articles covering Greek Nazi imagery did make a connection with Greek demands for World War II reparations, and thus between German guilt and obligation.[170]

Overall, Germany's historical responsibility and sins did function, in German press commentary, as an imperative for helping Greece and the other debtor states in the Eurozone. In *Die Zeit's* analysis: 'Most of the time, the Europe debate follows the following pattern. Here the critics with many confusing numbers and statistics, and there the euro-friends with great emotions: Never again war! Historical responsibility!'[171]

On the other side of the debate, there were of course more self-protective German reactions and accusations of Greek "ungratefulness". *Bild*, in particular, juxtaposed Greek uses of Nazi imagery to the large amounts of money contributed by Germany and Europe as a whole to helping Greece.[172] This seemed to betray a kind of collective wishful thinking, an implicit belief that money could stand as redeemer—as if Germany's significant contribution to the bailout payouts could somehow change how Germany viewed its own relationship with the past, and how it could expect its European partners to view it. The Greek sense of deserving special treatment or "being owed" on the grounds of the nation's heroic sacrifices and suffering was mirrored by a German sense that its own special treatment could finally be ended. Further, *Bild's* indignation conveyed a self-righteous message, or implicit threat, that the Greeks' refusal to recognise and appreciate the (at least hypothetical) magnitude of German support somehow effectively absolved Germany of further obligations, unless the Greeks changed their tone.

Lost in Translation

Such defensiveness notwithstanding, on the whole historical references to the Nazi era in the German press articulated mainly German guilt and Greek victimhood.[173] Lost in translation was thus a key dimension of what this period stood for in the Greek public imagination: not just victimisation, but rather heroic resistance to foreign occupation and imperialism. The flip side to the depiction of the Germans as a people who still owed the rest of humanity for the sins of their past was a portrayal of the Greeks as a people with a history 'inextricably linked with struggles for freedom, human dignity, self-determination, and national independence'—who deserved special treatment as a result.[174] As a result, to a Greek audience, the portrayal of current German leaders as Nazis

evoked the self-portrayal of Greeks as heroes resisting oppression today like yesterday.

The word 'Ochi' (Greek for No) adorned countless protest placards and news headlines throughout the Greek debt crisis (and long before the Yes/No referendum in July 2015). Like no other single word, it embodied this theme of resistance, which, in collective memory, is closely associated not least with the suffering of the Greek people during the Second World War. As every Greek schoolchild learns, Ochi is remembered in Greece as the laconic reply that the Greek ruler Ioannis Metaxas gave to the Italian fascist government on 28 October 1940, when Mussolini issued an ultimatum to the Greek government demanding the right of passage through Greek soil and the use of Greek strategic locations to facilitate the war efforts of the Axis. The 28th of October, or "Ochi Day", is annually commemorated in Greece as a celebration of heroic resistance against fascism and foreign aggression. With the crisis, Ochi became a pervasive response against perceived German coercion, as per *Avgi's* headline 'Ochi to Merkel's Ultimatum'.[175] The message was clear. No to all ultimatums, whether 70 years ago or now.

German papers, with some exceptions,[176] were initially oblivious to the Greek symbolism behind the Ochis on which they did report extensively—receiving only the message of defiant opposition to subsequent memorandum conditions or shorter-term negotiation proposals. Interestingly, however, in 2015, when the Greeks voted No in the referendum, the German press did catch on to Ochi's connotations of 'pride' and 'dignity' in a wave of articles. Even if mainly for the sake of an engaging background story, this surge of interest represented a moment of engagement with the other side's historical sensitivities.[177]

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

In addition, and more self-centredly, the perceived resurgence of the Nazi past in Greek visuals often invited a true engagement in Germany with how the Germans were seen abroad. *Der Spiegel*, for example, looked into how Nazi symbolism in Greek cartoons compared against public opinion in Greece. It cited a poll that had found that over three-quarters of respondents thought Germany was hostile to them, sixty-nine percent believed that German politicians indeed aimed to erect a 'Fourth Reich', and one in three associated terms such as 'Hitler', 'Nazism' or 'Third Reich' with Germany. Before the crisis, by contrast,

the Germans had still been the Greeks' 'favourite people'.[178] In 2015, a *Spiegel* cover story from across Europe, including Greece, presented an investigation of what people thought of Germany in an effort to explore and explain why the Nazi period had become an issue again in the Euro debate and in the discussion around Germany's leading role. The cover played on external perceptions by depicting a smiling Merkel visiting the Parthenon, surrounded by Nazi grandees (Image 2.7).

A *Spiegel* article entitled 'Are we Germans ugly again?' captured particularly acutely the concern that Germany's popularity in Europe was suffering:

> How beautiful we were in 2006. The world loved us because we were able to celebrate with such exuberance. The Germans danced to the tune of the football world cup in their own country, and almost everyone shared their joy. 60 years after World War and Holocaust, the nation of perpetrators seemed to have liberated themselves from their despondence, and the world showed itself ready to take these Germans to heart. Now we appear ugly again. When Greeks or Spaniards demonstrate against the supposed dictates of the Germans in the euro policy, some posters show Nazi motifs.[179]

Whereas hosting the world cup had temporarily liberated the Germans from their terrible past and made them likeable to the world, the Merkel governments' Euro policy, and more broadly the new power position Germany found itself in, albeit reluctantly, was destroying this reinvented image of the new Germany. Germany was once again reputed to 'want to seize the rule over Europe through economic detours, through credits and emergency aid'. *Bild* here quoted the British *Daily Mail*, disclaiming this assertion as just as absurd and unspeakable as the *Mail's* conclusion 'Welcome to the Fourth Reich'.[180]

This concern chimed with the Greek frustration that the country's 'brand name that was created with the organization of the 2004 Olympic games has been irreparably damaged',[181] not least by perceptions of Greeks as lazy, corrupt or spendthrift. Generalised denigrations in the German media of "the Greek mentality" or defilements of symbols of the ancient Greek civilisation were widely picked up in the Greek media. They prompted Greek commentators to note that the Germans 'consider[ed] Greece a toxic country',[182] who 'deserve[d] what it is going through',[183] even if Greeks were not alone in this predicament,

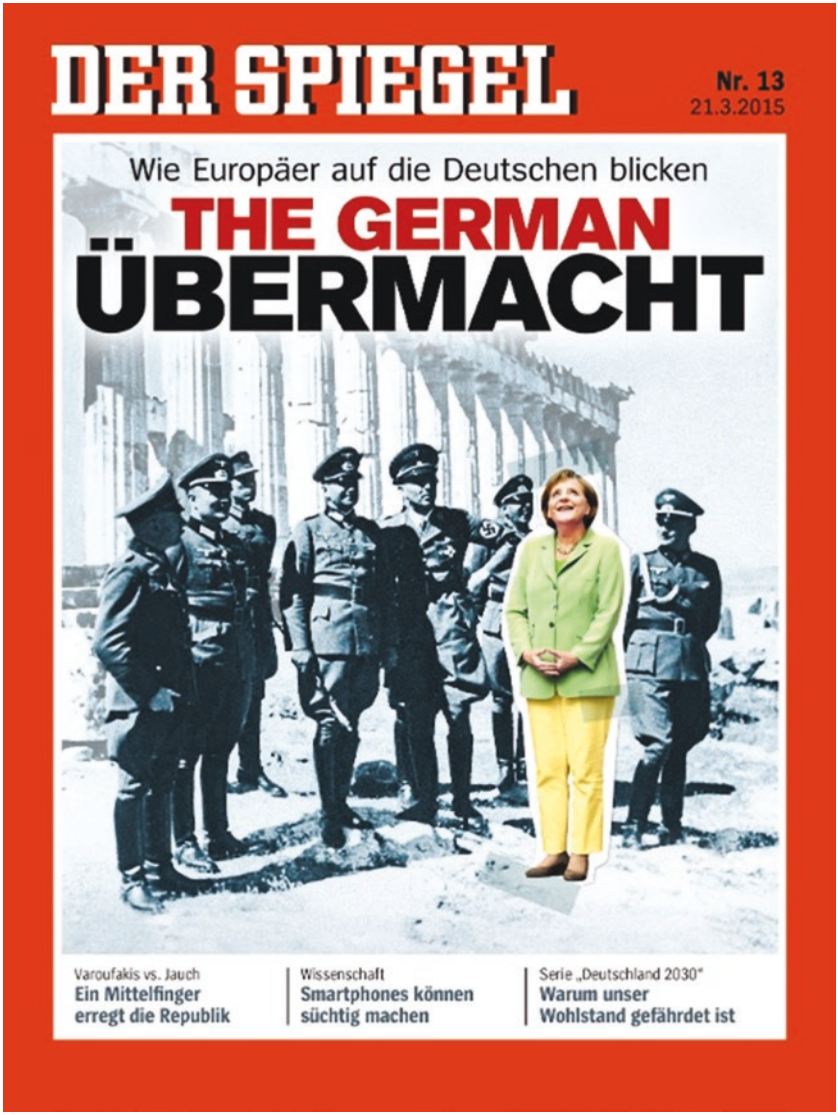

Image 2.7 *Der Spiegel* 21/03/2015 (Nr 13/2015): 'How Europeans view the Germans: The German Hegemony'

since 'for the Germans, any country south of the Alps [was] synonymous to mismanagement and corruption'.[184] Greek comedian Lakis Lazopoulos went on an anti-Memorandum tour across Europe that he dubbed 'Sorry I'm Greek',[185] trying to make light of Greeks' perceptions of themselves as the objects of foreign contempt. While *Kathimerini* made some conscious effort to publish alternative views of Greece from German newspapers such as *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, overall, in reading the Greek press one understood that 'the leitmotif of the German view of things' was that 'it is impossible that the prudent, productive Germans will go on paying for the black holes created by the irresponsible, consumerist Mediterraneans'.[186]

In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine* in May 2015, the then newly appointed Syriza Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias—himself a fluent German speaker—expressed his regret about this turn of events, very much in tune with the above *Spiegel* article:

> We are expected to tell our youth that so far nothing has been done well [in Greece], and that our Greek way of life was not worthwhile. My response to this is: the Germans used to admire us once, this great nation with its great culture. They were the ones who in fact made us important again on the basis of Greek philosophy. This was an act of love in history. We are indeed merry, optimistic, joyful. And now this attitude to life is supposed to be "unproductive"?[187]

As in Germany, the perception that Greece's reputation abroad had received a serious blow during the crisis led some Greeks to strive to improve their country's image and to make an effort to be liked and appreciated again. A characteristic example was *Kathimerini's* attempt to turn around the trope of the degenerating Greek civilisation by publishing two images of Greek works of art that were being displayed abroad under the titles 'The Charm of the Art of the Greeks' and 'The Radiance of the Byzantium is "illuminating" Bonn'.[188] Moreover, as we were finishing writing this book, a materially and symbolically important event for Greco–German relations was the co-hosting of the 2017 documenta art exhibition in Athens, for the first time outside Kassel, Germany, under the title 'Learning from Athens'. On the occasion of the exhibition, several Greek and German politicians gave speeches about the Greco–German friendship and the power of culture to unite, including

the Greek and German ministers responsible for European Affairs, who wrote in a joint article: 'The documenta exhibition encourages us to widen our horizons, builds bridges, and changes our point of view. If we can't see the world through the eyes of the Other, then we can't have empathy. Having empathy is exactly what is needed today, if we want to talk not only about numbers but also for people and their livelihoods'.[189]

Greek Historical Memory Revised

Perhaps related to the fact that Greeks were also hurt by the negative portrayals of Greece in the foreign press, Greek historical references to both the Nazi period and Greek history more broadly became the object of a lively controversy in the Greek press. A number of journalists debunked the use of Nazi imagery as a populist tactic, employed not least by politicians to divert attention from their own responsibility for Greece's economic crisis.[190] This was not helpful, they warned, in a situation where Greece simply could not afford loosing Germany as an ally. Since Greece had no acceptable alternative than to rely on a good relationship with Germany, it could not go on relying on the 'good old tactic "I am rude to you, but also give me the money"'.[191] Any gestures that threatened this relationship were reminiscent of 'the joke of the desperate husband who threatens his wife that he is going to castrate himself'.[192]

In the context of a deep-reaching critical revision of Greece's collective understanding of its national history, moreover, others called upon their countrymen not to hide between the Greco–German stand-off in historical references, but instead to acknowledge Greek responsibility in bringing about the debt crisis. A commentator in *Kathimerini* warned against using appeals to our 'three-thousand-year-old glorious ancestors' and to 'ghosts and international conspiracies' so as to duck out of admitting that 'our own strategic mistakes are the principal root of our dire economic situation in the Eurozone'. This old national identity reflex had not served the country well and would have destructive effect now: 'We spent the whole 20th century, and we continue in the 21st, thinking in terms of those mentalities and tactics. We handled the big "national issues" in this way, and with nationalist outbreaks—and moved from defeat to defeat'.[193]

Self-critical notes of caution were sounded against any smugness in claiming to have been on the right side of history in buffering claims

that Greece deserved or was "owed" special treatment on the international stage, as well as against unduly simplifying historical complexities of resistance and responsibility:

> Suddenly we have all become anti-Nazi. But [it] is one thing to remember the Nazis when they no longer exist, and another to fight them when they are in front of you. It is one thing to remember those who fought the Nazis, and another to forget that it was not the Nazis who later sent those who fought to the execution squad or to prison.[194]

This type of argument extended to other periods of Greek history as well. A commentator in *Avgi* traced one of the most important cultural causes of Greece's current demise back to the day 'when the Junta collapsed' in 1974, when many Greeks 'pretended that the dictatorship collapsed due to their own, personal bravery'. Instead of 'facing up to its compromise' during the years of the Junta, the 'Greece of silence and accommodation' did not embrace its responsibility 'for its tolerance towards the ridiculousness and the tragedy of the colonels, but instead hurried into arbitrary actions and excesses, selfishly claiming a peculiar immunity'. Although far from entirely warranted by historical facts, a discourse of victimisation prevailed in the post-1974 period, whereby 'everything is now considered a privilege and we never consider our duties and responsibilities'. 'Because always, "we then", etc.'[195] To our knowledge, no German criticism of Greeks had gone that far.

2.5 Power and Resistance

The connection established in the Greek press between German coercion and Greek resistance spoke to another theme: of power and its sources in a seemingly incontestable asymmetry between the two sides. If the language of domination and resistance was used ubiquitously in Greece, the German side struggled continuously to replace raw assertion of power with what could be construed as legitimate authority. From this angle, the credibility of each side's blackmail relied on the same threat, which was a Greek exit from the Eurozone. Hence the underlying source of relative power: for whom would Grexit be more costly, materially and symbolically.

German Despots and Their Greek Collaborators

A popular type of self-understanding among Greeks in the context of this power relationship was as the victims of Germany's position of absolute dominance in the Eurozone. In this narrative, Germany was seen not only as dictating the terms of the Memorandum, but as attempting to acquire control of every aspect of Greek political, social and economic life. For example, under the headline title 'OCHI to Merkel's Ultimatum' in the context of the second election campaign of the summer of 2012, *Avgi* accused the German government of using 'raw blackmail' towards the Greek government, 'demanding a "correction" of the vote of the Greeks'; of 'ordering' the formation of a 'pro-Memorandum government by New Democracy and Pasok'; and of demanding that a Greek referendum 'on the question of the Eurozone' be held with the second, June elections.[196]

The domination-resistance schema of German coercion and Greek victimisation and defiance was often extended to include the Troika as well as Greek "collaborators", who had a vested interest in upholding the status quo of Germany's influence in Greek life.[197] For instance, an *Avgi* cartoon depicted party leaders Evangelos Venizelos (centre-left PASOK) and Antonis Samaras (centre-right New Democracy) standing next to a three-headed dog called 'Troika' (Image 2.8). Together, they are plotting to sell Greek assets to a pawnshop called 'the Memorandum', specialised in buying 'gold, silver, teeth, medals, beaches'. The cartoon shows Venizelos, who is wearing a badge reading 'Benito', in reference to both his Christian name and Mussolini's, saying: 'If Tsipras gets any more votes, the loan shark will take his pawnshop and go to Bulgaria', to which the Troika replies: 'what horror!'

In a similar spirit, a cartoon published by *Avgi* in the run-up to the 2015 referendum showed a family watching the news on TV. The news presenter was saying: 'The preparations for the creation of a "pro-European" front in our country are reaching a peak! The River,[198] Mr. Dijsselblöm, Pasok, Mr. Schäuble, the banks, New Democracy, and *Bild* decided to run together!'[199] The cartoon's implication was that anyone identifying themselves as 'pro-European' (*philo-Evropaios*), which at the time was an allusion to politicians and simple citizens alike who supported the 'yes' campaign, belonged to the group of the German government's and the Troika's collaborators in Greece. Extreme versions of this narrative branded not only political parties but also entire social

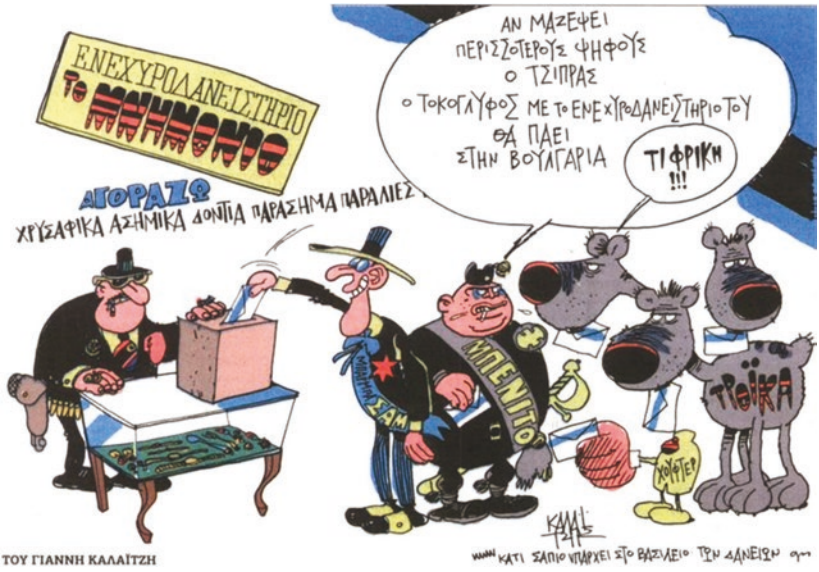

Image 2.8 *Avgi* 30/05/2012 (Yannis Kalaïtzis): Placard: 'Pawnshop The Memorandum: I buy gold, silver, teeth, medals, beaches'; Man: 'If Tsipras gets any more votes, the loan shark will take his pawnshop and go to Bulgaria'; Three-headed dog: 'What horror!'

groups in Greece as traitors. The images of these collaborators were juxtaposed to those of the representatives of the true interests of the Greek people, who would not shy away from using Greece's leverage to resist foreign domination, break away from the shackles of the Memorandums and strike a better deal with the lenders.

The Power of the Weak

Greece's greatest negotiating chip in this new confrontation would be its leverage over the fate of the Eurozone, since the latter would collapse under the weight of a Grexit. The following headline title by populist daily *Avriani,* published the day after Syriza's unexpectedly good performance in the May 2012 Greek general election, is an extreme example of this narrative: 'Sovereignty is restored to the people and to Tsipras: *Take the memorandum and go away*, is the message of the overwhelming

majority of the Greeks to the Troika. *Otherwise we will leave the Eurozone by ourselves and we will blow up the whole of Merkel's system*'.[200]

The message was heard in Germany. Greece's clout was recognised here as a "power of the weak", resulting from the palpable 'catastrophic consequences' of a Grexit and its social and political ramifications not only for Greece, but also for the rest of the Eurozone.[201] The question became whether this prospect constituted a threat or simply a prediction and cause for common action.

Unsurprisingly, Germans often did not see themselves merely as the stronger party, but rather as the righteous party enforcing the rules of the game for the common good and bearing the responsibility for that common good in their role as the effective "paymasters" of Europe. Germany too was capable of its own Ochi, digging its heels against any concessions on the conditions attached to the memorandum. As summed up by the Sociologist Ulrich Beck, this was 'the crucial power lever: Merkel ties the German willingness to supply loans to the willingness of the debtor countries to meet the conditions of the German stability policy'.[202] Yet, even the most dogged insistences on such conditionality took on a slightly desperate tone, as if to acknowledge in the end the effective power of the weak: 'Our "iron chancellor" is promising that German aid will not flow unless the Greeks finally start making tough economies. But who is to still believe the Greeks that they will?'[203]

Germany and Europe's destiny was at the mercy of Greeks, whose politicians had proved utterly unable and unwilling to stand by their word. In this Greco-European or Greco–German power struggle of the weak against the strong, Syriza's anti-austerity promises and rejection of the bailout conditions already in the run-up to 'Greece's destiny election' of May 2012 (and even more so when it entered government in January 2015) were a game-changer. Threats of reneging on the subsequent memorandum agreements were read in part as attempted 'blackmail', this time on the part of the Greeks. The success in May 2012 of 'parties that rejected the "Dictate of the Troika"'[204] tilted the balance of power noticeably in favour of the supposedly weak, who speculated that the rest of the Eurozone would not let it come to a Grexit for fear of its consequences.

Against this, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, for example, insisted that a breach by Greece of the bailout conditions would leave the other Eurozone governments 'no option but to stop the help to Greece in its current form' for otherwise 'the message would be clear: the Eurozone can be blackmailed. Why should other states save money, when they see

that someone smart at the end of his thirties in Athens can bend the whole Eurozone to its knees?'[205] There were calls in the German press to bully Greek voters into not electing parties that did not own up to Greece's commitments (here again in May 2012). Otherwise, 'Greece will exit the Eurozone […]; the Eurozone will not let itself be blackmailed by the fear of possible punishment from the financial world'.[206]

At this point, Greece and Germany seemed to have achieved a sorry relationship: a stand-off between threats and blackmail. Nevertheless, even though these were the stories most prominently picked up by the other country's newspapers, in reality there was far more complexity in both sides' discourses on power relationships.

Greece, for its part, did a lot of soul-searching regarding the limits of its influence, and many commentators were not so sanguine about the country's international position. Soon after Syriza's rise to power, a *Kathimerini* cartoonist humorously captured this scepticism by adapting what is known in game theory as the 'game of chicken' to fit what he perceived to be the context of the Greco-German power relationship. The cartoon showed two vehicles quickly approaching each other from opposite directions: a tiny old-fashioned car with Finance Minister Varoufakis on the wheel and Prime Minister Tsipras on the back seat, and an enormous truck with Chancellor Merkel driving at full speed. As a frontal collision seems to be imminent, Tsipras asks Varoufakis: 'And what will we do if she doesn't turn, Yiannis?' to which Varoufakis replies, 'We'll pass from underneath' (Image 2.9).

In fact, many journalists in the Greek newspapers reported systematically and with great concern the reactions of German policymakers to Greek intentions of moving away from some of the Memorandum commitments: 'Keep your commitments', said Merkel;[207] 'Greece must keep its commitments', warned German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel;[208] 'Return to realism', advised President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz.[209] What some commentators viewed as 'raw blackmail', others viewed as 'clear messages';[210] what some believed to be Greece's 'leverage', others viewed as a 'dangerous illusion';[211] what some journalists presented as 'scaremongering' was for others simply 'the reality', 'the facts';[212] ultimately, what some journalists viewed as an all-too-ready caving into Chancellor Merkel's wishes was for others a desperate plea to their fellow countrymen not to take risks that would result in the ruin of everyone's livelihoods, a plea that was grounded in a genuine belief that Grexit would hit the Greeks first and foremost.

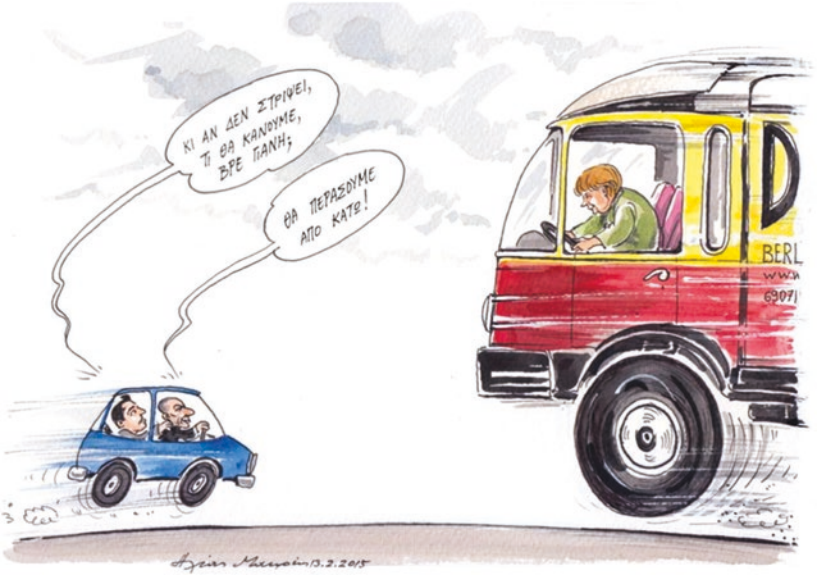

Image 2.9 *Kathimerini* 15/02/2015 (Ilias Makris): Tsipras: 'And what will we do if she doesn't turn, Yiannis?'; Varoufakis: 'We'll pass from underneath!'

The Reluctant Hegemon

On the other hand, the steadfast determination with which the German debate insisted on the strict conditionality of German (and European) bailout loans represented on some level a new note of resoluteness and confidence in Germany being in a position to set the tone.

This had to do with a deeper shift in German national self-understandings as to the country's new power and leading role in Europe. Germany's transformation since reunification from 'semi-sovereign' over 'tamed power'[213] to 'normalized power'[214] was now translating into policy stance, starting with Greece. The Euro crisis had ushered in a new chapter in this transformation with the country emerging as Europe's 'reluctant hegemon'[215] or 'accidental empire',[216] according to the academic narratives widely debated in the press debate.

The new chapter in the discursive history of German representations of German power involved, first of all, the acceptance that, after 'sixty years of taking a back seat, enclosed by the benedictory community with

the West' and doing 'splendidly' by making itself 'smaller than it was', the country was now finally standing big again. Commentators almost universally portrayed Germany's new political power as the natural result of Germany's economic pre-eminence: 'No tanks rolled, just the German Euro'.[217] The crisis of the Eurozone had created a situation—appreciated by 'the other member-states'—where 'without Germany' there was no way out, the Euro could not be rescued. 'Everything may now ultimately depend on Germany in saving the Euro because it seems to be the only country strong enough economically to bear the burden for the others'.[218] This analysis was often linked with claims that Germany had no choice but to lead in shaping Eurozone and the EU's immediate crisis response as well as more medium-term reform.[219] In fact, according to the emerging public narrative, Germany had long held a role of economic predominance but had avoided 'forming the economics of its country into a claim to power'.[220] Only the gravity of the Euro crisis was now forcing Germany openly to embrace this political power role:

> Political power is like millions of Euros on one's account; one does not talk about them. One just has them. Germany has been doing pretty well on this in Europe for decades—being important without loosing too many words about it. Every Germany government was great at making itself small politically if needed. But this is over now. German influence is audible now.[221]

Owing up to German hegemony, however, was usually accompanied with reassurances that this role had come about almost involuntarily: 'It was not our choice, but Europe's destiny today depends on Germany'.[222] *Die Zeit* prominently took up and systematically explored William Paterson's concept of the 'Reluctant Hegemon',[223] emphasising that Germany had 'not wanted, and even less conquered' this role.[224] *Bild* protested with great indignation ('PARDON ME?' in capital letters) against a 'serious lapse' by the *Daily Mail*, which had 'alleged' that, 'through economic detours, through credits and aid, the Germans want[ed] to pinch command over Europe', and likened the situation to a 'Fourth Reich'. Apparently, Greek sensitivity to historical echoes had become uncomfortably contagious. *Bild's* fury was directed at the allegation that they had willingly set out to achieve European dominance as well as the historical comparison.[225]

Indeed, German public and political discourse expressed ample reservation about Germany's new power role and the taxing expectations that came with it.[226] *Die Zeit* editor and former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, for instance, warned that Germany should 'beware' of assuming the leading role that many assigned it in the European crisis response (advocating instead reviving the Franco-German tandem, who 'alone can lead in Europe to this day', and including Poland as well); 'if the EU does not work, the Germans will be blamed for it'.[227]

Descriptions of Germany as bound to lead in shaping Eurozone reforms, as well as in picking up the bill, were often focused almost allegorically on Angela Merkel as the personified incarnation of the nation:

> She is the woman watched by Europe, no other politician on the continent excites so much hope, but also so much hatred as she does. When she flies to Greece, protesters in Nazi uniforms march the streets of Athens, but one word from her can cause a euro country to be saved from bankruptcy. It is her who holds the fortunes of the continent in her hands at the moment. If the euro is going to be rescued, it will have been above all her achievement. Should it break apart, she will conversely be declared guilty. No other chancellor was as powerful on the continent as Merkel.[228]

To be sure, Merkel's personal influence could be attributed not only to Germany's strong economic position, but also to her personal aptitude. *Die Zeit* quoted Romano Prodi: 'the Lady takes the decisions, and the French President then gives a press conference to explain the decisions'.[229] It is not least in this light that Greek concerns about insufficiently balanced and even effectively unchecked German domination should be seen, as should Greek impulses to assert resistance to it.

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

Perhaps in an effort to attenuate any such (understandable) mistrust, mainstream German discourses on German power emphasised how 'with great power comes great responsibility', to quote Spiderman's uncle.[230] There was much talk in our German corpus of 'our responsibility' for ensuring the preservation of the Euro.[231] It was the Germans' assuming this very responsibility that made all the difference in 'The Miraculous Transformation of the Once Feared Germans' into a 'Good Hegemon'.[232] Radoslaw Sikorski's appeal to the Germans to

take responsibility for a viable Eurozone found great resonance in the German debate. The Polish foreign minister assured them that Poland would not misinterpret Germany's living up to the role of the hegemon, giving up its historic ballast: 'I fear Germany's power less than its inactivity'.[233] His famous dictum bolstered the storyline that Germany was duty-bound to overcome its own reluctance to assume power in Europe. But critical voices did also caution against the use of the language of responsibility and of a 'responsibility ethics' which connects duty to act with accountability for the consequences of one's actions; for, if the Chancellor were to fail, 'she alone [would] have to assume responsibility'.[234]

Germany's new political power seemed to play out the main precepts of 'hegemonic stability theory' and especially its ideas of 'benign hegemony' according to which the hegemon's authority is underpinned by material resources and the provision of public goods such as a stable currency or access to its own markets—in other words, disproportionate burden sharing.[235] Yet, such goods come at a price, namely general acquiescence with the hegemon's normative dominance, as a German newspaper article explains: 'It is, if you will, part of the construction principle of a currency union that there is a strong one, who has to be willing to shoulder more than others, to keep the union together—and who in exchange determines its direction'.[236] This (voluntary) contract is what buys the hegemon its legitimacy.[237] The beauty of this logic for a German public eager for moral cover was the plausibility of the common storyline according to which other Eurozone members, like Sikorski, were actively 'requesting' measures and a lead from Berlin.[238]

The hallmark of stable hegemonic arrangements is that the interests of both the hegemon and their partners are served, albeit sometimes sacrificing short-term for long-term interests. The partners reap material benefits while the hegemon creates and sustains a system that serves its own interests as well as those of the whole. Indeed, a recurrent theme in the German press was that, as the country benefiting most from the Euro—a point we will discuss in Chapter 3—it remained in Germany's interest to keep the currency intact:

> Of course Berlin needs the Euro and Europe for selfish reasons. Two thirds of exports of the vice world champion go to the Eurozone. With the EU, this classic growth machine would crash, too; the renationalization of the currencies would unleash a devaluation race to the bottom of the weaker

> economies, which would force a new Deutschmark skyward. The political disaster would be even more horrific. The Germans would once again be where they must never be again: too strong to be left alone, too weak to bully the rest of Europe.[239]

In another version of the economic interest argument, Green MEP Franziska Brantner argued that saving the Euro, even at the cost of partial debt reliefs, was not about 'altruism' but about preserving the Germans' own wealth; even a 'Swabian housewife' (the typecast of thriftiness) knows 'that is its better to pay part of someone else's debt than to completely lose one's own assets by not doing so'.[240] The interest of the 'good' German hegemon extended as far as paying 'the bulk of the bill'—its 'terrible problem' being that 'its interest in preserving the "public good" named "Europe" is the greatest' and that it has 'the greatest wealth' and thus the ability to pick up the bill.[241] In fact, the acknowledgement of this German interest was underlying much of *Bild's* rants against the (assumed) costs incurred by Germany in connection with the crisis. But interest alone never seemed to settle the argument. When German journalists requested of the Greeks that they refrain from hurting the feelings of Germans with Nazi references, this was from a position of wounded power—we are owed at least that![242] Perhaps, the most common plea in our sample more broadly, beyond *Bild* and reflected not least in the *Bundestag's* debates around the votes on the European Rescue Mechanism, was that in return for German cash injections 'the others' had to play by 'our rules'.[243] Taking the paymaster meant accepting the rule setter.

Nevertheless, for many Germans, with responsibility also came magnanimity: Germany had to recognise not only the Greeks' interests and needs, but also their dignity and pride. The discourse along these lines was that the hegemon had a responsibility to wield its power gently: 'The Germans of all people are not allowed to bang their fists on the table but rarely and gently. They have to "take the others along" while they work on building the institutions that can ensure fiscal virtue'.[244]

With a view to recognising the sensitivities of those subject to their power, they had to exercise it with sympathy and respect. This implied also that agency and responsibility also belonged to the Greek side. For instance, a *Zeit* article advocating a Greek referendum on the austerity package as early as 2011 argued that 'heteronomy [Fremdbestimmung] hurts more than the austerity measures':

> The Greeks are suffering under the European austerity stipulations and rebel against them. Yet, no one knows how much of their resistance is due to a sense of powerlessness and incapacitation, to the humiliation by a Brussels punishment and aid machinery chattering away in unreachable distance. This offending heteronomy might be counteracted by the direct question "Do you want this". Being able to, but also having to, decide, to assume responsibility: this can discipline and free up force. It offers a chance to overcome victimhood and to reclaim the upper hand over their destiny at least in political-symbolic manner. Greece could regain its dignity and self-respect. [245]

The dark sides of the Troika's power over Greece and the other current debt sinners—in other words the irresponsible wielding of power—did not go unnoticed in the German press. *Der Spiegel* criticised delays in clearing imminent aid payments and the postponement of the decision as having 'just one purpose: to demonstrate to the givers that the takers are in their hands'. The same article quoted Juncker that the Greeks had 'delivered all right' on their austerity obligations.[246] Representations of the kind of raw power at play pointed to the psychological temptations of the givers' power: 'Contrary to official assurances, the governments of the Eurozone are threatening Greece with the sack from the Eurozone'.[247] Power, it seemed, could be enjoyed for its own sake too.

In sum, our story of how Greeks and Germans perceived their struggles of power and resistance over the course of the European sovereign debt crisis, as this whole chapter's story of how the Greek and German players represented each other and themselves in debating this crisis, has been a tale of denying the other side recognition in their complexities and multiplicity, a tale of hurtful stereotypes and unfair exaggerations and generalisations. Yet, it also did harbour some promise in the form of discourses that opened up this "black box" of the other side, acknowledging the many shades that defined this other side. Moreover, we found plenty of discourses that pointed to commonalities and common points of view between Greeks and Germans, be it as Europeans or as human beings, in all their differences. Ironically, this could occur even in the worst instances of offensive and generalising typecasts, as we argued that these could be in effect projection screens of one's own fears, demons and insecurities. We found a final possible seed for recovering the mutual recognition among the Europeans in their complex and multiple identities, needs and interests expressed in discourses around solidarity. These

gained significant strength in both Greece and Germany not least in response to the acute asymmetries of suffering under the Euro crisis and in engagement with how the European power balance had shifted over its course. New fault lines of class and economic ideology have come to counterbalance and at times overpower those of nationality at least in some discourses.

Notes

1. Section 1.1 and Bartelson 2013: 108; drawing on Ricœur, P. (2005). The Course of Recognition. London, Harvard University Press); for an account of identity formation as involving both integration and separation, see Brewer, M. B. (1999). 'The psychology of prejudice: ingroup love or outgroup hate?' Journal of Social Issues 55(3): 1999; on identity formation as being integrative rather than exclusionary, as resting on the emulation and the incorporation of characteristics rather than contradistinction to any real or imagined others, see Lebow, R. N. (2012). The Politics and Ethics of Identity: In Search of Ourselves. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
2. See images in *Spiegel* 46/2012, 42/2012, and 24/2012 or *FAZ* 10/05/12.
3. *Spiegel* 26/2012, citing the Greek Finance Minister.
4. Headline *FAZ* 21/03/2013, see also *Bild's* on 06/02/2014: 'Fewer Taxes, Higher Pensions, and More Assets: Greeks Richer than Us! Official: household assets twice as high as in Germany'; but see Jones, E. (2010). 'Merkel's Folly'. Survival 52(3), for a critique of such statistics.
5. For example, *Bild* 08/02/2012 'An average German works for 38.8 years … a Hungarian only 29.3 years'.
6. *Bild* 01/04/2010, see, e.g. 06/02/2014.
7. See Tzogopoulos, G. (2013). The Greek Crisis in the Media: Stereotyping in the International Press. UK, Ashgate, p. 90.
8. Kathimerini 21/02/2010, p. 8 (Xenia Kounalaki).
9. *Spiegel* 15/04/2013. See similarly, Bild 06/02/2014: 'Fewer Taxes, Higher Pensions, and More Assets: Greeks Richer than Us!'.
10. *Zeit* 10/02/2011 (Paul J.J. Welfens).
11. Bild 27/04/2010 'Who is to Still Believe the Greeks?'.
12. *Zeit* 17/12/2009 (Michael Thumann).
13. *Spiegel online* 29/06/2007 *'Werbeslogans: Geiz war geil'*.
14. *Bild* 15/04/2010.
15. *Avgi* 23/02/10, p. 2 (George Bramos).

16. *Kathimerini* 15/02/10, cover page, comment (Nikos Konstantaras).
17. *Avgi* 21/02/10 (Syriza economist Yannis Dragasakis).
18. *Avgi* 24/12/09, p. 5.
19. *Real News* 02/05/10, cover page.
20. For example, *Bild* 20/08/2012 Interview with newly elected Prime Minister Antonis Samaras.
21. For example, *Zeit* 26/05/2011 and 01/12/2011; or *Spiegel* 13/2012 'Crumbling Civilization', 31/2012, 35/2012 'The 2300 Euro Baby'.
22. *Zeit* 01/12/11 (Petros Markaris).
23. *Bild* 11/11/11; quoted also in Tzogopoulos 2013: 116–117.
24. See *Spiegel* 42/2012 'Greece: "Rotten To The Core"'.
25. *Avgi* 24/12/09, p. 5.
26. *Avgi* 20/12/09, p. 6 (Dimitris Hristou).
27. 21/09/2010, as quoted on http://pangalos.gr/portal/%CE%BC%CE%B1%CE%B6%CE%AF-%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%86%CE%AC%CE%B3%CE%B1%CE%BC%CE%B5/ [accessed 23/12/2016].
28. For example, *Kathimerini* 28/03/10, cover page, 'Greek lead in Cayennes'.
29. *Kathimerini* 15/09/13, 'Big Things are the Result of Small Things' (Stefanos Kassimatis).
30. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, 'A night at the bouzoukia with Greece' (Stefanos Kassimatis).
31. *Real News* 28/02/10, cover page headline '*Cut wastefulness and permanency!*'.
32. *Avgi* 23/02/10 (George Bramos).
33. On the 'rhetoric of blame-shifting populism' of Greek political elites between 2009 and 2011, see Vassilopoulou, S., D. Halikiopoulou and T. Exadaktylos (2014). 'Greece in Crisis: Austerity, Populism and the Politics of Blame'. Journal of Common Market Studies 52(2): 388–402, p. 392.
34. *Avgi* 21/03/10, cover page.
35. *Avgi* 06/01/10, cover page.
36. *Kathimerini* 12/05/12, cover page, comment (Nikos Xidakis).
37. *Bild* 21/12/2009, *reported* in *Avgi* 22/12/09, p. 5. It is noteworthy that *Avgi* made a mistake in the translation of Schäuble's statement, reporting that the Finance Minister claimed that Greece will not be able to get round 'saving itself and helping itself' rather than 'making savings and helping itself'. This reinforced the perception that the German government was denying solidarity to the Greeks.
38. *Avgi* 22/12/09, cover page.
39. *Avgi* 09/10/12, cover page.
40. *Avgi* 10/01/10, p. 16 (Eliza Papadaki).
41. *Kathimerini* 21/02/10, p. 18, 'The German Problem'.

42. *Kathimerini* 21/03/10, p. 19, 'Berlin's responsibility for the crisis'.
43. *Avgi* 21/02/10 (Yannis Dragasakis).
44. *Spiegel* 16/2012.
45. *Spiegel* 16/2012.
46. See further, e.g. *Spiegel* 28/2012, *Zeit* 16/05/2012 'The first sacrifice'.
47. *Focus* 19/05/2010.
48. *Spiegel* 44/2012.
49. *Zeit* 17/12/2009 (Michael Thumann).
50. See above and e.g. *Zeit* 26/05/2011, 01/12/2011 and 01/01/2012; *Spiegel* 13/2012 'Crumbling Civilization', 31/2012, 35/2012.
51. For example, *Spiegel online* 26/11/2011 'Fraud of Millions: Greece Presumably Has 21,000 Phantom Pensioners'.
52. *Spiegel* 05/2012.
53. *Bild* 20/06/2012 'Greek Party Leader Advises Merkel: Let My Country Go to Hell'.
54. For example, *Spiegel* 43/2012 'Greece: Jobs for Good Friends', *Zeit* 16/05/2012, citing an OECD report, or *Bild* 27/04/2010 'Coterie, Corruption, Family Ties: How the Greek System Works'.
55. *Bild* 26/04/2010 (Paul Ronzheimer).
56. *Spiegel* 40/2012.
57. FAZ 10/05/2012, see Bild 19/05/2012.
58. Schäuble's statement was reported, without further comment, in *Kathimerini* 13/06/12, cover page.
59. For example, *Zeit* 17/12/2009 (Michael Thumann).
60. *Zeit* 16/05/2012 'The first sacrifice', see similarly *Bild* 27/06/2012 'The Lacerated Bust-Country'.
61. *Bild* 26/04/2010, see also, e.g. 27/04/2010, 16/05/2012.
62. For example, again *Zeit* 17/12/2009 (Michael Thumann).
63. *Zeit* 20/12/2013.
64. *Spiegel* 35/2012 'Opportunists and Illusion Artists'.
65. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 20/2012 'Spiegel Conversation: "Our Future is Called Europe"' (interview with Poland's foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski)
66. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 25/05/2017 'SPD Attacks Schäuble in Greece Debate', see also 16/06/2017 'Schäuble has used tricks in Greece agreement' (Cerstin Gammelin), arguing that he refused the IMF's demands in anticipation of the imminent federal election in September muting any domestic resistance.
67. *Spiegel* 20/2012, Sikorski interview.
68. *Spiegel online* 21/06/2012 'Euro Crisis: "Germany is the Greatest Debt Sinner of the 20th Century"'.
69. For example, *Kathimerini* 23/02/10, p. 11 (Evridiki Bersi).
70. *Kathimerini* 28/03/10, cover page, 'Record bribes for the submarines'.

71. *Eleftherotipia* 08/01/10, quoted in *Avgi* 09/01/10, p. 22.
72. *Spiegel* 8/2012, citing Bavaria's Minister President Horst Seehofer; see also Tzogopoulos 2013, p. 81.
73. *Bild* 02/05/2010, interview with Merkel; see also 27/04/2010 'Who is to Still Believe the Greeks?'; or *Spiegel* 02/2012 on Greece having 'cheated', or 15/2015, using MEP Chatzimarkakis's fraudulent PhD thesis as a starting point.
74. *Bild* 15/04/2010; see also 27/04/2010 'Who is to Still Believe the Greeks?'.
75. For example, *Bild* 27/04/2010 'Who is to Still Believe the Greeks?'.
76. *Bild* 02/05/2010, interview with Merkel.
77. Papadimitriou, D., A. Pegasiou and S. Zartaloudis (2017). 'European Elites and the Narrative of the Greek Crisis: a Discursive Institutionalist Analysis'. Paper presented at the EUSA Fifteenth Biennial Conference on 4–6 May 2017, in Miami, Florida; see, e.g. again Bild's Merkel interview 02/05/2010, and 26/04/2010 on the TV debate of the front runners in the North-Rhine-Westphalian election; Spiegel online 21/06/2012 'Greatest Debt Sinner'.
78. Merkel, speech to *Bundestag,* 17/06/2015, https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2015/07/2015-07-20-merkel-bt-griechenland.html [accessed 13/07/2017]; see Boergerding, L. (2016). An End to 'Merkelism'? German Decision-Making in the Eurozone Crisis as 'Stigma Management'. Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford. MPhil International Relations.
79. *Spiegel online* 21/06/2012 'Greatest Debt Sinner'.
80. *Spiegel* 34/2012, interview with Volker Kauder, leader of the CDU/CSU group in the Bundestag.
81. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 21/2012 'Ultimatum to Greece' or again Merkel's 17/06/2015 speech. See, however, Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann's defence of Greece that the Greeks *were* doing their part, only the markets were not responding; interview 'Like a Drug', *Spiegel* 35/2012.
82. For example, *Spiegel* 24/2012 'The Blood of the Earth'.
83. *Spiegel* 07/2012 and 42/2012, respectively.
84. *Spiegel* 42/2012 'Greece: "Rotten To The Core"', *Bild* 08/04/2012, *Spiegel* 40/2012.
85. *Avgi* 25/10/09.
86. *Avgi* 24/12/09, p. 5.
87. *Real News* 02/05/10.
88. *Kathimerini* 20/12/09, p. 20 (Nikos Konstantaras).
89. Ibid.

90. *Avgi* 16/12/09 'A Meeting Off Topic'.
91. *Kathimerini* 13/12/09, p. 24 (Alexis Papahelas).
92. *Kathimerini* 02/05/10, p. 20 (Alexis Papahelas).
93. *Avgi* 18/04/10 (George Bramos).
94. *Kathimerini* 13/12/09, p. 24 (Alexis Papahelas).
95. *Kathimerini* 19/02/10, cover page, main article.
96. For example, *Bild* 26/04/2010, 27/04/2010, 16/05/2012.
97. *Kathimerini* 20/10/09, quoting Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker.
98. *Kathimerini* 12/05/12, quoting Commission President José Manuel Barroso.
99. *Kathimerini* 13/05/12, comment (Alexis Papahelas).
100. *Kathimerini* 20/05/12, comment (Alexis Papahelas); and 23/05/12, main article.
101. For example, *Avgi* 22/12/09, p. 5, referring to *Bild* 21/12/2009; or similarly *Avgi* 13/12/09, p. 17, and 24/02/10, p. 12.
102. *Avgi*, 11/12/09, cover page, 'Electric shock… with dialogue'.
103. *Avgi* 15/11/09, cover page, 'Shock-therapy by the government'.
104. *Avgi*, 23/02/10, cover page, 'The measures that are coming slaughter people'.
105. *Avgi* 09/05/10, cover page, headline title.
106. *Kathimerini* 12/05/12, cover page, comment (Nikos Xidakis).
107. *Avgi* 11/05/12, cover page, 'Merkel-Schäuble insist on austerity'.
108. *Avgi* 09/05/10, p. 3, Verba Manent.
109. *Zeit* 2013/01 'Euro Crisis' (former chancellor and Zeit editor Helmut Schmidt), see also *Zeit* 06/06/2012; for a study that explains the German government's Euro crisis response as 'motivated by a concern for the moral hazard generated by other member states', see Newman, S. (2015). The Reluctant Leader: Germany's Euro Experience and the Long Shadow of Reunification. *The Future of the Euro*. M. Matthijs and M. Blyth. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
110. For example, *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 04/09/2012; see further, e.g. Merkel's *Bundestag* speech on 17/06/2015.
111. *Zeit* 27/12/12 'The Obligation to Solidarity'; see further, e.g. 11/08/2012.
112. *Spiegel* 31/2012, see similarly *Zeit* 06/06/2012.
113. *Avgi* 23/05/2012, cover page, 'Attack against Merkel from the leaders of the German Left, G. Gysi and Kl. Ernst'.
114. *Avgi* 28/02/10, p. 11.
115. See, e.g. *Kathimerini's* headline title on 06/10/12: 'Visit of Support from Merkel'.
116. *Kathimerini* 10/10/12, cover page.

117. For example, *Bild* 18/05/2010, 27/10/2010 (the infamous 'Why don't you sell your islands, bankrupcty Greeks'), 16/05/2012, etc. A search on 04/10/2013 on www.bild.de for 'Pleite-Griechen' resulted in 183 hits, on 10/06/2017, in 829.
118. *Spiegel* 48/2012 'Europe's Black Plague'.
119. *Bild* 08/04/2010 'Euro crisis: Are Greeks on Brink of a Bank Collapse? Stock Markets Across Europe in Downward Suction +++ Euro Nose-Diving'.
120. For example, *Spiegel* 26/2012, Bild 27/04/2010 'The Greeks: Cuts? Why? They'd rather go on strike!'.
121. *Spiegel* 06/2014 'In the Delirium of the Billions', see also 08/10/2012 'Mind the Inflation! The Creeping Dispossession of the Germans'.
122. *Bild* 08/04/2010 'Are Greeks on Brink of a Bank Collapse?'.
123. *Spiegel* 48/2012 'Europe's Black Plague'.
124. Shklar, J. N. (1989). The Liberalism of Fear. Liberalism and the Moral Life. N. L. Rosenblum. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press: 21–38.
125. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 20/2012, 40/2012:98, the dramatized hanging scene in *Spiegel* 37/2012; or *Bild's* videos and picture galleries 'After Vote [in parliament on austerity plans]: Chaos in Greece' (30/06/2011, http://www.bild.de/politik/fotos/griechenland-krise/fg-18606070.bild.html) showing images of 'total escalation' in violent clashes between rioting protesters and police 'acting with monstrous brutality', or similarly 'Greece in a state of emergency' (29/06/2011, http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/griechenland-krise/griechenland-so-blutig-war-der-schicksalstag-in-athen-18590816.bild.html) and 'Nazi Comparisons and Bloody Street Battles' (30/06/2011, http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/griechenland-krise/griechenland-das-denken-die-griechen-ueber-die-deutschen-koennen-wir-dort-urlaub-machen-18607720.bild.html) [all accessed 06/07/2017].
126. *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 16/06/2012.
127. *Bild* 05/02/2012, 27/06/2012 'The Lacerated Bust-Country'.
128. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 21/2012. In 2014, *Die Zeit* in particular expressed a wave of regret for the nonappearance of a European revolution (see, e.g. 17/04/2014 or Zeit 13/08/2014).
129. All *Spiegel* 40/2012.
130. See, e.g. *Bild's* coverage on 09/10/2012 on Merkel's visit to Athens, reporting not only on the demonstrations and riots, but also the harsh police action and popular resistance.
131. *Spiegel* 20/2012 and 21/2012 'Sick Conditions'.
132. For example, *Spiegel* 20/2012 and 21/2012.
133. *Focus* 22/02/2010.

134. For example, *Spiegel* 21/2012 'Ultimatum to Greece', *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 25/09/2011, FAZ 10/05/12.
135. *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 25/09/2011 (citing Wolfgang Schäuble); even *Focus* 22/02/2010 (the Venus story) made this concession.
136. *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 25/09/2011.
137. On philhellenism as the 'private passion' and 'institutionally generated and preserved cultural phenomenon' of the German educated elite's obsession with the ancient Greeks, dating back to the mid-eighteenth century and not declining until the 1930s, persisting in cultural reflexes to this day, see Marchand, S. L. (1996). Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.
138. *Spiegel* 13/2012, see also, e.g. 24/2012 'The Blood of the Earth'.
139. *Spiegel* 20/2012.
140. *Focus* 22/02/2010, see, e.g. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, 'Populism, the Guilty and the Truth' (Paschos Mandravelis).
141. A Greek court case against *Focus*'s slander of Greek national symbols resulted in the acquittal of the *Focus* editor in chief and a dismissal of the case against the article's authors (see, e.g. *Spiegel online* 03/04/2012 'Bird Affair: Greek court lets "Focus" people off the hook').
142. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, 'Populism, the Guilty and the Truth' (Paschos Mandravelis).
143. See, e.g. *SZ* 01/03/2010 'Greece/Germany: The Hour of Blitz Clichés' (Kai Strittmatter).
144. See, e.g. SZ 01/03/2010 'Blitz Clichés.'
145. SZ 01/03/2010 'Blitz Clichés'.
146. *Avgi* 27/02/10, p. 32, 'Germany and the finger' (Thanasis Karteros).
147. *Bild* 24/02/2010 'Athens Press—Greeks Outraged by "Focus" Cover', see likewise *Die Zeit* 26/02/2010 'Consumers call to boycott of German products'.
148. *Avgi* 22/12/09, p. 5, referring to the original interview in *Bild* 21/12/2009.
149. *Kathimerini* 22/12/10, cover page, 'The Commission is deeply concerned about Greece'.
150. *Avgi* 06/01/10, pp. 8–9.
151. *Avgi* 24/12/09, back page, 'M. Glezos on Schäuble's statements'.
152. *BBC News* 25/02/10 'Greece angers Germany in Gold Row', http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8536862.stm [accessed 11/07/2016].
153. *Kathimerini* 24/02/12, p. 4, 'Anti-German "hysteria" from part of the political world'.
154. *Avgi* 06/01/10, pp. 8–9 (Ganis Solomon).
155. *Kathimerini* 24/02/10, cover page, comment (Alexis Papahelas).

156. *Kathimerini* 02/05/10, p. 20 (Alexis Papahelas).
157. *Avgi* 27/02/10, cover page (Maria Karamesini).
158. *Avgi* 06/01/10, p. 8, 'Schäuble Adds Insult to Injury', see *Spiegel* 13/2015 (21/03/2015) cover showing Merkel among Nazis visiting the Parthenon, and the cover story 'How Europeans view the Germans: the German Hegemony'.
159. *Avgi* 27/02/10, p. 30.
160. *Proto Thema* 04/12/11, cover page.
161. *To Vima* 07/07/14.
162. *Avgi* 13/07/15, cover page, main article, 'Three times a sinner?'.
163. For example, *Bild* 20/06/2011, 30/06/2011, 08/02/2012, 21/07/2012, 10/10/2012, 24/02/2010; *Spiegel* 09/2012. *Bild* 13/02/2015 'Radical Greeks agitate against Schäuble, for example, reported on *Avgi's* Schäuble cartoon reproduced as Image 2.5, and the minister's spokesman calling it 'repugnant': 'its author should be ashamed'.
164. For example, *Bild* 201/06/2011 'Nazi Posters, Abuse' or 30/06/2011 'Nazi Comparisons and Bloody Street Battles'.
165. For example, *Bild* 10/10/2012 'Chancellor in Greece—Germany Does Not Deserve This! Revolting Protests Against Merkel in Athens! And We Are Paying Even More'. *Bild* invited readers to vote, under the heading of 'Ungrateful Greeks', on whether it was 'right, regardless, that Merkel went to Greece'. Sixty percent voted No, forty Yes, with the vote closing on 30/10/2012.
166. *Spiegel* 09/2012 'Prejudices: Nazi Always Works', see also *Bild* 08/02/2012 in 'Anti-German Agitation in Athens Worsening'.
167. *Bild* 21/07/2012 'Greece—Federal Eagle Desecrated with Swastika!' See further 22/07/2011 'Greek apologises for Swastika Attack'.
168. For example, *Bild* 10/10/2012 'Chancellor in Greece—Germany Does Not Deserve This!' or 22/06/2011 'With Swastika!'.
169. Here, Munich's Lord Mayor and SPD lead candidate for the Bavarian land election in 2013, in a speech at a Lower Bavarian Oktoberfest-type fair in Gillamoos at which the crème of German politics spoke, including the Chancellor, with all the inflammatory rhetoric that may be expected for such an event (*Stuttgarter Zeitung* 04/09/2012).
170. For example, *Zeit* 26/02/2010 'Consumers call to boycott of German products'.
171. *Zeit* 14/06/2012 'Three months to go for Europe'.
172. For example, Bild 10/10/2012 'Revolting Protests Against Merkel in Athens! And We Are Paying Even More', or 22/06/2011 'With Swastika! Greeks Scorn Europe … and Get New Billions Anyway!'.

173. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 24/2012; and Kalantzis, K. (2012). "Crete as Warriorhood: Visual Explorations of Social Imaginaries in 'Crisis'" Anthropology Today 28(3): 7–11.
174. *Avgi* 06/01/10, pp. 8–9 (Ganis Solomon).
175. *Avgi* 19/05/2012.
176. *Handelsblatt* 03/11/2011 'Ochi! Why the Greeks Like Saying "No" so much"; *SZ* 01/03/2010 'Blitz Clichés'; *Tagesspiegel* 25/12/2012 'Parade without Tanks'.
177. *taz* 05/07/2015 'The History of "No" in Greece: Ochi is More than Just a Word", see, e.g. *Die Welt* 29/06/2016 'The Greek Cult of Saying No'; FAZ 11/07/2015 'Greek Debt Crisis: Ochi, As If!'; Spiegel 28/2015 (04/07/2015) 'Greece—Operation "Ochi"'; *SZ* 28/10/2015 'Greece celebrates Ochi-Day. A Country Says No'.
178. *Spiegel* 09/2012 'Prejudices: Nazi Always Works'.
179. *Spiegel* 50/2012 'Are we Germans ugly again?'.
180. *Bild* 18/08/2011 'Euro Rescue—British Author Insults Merkel with Hitler Comparison'.
181. *Kathimerini* 14/02/2010, cover page.
182. *Kathimerini* 14/02/10, cover page.
183. *Kathimerini* 21/02/10, cover page.
184. *Kathimerini* 21/02/10, p. 8, 'Goodbye Karl Marx and Lenin'.
185. *Proto Thema* 23/10/11, cover page.
186. *Kathimerini* 21/02/10, p. 18, 'The German Problem'.
187. *FAZ* 29/05/15, 'Lacking Visions and Real Values', interview with Nikos Kotzias (Hansgeorg Hermann).
188. *Kathimerini* 14/03/10.
189. *Kathimerini* online 07/04/17, 'Lessons for the EU from documenta 14' (George Katrougalos, Michael Roth).
190. *Kathimerini* 24/02/10, p. 2 (Stefanos Kassimatis); see further, e.g. *Avgi* 27/02/10, 'Rage against the Bundesbank'.
191. *Kathimerini* 24/02/10, cover page, comment (Alexis Papahelas).
192. *Kathimerini* 21/03/10, p.2 (Stefanos Kassimatis).
193. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, p. 20 (Antonis Karkayannis).
194. *Ta Nea* 26/02/10, reprinted in *Avgi* 27/02/10, p. 30. The statement makes a reference to the Greek Civil War.
195. *Avgi* 18/04/10, 'Post-1974 distortions' (George Bramos).
196. *Avgi* 19/05/2012; on the same incident, see also Ntampoudi, I. (2014). 'The Eurozone crisis and the politics of blaming: the cases of Germany and Greece'. Political Perspectives 8(2): 1–20. p. 10.
197. Vassilopoulou et al. describe a tendency of Syriza and the Greek Communist Party to accuse the mainstream parties of collaborating with external enemies (2014: 397).

198. 'The River' (Potami) is a centre-left political party in Greece, which strongly supported the 'yes' campaign in the summer 2015 referendum.
199. *Avgi* 03/05/15, cover page.
200. *Avriani* 07/05/2012, cover page.
201. *Spiegel* 26/2012.
202. *Faz.net* 24/05/2013.
203. *Bild* 27/04/2010 'Who is to Still Believe the Greeks?'.
204. *FAZ* 25/05/2012.
205. *FAZ* 18/05/2012 'Greece's Destiny Election'.
206. *FAZ* 25/05/2012.
207. *Kathimerini* 09/06/12, cover page.
208. *Kathimerini* 29/01/15, cover page.
209. *Kathimerini* 30/01/15, cover page.
210. See *Kathimerini* 27/01/15 'Clear messages in a mild tone by the Eurozone' and compare it with other titles evoking a language of black-mails, ultimatums and colonization.
211. *Kathimerini* 12/02/15, cover page, 'Dangerous illusions' (Kostas Iordanidis): 'It is a dangerous illusion that Syriza can torpedo the Valhalla of the European establishment'.
212. *Kathimerini* 05/02/2015, cover page, main article, 'Facts and illusions'.
213. Katzenstein, P. J. (1997). Tamed Power: Germany in Europe. Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press.
214. Bulmer, S. J. and W. E. Paterson (2010). 'Germany and the European Union: from "Tamed Power" to Normalized Power?' International Affairs 86(5): 1051–1073.
215. Paterson, W. E. (2011). 'The Reluctant Hegemon? Germany Moves Centre Stage in the European Union'. Journal of Common Market Studies 49(s1); Bulmer, S. and W. E. Paterson (2013). 'Germany as the EU's reluctant hegemon? Of economic strength and political constraints'. Journal of European Public Policy 20(10): 1387–1405.
216. Beck, U. (2013). German Europe. Cambridge, Polity Press.
217. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"' (Josef Joffe); see also 11/08/2012 'Because We Aren't Honest' (MEP Franziska Brantner), but see Bulmer/Paterson 2013 on Germany's pre-eminence being largely confined to the economic sphere.
218. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Euro-Crisis: All Power to the Germans? Reluctant Hegemon'.
219. For example, *Spiegel* 20/2012 Sikorski interview.
220. *Zeit* 11/08/2012 'Because We Aren't Honest'.
221. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
222. *Zeit* 11/08/2012 'Because We Aren't Honest'.
223. See Paterson 2011, Bulmer/Paterson 2013.

224. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'; see *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
225. *Bild* 18/08/2011 'Euro Rescue—British Author Insults Merkel With Hitler Comparisons'.
226. *Zeit online* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'; for an academic account of domestic political contestations of, and constraints on, Germany's role of hegemon, see Bulmer/Paterson 2013.
227. *Zeit* 27/12/2012.
228. *Spiegel* 50/2012 'Government: No Wonder'.
229. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
230. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'.
231. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
232. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'.
233. See, e.g. *Spiegel* 20/2012 'Sikorski interview.
234. *Zeit* 10/11/2011, see also 27/12/2012.
235. Bulmer/Paterson 2013:1389; see also Keohane, R. O. (1984). After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press: 32, 39–41; and Lentner, H. H. (2005). 'Hegemony and Autonomy'. Political Studies 53(4): 736. But see Matthijs, M. and M. Blyth (2011). 'Why Only Germany Can Fix the Euro: Reading Kindleberger in Berlin'. Foreign Affairs (17 November), on Germany not actually having provided public goods. For explicit discussions, see Zeit 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"' and 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
236. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon', see *Zeit* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'.
237. Bulmer/Paterson 2013: 1389–1390; Clark, I. (2011). Hegemony in International Society. Oxford; New York, Oxford University Press: 32.
238. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
239. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'.
240. *Zeit* 11/08/2012 'Because We Aren't Honest'.
241. *Zeit online* 09/01/2012 'The "Good Hegemon"'.
242. *Bild* 21/07/2011 'Federal Eagle Defiled With Swastika', see also, e.g. 10/10/2012 'Chancellor in Greece—Germany Does Not Deserve This!' or 22/06/2011 'With Swastika! Greeks Scorn Europe … and Get New Billions Anyway!'.
243. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
244. *Zeit* 27/10/2011 'Reluctant Hegemon'.
245. *Zeit* 03/11/2011 'Oops, the people! Papandreou's plebiscite' (Jan Ross).
246. *Spiegel* 48/2012.
247. *Spiegel* 21/2012 'Euro: Ultimatum to Greece'.

CHAPTER 3

The Name of the Game: Shaping Europe Through Self and Other

Abstract Chapter 3 moves on from the book's two central characters to the overall game in which their fraught relationship is embedded. How has the Greco-German saga affected the rest of the EU story? More specifically, how have the mutual ascriptions of Greeks and Germans affected their representations of the EU, and how has their perception of the EU game evolved as a result? The chapter discusses, in particular, the narratives of the EU's promise of prosperity, turned into a threat thereof during the crisis; the 're-nationalisation' of politics in Europe; and the fate of 'the EU as an agent of progress'.

Keywords Prosperity · Zero-sum game · Re-nationalisation of European politics · Competent government · Governance Modernisation

If Greeks and Germans have been involved in a game of identity cat-and-mouse, redefining themselves by looking at the Other, this story has not unfolded in a vacuum. Although the affair predates the EU and is not reducible to it, the EU created the drama in the first place. Greeks and Germans may have been talking—or shouting as the case may be—at one another, but their evolving relationship also was about redefining the game they were playing together. There is little doubt that the crisis and especially its Greek dimension triggered a moment of soul-searching regarding the normative cornerstones of our European construct. This happened both indirectly and explicitly, by way of the very concrete

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questions of what was owed to others in the EU context. Where does it leave Europe if its constituent peoples see each other as hearts of steel or lazy swindlers?

In this chapter, we show that the affair led to the challenging of traditional EU narratives about purpose and legitimacy.[1] We analyse, in turn, how three narratives about the EU fared during the crisis: Is the EU still a promise of prosperity? What about overcoming national divisions? And can we still associate the EU with competent governance?

3.1 A Union of Prosperity?

As with any union, the European Union is predicated on the shared belief that we have more in common than what divides us and that the union will advance our prosperity and material well-being. So what happens to this premise when people start addressing each other as squanderers, misers or blackmailers across borders? Can they still believe that cooperation can lead to a mutually beneficial outcome?

From Promise to Threat

The fortunes of the EU have ebbed and flowed since its creation. But there is little doubt that the Euro crisis truly shattered the myth underpinning European integration, namely that the EU is about promoting prosperity across its member-states. The aspiration behind integration, in the words of the Treaty of Rome's preamble, was nothing less than 'the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples'. To be sure, the credibility of this promise had been dented before, for example with the economic crises of the 1970s, with the resistance to the introduction of economic and monetary union and the Maastricht treaty in the 1990s, or when the constitutional treaty's ratification failed as many, not least in the French referendum debate in 2005, questioned the EU's recipes for economic well-being.[2] The Euro crisis, however, added new urgency to concerns that the EU, and the common currency, might not only fail to make the Europeans more prosperous, but might actually be turning into a *threat* to people's individual and collective wealth. For *Der Spiegel* for example, the crisis was jeopardising the model of life to which the Europeans had gotten used.[3] The Euro had 'paradoxically contributed to increasing prosperity' *as*

well as creating the very conditions for Europe's 'decline into poverty or even destruction'.[4]

The EU has been transformed under our bewildered eyes, from promise of prosperity to threat to prosperity: a leitmotiv across the Greek newspapers, and many of the German articles which we surveyed. "The Greece of the crisis" was descending into a state of national depression as it became apparent that it would take years to overcome the crisis. To this day, the long-awaited turning point towards recovery is still wanting. The habitual headlines of the period continue to set the tone: 'Rich Getting Richer and Poor getting Poorer in the Greece of the Crisis'[5]; 'Do I Stay or Do I Leave the Greece of the Crisis?'[6]; 'Suicides Up by 35% in the Greece of the crisis'[7]; '25,000 Children Born to Uninsured Parents Every Year In the Greece of the Crisis'.[8]

In a nutshell, the crisis had starkly exposed and magnified the asymmetries of power that had been mitigated until then. Not surprisingly given their role as custodians and enforcers of the strict conditionality attached to Greece's loans, the Commission, the ECB and the IMF as well as German and other EU member-state leaders came to be associated with (a million miles from any promise of prosperity) austerity, recession, social despair, as well as the imposition of a 'breakdown of post war social acquisitions'[9]—often portrayed as 'a medicine worse than the illness' it was meant to cure.[10] When the negotiations for a possible EU loan with IMF involvement were intensifying in April 2010, *Avgi* proclaimed that 'the triple supervision of the country by the IMF, the EU and the ECB' would mean 'The End of the Welfare State', illustrating this menace with the image of a meat grinder attached to a gun.[11]

The negative appraisal of the role of the European institutions in perpetuating, or even sparking, the Greek crisis was sometimes followed by the idea that entering the Eurozone had been a mistake in the first place, and that the Eurozone structurally disfavours Greece. 'The problem', in the words of Alexis Tsipras, had 'the name "Eurozone"'.[12] As the Euro crisis intensified, the argument was increasingly made that the common currency was designed to favour Germany and the rich Northern European member-states at the expense of the Southern periphery including Greece. EMU had deprived its member-states of monetary policy as an instrument for steering unemployment, consumption, growth, liquidity and inflation in exchange for a 'one-size-fits-all approach' to a currency area between countries with very diverse needs

and interests. The difficulty for Greece and the Southern European countries was that they 'followed a monetary policy tailored to the needs of another country'—'euros being printed in Frankfurt rather than Cholargos'.[13] In addition, Germany, through Maastricht and EMU, had 'solidified its supremacy in terms of labour productivity', while taking away from its weaker partners their 'traditional weapons' for promoting competitiveness, namely the issuing and devaluation of the currency.[14] In that sense, the argument went, any balanced account of the economic costs and benefits of EU membership should consider not only the size of the transfers that Greece received from Germany through the structural funds or the rescue packages, but also the value of Greek net imports from Germany, which 'in 29 years of coexistence means about 175 billion of Greek money to Germany'.[15] No matter that these high-end consumer goods were the mark of consumption nirvana for many Greeks.

Economic arguments were often combined with political ones, especially when stressing the way the more powerful countries always won the argument. And the left-wing end of the journalistic spectrum in particular was unsurprisingly fond of class-based political arguments, defining the euro as 'an instrument through which the pressures of international competition are transferred into the labour market in order to ensure the discipline of the working classes and to consolidate the despotism of capital at the sites of production'.[16] Euro vs Labour: 1–nil.

The debate raged for a while in Greece as to whether the country would be better off unilaterally defaulting on its debt, leaving the Eurozone, and starting to rebuild its economy free from the Troika's prescriptions. In spite of the obvious challenges, anything seemed better to those advocating this route than the Sisyphean effort of getting out of an otherwise intractable impasse.

The idea gained much credibility when Nobel Prize-winning economists Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz intervened in the debate on the occasion of the July 2015 referendum about the Troika's proposed bailout conditions. The two Americans found a ready audience in both Greece and Germany (and elsewhere) and were widely translated, reprinted and quoted in the Greek press—'Stiglitz: Europe's attack against democracy'[17] and 'Krugman to the institutions: Be careful, Greece might leave the Euro and succeed!' According to Stiglitz and Krugman, the European economies had 'put themselves into an economic straightjacket' by joining the Eurozone and had given up effective

tools of governing their economies.[18] Stiglitz added that 'concern for popular legitimacy [was] incompatible with the politics of the Eurozone, which [had never been] a very democratic project'.[19] They advised the Greeks to reject the austerity required by Greece's creditors, even if this meant exiting the Eurozone. As Krugman put it, leaving the euro 'would be hugely disruptive in the short run', but it would 'also offer Greece itself a chance for real recovery', and not least 'serve as a salutary shock to the complacency of Europe's elites'.[20] In Stiglitz's opinion, voting for an acceptance of the creditors' conditions 'would mean depression almost without end', whereas a 'no' vote 'would at least open the possibility that Greece, with its strong democratic tradition, might grasp its destiny in its own hands. Greeks might gain the opportunity to shape a future that, though perhaps not as prosperous as the past, is far more hopeful than the unconscionable torture of the present'.[21]

In the end, however, it does not seem that the rejection of the bailout conditions by Greek voters (by over 61%) encompassed a concomitant embrace of their alternative scenario.[22] No matter how unhappy Greeks were with the Eurozone game, they wanted to continue carrying Euros in their pockets.

Bottomless Pit

As the travails of the Greco-German affair came to be replicated elsewhere in Southern Europe, the Euro and its crisis came to stand for a threat to prosperity not just in the member-states in budgetary trouble but across the Eurozone. Even the Germans expressed fears of financial and economic crash, chiming with long-standing German discourses that saw monetary stability and fiscal conservatism as keys to prosperity.[23] The country's role as the key paymaster of the rescue measures played a central role in our sources, as did fears that the height of German contributions would get out of control and that a 'chain reaction'[24] affecting the banking sector and the public purses far beyond Greece might lead to further Eurozone countries needing help, too. *Bild's* headline on the May 2010 'emergency safety net', meant to bolster international financial markets and prevent the crisis from damaging the Euro, was emblematic: '750 Billion for Bankruptcy-Neighbours: Once Again We are Europe's Fools!'[25] In polemicizing that Germany should hold a German referendum on the Euro rescue, the tabloid conducted a poll among its readers that offered two options: 'YES, keep throwing money at them' and 'No,

not a cent more for the Bankruptcy Greeks, take the euro away from them'.[26]

The theme of any help to Greece falling into a bottomless pit and setting the course for additional instalments further down the line was captured in another *Bild* headline 'Quest for New Billions for the Greeks: The Never-ending Story'.[27] It resonated with the wording common in government circles that, in the absence of thorough political and administrative reform, including, for instance, reform of the tax and land registry systems, Greece would never be able to 'live within her means' (unless of course, it 'reduced costs by lowering living standards').[28] A *Spiegel* cartoon depicted Merkel with an umbrella in a time series of images with speech or thought bubbles: initially, she remarks that 'it's just a tiny collapsible umbrella after all', and then the umbrella progressively grows to enormous dimensions until, finally both her and her umbrella are carried away by a gust.[29] Commentators doubted whether Greece would ever pay back any loans at all.[30] The general sense was that 'Everybody wants our money'.[31] This slogan appealed to both frustration and pride and was not without populist agitation potential.

The German leadership had to face the widespread reproach of making their country a sucker, by ensuring that 'we'll pay whatever happens'.[32] In this context, domestic politicians as well as commentators demanded ways of limiting Germany's expenditure. They referred in particular to the German limit of liability, which the Federal Constitutional Court had affirmed, and pleaded for entrusting the Bundesbank with the responsibility of controlling this limit.[33] These two much-trusted Federal institutions were thus to impose German checks on German contributions. This in addition of course to stringent conditionality of any payments was a *leitmotiv* we have encountered countless times.[34]

In addition to the uncertainty regarding quite how much Germany would pay to save the Euro in future, there was also much confusion as to how much it had spent already. This question was brought to a boil at different points in time as events unrolled. *Bild* kept a lurid, and at times self-contradicting count.[35] It did not help that Merkel and Schäuble were long—and with reason—accused of talking down the costs of the Euro rescue to Germany for reasons of domestic politics, including by IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, no less.[36] *Der Spiegel* referred to Merkel's 'policy to expose voters to the truth in homeopathic doses', and remarked that the Chancellor treated 'the Germans like children, whose eyes one covers when reality is all too horrifying'.[37]

It did not help either that the German leadership did not provide the German public with the other side of the balance sheet, with an evaluation of how much the euro and even its crisis had benefitted the German economy.

Fuelled not least by this lack of clarity, the German coverage conveyed in parts a real fear that disaster would strike—and that Germany would be included, for better or for worse, in the 'community of (doomsday) fate', which the EU had morphed into.[38] The popular commentators depicted themselves as Cassandras, heard but not headed, when calling *not* to help Greece on the grounds that it could not be helped; the financially sounder member-states should save themselves at least, avoiding the scenario described as 'patient dead and saviour broke'.[39]

While the image of emptying national coffers prayed on Germans' collective imagination, some also felt affected *individually* in their personal financial well-being. *Bild*, for example, drew a direct link between the Euro safety net of 750 billion and the fact that German tax cuts were failing to materialise.[40] Likewise, a *Spiegel* cover headline in October 2012 extolled the 'creeping dispossession' of the German 'average citizen'.[41] As a result of bond purchases and 'ultra low interest rates' with which the ECB 'want[ed] to help the indebted states', his 'savings are being devoured by inflation', and a 'whole generation' had to 'fear for their retirement provision'.[42] This discourse was meant to stoke a sense of victimisation with the proverbial German "saver", a stereotype that carries the double connotation of someone slightly ridiculous and petty minded, but also of admirable self-restraint, virtue and reason. Not only were such savers' valiant efforts in the process of being undone, they were also in effect bearing the cost of the Euro rescue:

> Interest rates are low because the ECB is flooding the Euro area with money to stabilize the system. Whoever saves is currently the idiot, and is being subtly expropriated […]. The taxpayers and the small depositors are thus financing the Euro-rescue—and from this, those who profit above all are the rich people in the crisis countries.[43]

United in Fear?

Against the skyrocketing costs of membership, however, stood the even greater risks of non-membership. What would happen if Greece were forced to leave the Euro? In Greece, defenders of Greece's Eurozone

membership argued that in spite of the economic hardship caused by the Euro crisis, a Grexit would simply exacerbate the situation, bringing on an economic catastrophe that would also threaten the country's social and political stability. A genuine fear of the consequences of a possible Grexit influenced many of those engaged in public dialogue in Greece throughout the Euro crisis and especially before the July 2015 referendum. The Mayor of Athens, during a rally of the 'Yes' campaign in the run-up to the referendum, appealed 'to the people who have become impoverished during these [past few] years: these people must not succumb to the temptation of "nothing"[…]. There is always something worse than a bad situation'.[44] The day before the vote, a Professor of European Politics and Economics at the University of Athens, George Pagoulatos, warned in *Kathimerini* that 'the day after the "No" the banks won't open, for days or weeks'. He fleshed out the scenario, typical of this discursive position:

> Deposits will be haircut – naturally debts will continue to be valid. Hundreds of thousands of people, households, and businesses will make huge losses. […] The phrase "business in Greece" will for many years evoke anger and derision among the destroyed entrepreneurs and investors. The 1.3 million unemployed who believe they have nothing to lose will be joined by some hundreds of thousands newly unemployed. The creative people who put their trust in this country and tried to start a business will pack their bags and leave. And the problem is not only that we will lose the best and most productive people. It is also that we will remain with the worst ones. […] This is how societies sink in vicious cycles of destruction.[45]

These fears also resonated in Germany. The vivid trauma of the 2008 financial crisis offered a powerful deterrent used repeatedly in efforts to mobilise support for successive rescue packages. Volker Kauder, chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, for example, canvassed for a new rescue package on the reminder of Lehman Brothers' downfall and its role in triggering a global economic crisis.[46] According to this German establishment discourse, '[t]he risk in simply letting Greece dip is enormous, and no one knows exactly what would happen'.[47] Again we see the spellbound peering into the abyss. ECB President Jean-Claude Trichet and IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn' warned that the alternative to the May 2010 rescue plan for Greece was nothing less than a 'nuclear meltdown', likewise drawing a parallel with the Lehman collapse.[48]

More soberly, *Die Zeit* detailed the 'unpleasant consequences' of a Greek exit specifically for Germany: 'there would be a threat of new turbulences on the financial markets, which would burden the economy. And Germany would face losses of around 80 billion euro, partly because the Greeks could no longer service the credits they already obtained'.[49] *Bild*, too, tried to quantify: 'How much money is Germany going to lose in case of Greek bankruptcy?[50]

Besides such discussions of the repercussions of a Grexit for Germany, the Eurozone and the global economy, the German political and media debate did engage with the consequences of a Greek exit for the *Greeks* as well.[51] The *Stuttgarter Zeitung* elaborated on how a return to the Drachma would imply 'a mass expropriation of the population' and quoted the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras as predicting 'never-seen poverty and unemployment' in the case of Grexit.[52] This part of the debate once again appealed to sympathy for and solidarity with the suffering of the Greeks.

Cui Bono?

At the same time, it did not go unnoticed in either country that the Euro crisis, and generally the common currency, *did* promote prosperity—at least in Germany in spite of the plight of the "expropriated saver". One favourable outcome from a German perspective was that the Germans could borrow money 'almost for free'—not just individual homeowners or consumers, but also the *Bund*, whose debts could increase year by year with interest rates still falling. True, this effect arguably amounted to a 'redistribution', comparable to a tax, from the many German savers to borrowers.[53] Notwithstanding, as Martin Schulz noted, overall 'Germany is the country that profits most from the Euro' and among those in which 'the population profits most from the EU'. Ironically, however, 'the impression is being conveyed that it constantly has to pay for the others. […] This is objectively not correct'.[54]

The benefits of the crisis to the German economy did get widely reported from the very beginning of the crisis. Even *Bild* featured periodical headlines such as 'Low Euro Exchange Rate makes it Possible: Bankruptcy Greeks Bring Us Economic Boom'.[55] *Der Spiegel* quoted the head of a technology company who noted that the weak currency and low interest rates bring about 'the same effect as an economic stimulus package' (adding that 'we do need this prosperity, for it is inevitable

after all that we are presented with the bill for the euro at the end of the day').[56] Germans, in *Der Spiegel's* words, emerged from the crisis as the great winners, with pension funds, insurance companies etc.—as well as banks making direct profits from loans—hardly knowing where to invest all their money.[57] As early as 2010, the *Stuttgarter* stated, Germany had 'already received more in interest rates for the Greek aid than its financing cost itself', and this effect would be multiplied in the future so that the 'current helpers' would 'find themselves the winners'.[58]

To balance such a lopsided diagnosis, and while it would have been inconsiderate to argue that the Greeks were in any way the beneficiaries of the crisis, commentators did remind their readers that Greece's prosperity had benefited from EU and EMU membership over the years and would continue to do so in future. Those stressing the direct redistributive aspects of the EU construct often pointed to the EU structural funds (known in Greece as the 'ESPA' funds).[59] During a rally of the Yes campaign at Kallimarmaro stadium on 3 July 2015, diverse stakeholder representatives directly benefiting from the structural funds were given the floor to explain the measures that had been made possible through EU funding. The speakers included schoolteachers, business owners, farmers, organisations for the disabled, representatives of the Roma community and others. On another occasion, a *Kathimerini* journalist stressed the numerous activities that had become part of daily life in Greece and were inextricably linked with the EU:

> How will the networks for the production of ideas, infrastructure, goods, and progress be sustained without the dozens of European financing programmes in all sectors? Without ESPA and OPs and ROPs, without Life, Interreg, Med, Urbact, Progress, without Comenius and Erasmus and Youth in Action, without Leonardo Da Vinci and Build Up Skills, without NER-300, Horizon 2020, etc.? Without restraints in the thoughtless use of funds, the uncontrolled disposal of waste, without the European experience in the protection of cultural heritage and of the landscape?[60]

Relatedly, others pointed to the economic potential that some of the structural reforms on which the Europeans insisted could unleash in years to come. These reforms, accordingly, would lead to an increase in production and productivity, which were the preconditions for the rise in demand and the redistribution of income 'that everyone in the Greek political class [was] preaching about'.[61] In this light, the conditionality

game could be seen as some sort of a solution, since after all, 'it wasn't the foreigners who imposed the wastefulness, the disorganization and the corruption that sank Greece into debt'.[62]

For the optimists then, remaining a member of the Eurozone was about playing the long game, a commitment that would indeed pay off at least in the long run, despite all the costs and conditions that came with it. National interest was still frequently invoked as a reason for remaining committed to European integration, in line with a discursive tradition as old as European integration itself.[63] In Germany, the benefits from the common currency, and even its crisis, were sufficiently apparent for both European unity and any rescue measures to continue to be portrayed as serving Germany's long-term interests (remember not least the explanation in terms of the tight-fisted Swabian housewife's reasoning that it was better to spend a little more than to loose everything one has already invested). In Greece, too, a vocal group of commentators continued to argue against EU detractors that Greece would best recover its economic dynamism as an EU member.

But overall, the European story was being couched as a zero-sum game, where gains for one member-state meant losses for another. The "Pareto efficient" idea that the EU was about a bigger "cake" for everyone, without making anyone else worse off, seemed discredited once and for all by Euro crisis. The early EC discourse that had focused on establishing that there was such a thing as a common European interest, over and above national interests, lost all credibility.[64] While this narrative was contested early on and throughout the history of integration,[65] the Euro crisis sounded the death knell for the narrative of a European common good furthered by European integration. The divergences between the Eurozone countries made monetary union look like anything but a mutually beneficial enterprise. Rather, the Eurozone emerged as ridden with unresolvable conflicts of interest, tainting in turn the EU as a whole.

3.2 Europe Re-Nationalised?

In addition to prosperity, however, the idea of a European common good furthered by European integration rested centrally on two further legitimating narratives. First, that European integration safeguarded peace in Europe and helped Europeans overcome national divisions. Second, that it offered enlightened social engineering and governance on the basis of expert rationalities and competent policy-making.[66]

In some member-states, the progress ushered by European integration even became synonymous with modernity. The EU would help overhaul obsolete national practices, structures and institutions through both the obligations which it entailed and the mutual accommodation which it encouraged. Did these promises survive? How could the EU stand for the overcoming of national selfishness through social progress and a better life for all, when thousands were using Nazi imagery to protest against imposed austerity and its implications in the streets of Southern Europe? When there were such hard-wearing discourses about Europe's decision-making elites at a loss as to what course of action to take in the face of the crisis? We shall now turn to the question of whether the crisis brought about a "renationalisation" of politics in Europe, of which there was much talk in both countries' press, before moving to the questions of how the crisis affected the portrayal of the EU as a moderniser.

Germanisation, or Nationalisation?

In the early years of integration, references to the European common good had often gone in tandem with calls to leave "national thinking" behind. These ideas had been particularly resonant in Western Germany until the early 1990s, but have continued to represent an important discursive strand in German public discourse since then.[67] The project of EU citizenship had been a deliberate attempt at rooting post-national thinking in popular mindsets and mentalities.[68] De Gaulle's counterpoint of a "Europe of the nations" in the 1960s, and significant resistance to the Maastricht and Draft Constitutional Treaties' ratification in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s had already re-tilted the discursive balance in Europe towards national interests. This discursive counter-movement had now intensified. Indeed, throughout the time period covered by our study, there was much talk of how the Euro crisis was triggering a 'growing re-nationalisation in Europe'.[69]

In Greece, this re-nationalisation was mainly understood as the result of the resurgence of other countries' (and particularly Germany's) inward-looking or nationalistic reflexes. As we discussed in Chapter 2, the Greek press often fell to the temptation to draw parallels to Germany's Nazi past, at least implicitly. Germany's renewed assertiveness was seen by several journalists as having led to the 'Germanisation of Europe', as in: 'the European Union is led to "Germanisation"'[70]; 'some don't believe in a united Europe, but in a German Europe'[71];

'German Europe is at a standstill'.[72] Even though it had several domestic propagators, the idea of the Germanisation of Europe also gained credibility through its use by non-Greek commentators eagerly translated in the Greek press, such as the sociologist Ulrich Beck's assertion in *Avgi* that his country was becoming introverted, a country that 'has stopped being the most European of Europeans', and that is 'recasting the "German problem" in the European context'.[73] Similarly, a commentator in *Kathimerini* quoted Oxford's Timothy Garton Ash, who observed that 'the policy of the European Union is undergoing fundamental change, with Germany becoming increasingly willing to absolve itself of the shackles of the past and to make its voice heard'. The commentator remarked that 'from now on, we will live in a more German Europe, with an economic policy that will be determined by the "exports or death" model of ascetic Berlin'.[74]

For some, the Germanisation of Europe had gone so far that the decision-making process in Brussels now fully reflected the preferences of the German government and, rather than serving the European common good, the European institutions had been reduced to serving the national interest of Germany (or at best also that of her close allies in the Eurogroup, for example Finland and the Netherlands). As a result, 'Berlin' and 'Brussels' were typically considered together or interchangeably as imperialist agents trying to subjugate Greece, as in the titles 'the Brussels-Frankfurt axis has become Greece's economics super-ministry'[75] and 'Barroso, Rompuy and Schäuble demand submission to the Memorandum'.[76] A cartoon published by *Kathimerini* in 2010 showed Greece's Finance Minister George Papakonstantinou preparing to meet with the 'inspectors from the European Union', taking off his jacket and starting to whip himself as the inspectors come into the room, upon which the latter exclaim, '*sehr gut!*'[77] Nikos Kotzias, at the time Professor of International and European Studies at the University of Piraeus and later Foreign Minister of the Syriza-ANEL governments, elaborated on these arguments in his book 'Greece: Debt Colony—The European Empire And German Primacy', in which he described the EU as turning into an empire, with Germany as its 'New Rome'.[78]

Greece of course may have seen others as harping back to the national interest frame, but most of its commentators almost exclusively focused on the imperative of 'protecting Greece' rather than on some European common good to which Greece ought to contribute. Even calls by left-wing newspapers to move towards a 'Europe of solidarity' were seldom

accompanied by a vision that went beyond noting the anti-memorandum support by kindred political movements and parties abroad (especially *Die Linke*).[79] While this introversion could be seen as the result of short-term hardship, the defensive discourse against Europe, which emphasises national resistance against European imperialism, has a long pedigree in Greek national debate.[80] Let's recall for instance how soon after Greece's accession to the European Economic Community in 1981, the then PASOK leader Andreas Papandreou, who was about to win a landslide victory in the upcoming national elections with 48% of the vote, described the accession treaty as a 'monument of national subjugation and betrayal of the interests of the people', through which the right-wing government 'surrendered Greece in shackles to foreign interests and monopolies'.[81] While many in Greece had hope that the long-standing self-understanding of Greeks as underdogs in the European arena had been mostly overcome through the co-ownership of EU policies, the Troika's growing influence over Greek socio-economic policy easily reawakened both the fears and the discourse which stoked them.[82]

German commentators also stressed the discursive shift towards national interests, but tended to start at home more than Greece did. The German government was often held responsible for this change of perspective. 'Merkel's policy on Europe', said Ulrich Beck, 'has isolated Germany, woken the spectre of a German Europe, created massive resistance, and has proven counterproductive'.[83] Re-nationalisation was usually seen as part of a broader phenomenon across Europe at large, not limited to Germany. Were the images of violent Greek protests adorned by Merkel-as-Nazi, seen as the proof that *Focus* was right to picture the Greeks as uncivilised? Was the EU no longer capable of mitigating the old national divisions as well as German power preponderance? It seemed that the Euro had turned Germany into a hegemon, however reluctant, without giving Germany a purpose in how to use this power against the reigniting of old national cleavages across the EU.

Another important discourse championed by left circles including in particular economic sociologist Wolfgang Streeck, called for the re-nationalisation of monetary policy and decision-making in European politics.[84] This rested on the democratic deficit of the EU, as greatly exacerbated by the crisis. Enormously consequential decisions were being taken by institutions that had to 'pay no political price' for them.[85] Accordingly, the crisis had only exposed how EMU's and the EU's institutional logic inherently favoured economic liberalisation, pushed

through by EU institutions and 'authoritarian liberal strategists such as Wolfgang Schäuble', while side lining any opposing forces such as parliaments, trade unions, critical publics or organised civil society.[86]

Community of Fate and Responsibility

There was, however, a competing storyline. Rather than reviving primordial nationalist instincts, the crisis was actually turning the EU more than ever into a 'community of fate'.[87] Accordingly, the currency union indissolubly tied the member-states to one another in their destiny, for better or for worse. Only together could the European 'community of fate' overcome a crisis which was after all imported from Wall Street, argued Merkel,[88] and in the process turn it into a 'community of responsibility', in which Greece's 'enormous efforts face enormous European solidarity'. This meant not letting Greece 'bleed to death' and slip into 'chaos and violence'—matched, the Chancellor did not fail to remind her audience, by an obligation on the part of Greece to play by the rules of the community, which was also a 'community of law'.[89] In 2017, SPD Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel captured the idea of a community of shared destiny when warning that Europe 'will not be strengthened by being amputated', ruling out any prospect of Greece leaving the Eurozone, even temporarily as Schäuble had proposed in 2015.[90]

References to the inescapable interdependence between Eurozone and even EU members often involved a concept of path dependence, whereby institutions, once in place, became irreversibly entrenched. 'You can't unscramble scrambled eggs', one German economist commented on the unacceptably excessive costs of undoing monetary union.[91] Tying European nation states into a shared institutional framework that irrevocably intertwined their welfare and disincentivised unilateralism had been one of the key functionalist motivations behind European integration.[92] Provided all played by the rules, that is. As one German politician put it: 'We have built a European house and it was a mistake to accept Greece into it'. But now that the 'roof structure' is burning 'we on the ground floor cannot suddenly say that this is none of our business'.[93] The metaphor of a fire for the Greek debt and the euro crisis was widespread, and the need to extinguish this fire appeared to be a matter of urgency, leaving no time or little room for theoretical debate on the ideal course of action.[94]

In this context, it was the inescapable interdependence between European countries in the face of global turmoil in general and the financial crisis in particular that justified hanging on together and making the Euro work. Germans after all had been deeply attached to the *Deutschmark* and their support for the Euro only been out of the absolute necessity resulting from a globalised financial and economic system. Now more than ever, Europeans' only chance of regaining agency over their fate, and over the Euro crisis, was to work together. In fact, the current situation presented an 'enormous risk' of a complete loss of control, that is, a global economic crisis if Europe failed to help Greece to stabilise.[95] The German public seemed generally to understand that the Euro and Greek debt crisis had only intensified, and laid bare, how much the European *demoi* had come to be at each other's mercy.

If European countries' interdependence was a salient topic in public discussion in the economically strongest country of the EU, it was even more so in Greece, the country that was gradually and painfully becoming increasingly aware of its own fragility. Many Greeks saw losing the support of Greece's longest-standing partners and leaving the 'big hug of Europe'[96] as tantamount to economic and geopolitical folly.[97] In April 2015, as it was becoming clear that the negotiations between the newly elected Syriza-ANEL government and Greece's lenders were reaching a

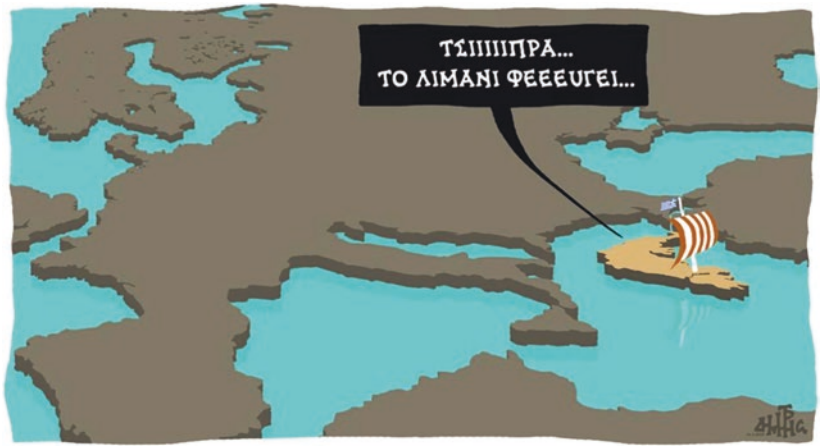

Image 3.1 *Kathimerini* 26/04/2015 (Dimitris Hantzopoulos): '*Tsipras… The port is leaving…*'

dead end, a cartoonist in *Kathimerini* uttered a cry of agony over the 'deepening rift' between Greece and the EU (see Image 3.1).[98]

Crucially, the idea that Greece's interests were inextricably tied with its continued Eurozone membership was not confined to the 2015 'Yes' campaign. After all, even Syriza members in their majority argued that the Syriza-ANEL government's negotiations with Greece's lenders ought not to endanger the country's position in the Eurozone, since Eurozone membership was a 'strategic choice' for the party.[99] According to Tsipras, 'the country's European course "can be taken for granted"'.[100] Characteristically, four days before the July 2015 referendum, *Avgi* claimed in its cover page that 'Schäuble clarified that Greece won't leave from the Euro even if No prevails'.[101] Any claims to the contrary were summarily dismissed as 'scaremongering',[102] demonstrating by default how negative the connotations associated with this scenario.

Mortal Europe, More Europe, and a Different Europe

Nevertheless, and much before Brexit, the Greco-German affair did bring to light something that had long been unspeakable and even unthinkable: European integration was no longer irreversible. Talk of Grexit, whether as desirable or anathema, became ubiquitous. We were finally 'experiencing Europe's mortality'.[103] The prospect was truly disorientating not only for both our protagonists but also for the rest of Europe. Merkel put it most starkly: 'If the Euro dies, Europe dies'.[104] But Beck echoed many other commentators in his quip that Europe felt like a 'marriage that is not yet divorced only because one is afraid of the consequences'. In these kinds of musings, were Greece and Germany stand-ins for all their peers in the European Council? Was the diagnosis about Europe, the odd couple's writ large, a couple that had become so mutually dependent as to be inseparable whether or not their initial bond was still alive? And was the use of the term 'Europe' to refer to the threat of the European Union's break up a way to evoke fears of an even greater order?

But then again there is nothing like the vivid prospect of mortality to serve as a wake-up call. Talk of Europe's mortality seemed to reawaken 'the dream of a new Europe'.[105] The 'new' here most often amounted to calling for "more Europe" as the answer to the EU's existential crisis—a theme used early on by Wolfgang Schäuble.[106] But of course what 'more

Europe' entailed varied. Some voices centred on "political union" or fiscal, budgetary and financial coordination. *Der Spiegel* among others commended the 'courageous plan' of the heads of the European institutions (Barroso, Juncker, Van Rompuy and Draghi) to complete what Merkel had called the 'dame without abdomen', i.e. EMU, with political union. The magazine found that 'everyone agreed that the currency union had to be turned into a political union'—only 'what this meant concretely was controversial between Berlin and Paris, Helsinki or Rome'.[107] One widely reported version was the 'programmatic call upon the social democrats' by Jürgen Habermas, philosopher Julian Nida-Rümelin, and economist Peter Bofinger. In their opinion, what needed to be done was 'obvious' (and of course diametrically opposed to those advocating a renationalisation of powers):

> Only a clear deepening of integration would enable us to keep a common currency alive without making a never-ending chain of aid measures, which would, in the long run, overstrain the solidarity of the European state peoples on both sides, giver and taker countries. A sovereignty transfer to European institutions is inevitable to this end, in order to effectively enforce fiscal discipline and to guarantee a stable financial system. In addition, the financial, economic, and social policies of the member-states need to be coordinated more strongly with a view to balancing structural imbalances in the common currency area. […][108]

The 'institutional safeguarding of a common fiscal, economic, and social policy' that they called for was a matter of absolute and self-evident necessity, the only viable alternative to a return to national currencies in the whole of the EU which 'would expose every individual country to the incalculable fluctuations of highly speculative currency markets'. Germany, they concluded, should take a lead in mustering the hitherto lacking political will, and the European Parliament and the European Council should be strengthened as the EU's democratic institutions so as to legitimate the inevitable redistributive effects.

In contrast, others flatly rejected "more Europe" as unrealistic or even undesirable: 'Stop dreaming!' was the headline of a *Bild* commentary that suggested that the 'European Union has got to master its crises as it is—in the framework it has'. Any more far reaching efforts at institutional reform, it cautioned, would fail against the resistance of

European citizens. One Bild commentator flatly dismissed Habermas' et al. programmatic call as an example of 'howling at the moon'.[109] Unsurprisingly in the light of this divergence of opinions, 'more Europe' (or 'federalism') has been shown to have been 'both taboo and pervasive' in the Chancellor's speeches around European summits between 2010 and 2013.[110]

Others demanded, rather than just "more Europe", a different *kind* of Europe, often focusing on an alternative economic approach. Martin Schulz and Ulrich Beck, for example, both argued that the EU ought to provide an 'alternative to what Angela Merkel contends is without alternative, that is, the austerity policy' (Schulz). Not only was this necessary, but it would be possible thanks to a Merkel-Hollande alliance (Beck).[111] As we discussed under the rubric of 'revolutionary nostalgia', some Germans were truly fascinated by Greek resistance to the austerity measures and the possibility it opened up for alternatives to current Eurozone policies and more radically to the global financialised capitalist system in its present form. Pressures to give up on Merkel's 'austerity dictate', not only from Hollande, but also from ECB President Draghi, and the Southern European governments and electorates, were widely reported, and their proposed alternatives explored.[112]

As a result, as with any affair which goes sour, it became harder and harder for other member-states not to take sides, leading to an awareness in both countries that the EU was being split by the ongoing saga, not only materially but also in the public imaginary. The cleavage between rich and poor was not necessarily congruent with the cleavage between creditor and debtor countries, which in turn was not quite the same as countries with their finances in order and those without, a fact which took a long time to percolate in Greek reporting. As a result, there were countries and publics who resented an EU that became a channel for redistributing funds to Greece when they were actually poorer than Greece (eastern Europeans and Baltics states), while there were those who saw the EU forcing redistribution across countries upon them as if they were punished for their success. Either way, 'redistributive EU' was coming up against the hard constraint of domestic politics, in an increasingly re-nationalised EU. Post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism *à la EU* were all well and good, but when it came to budgets, unemployment and similar 'significant numbers', one could no longer afford to dream the dream of a Europe united beyond national divisions. At least a neoliberal Europe left redistributive choices up to the markets!

European Domestic Politics

One of the paradoxes of the Greco-German affair is that even while it led to the kind of raw assertion of national interests which the European integration had meant to tame, it also visibly increased the curiosity exhibited by national newspapers about political debates and developments in other European countries.

As early as May 2010, for instance, Greek journalists paid unprecedented attention to the German regional elections of North Rhine-Westphalia, both to understand the ways in which these elections had been influenced by the recently signed first loan package for Greece, and, admittedly more selfishly, because they knew that the electoral results would influence the federal government's future stance towards Greece. Accordingly 'Greece, Germany, and the whole of Europe have paid dearly for this pre-election campaign', as Chancellor Merkel 'desperately' resorted to 'the populism of coffee-shops – "not a cent for the good-for-nothing Greeks"'.[113] Other articles explained that turning the EU into a transfer union was highly unlikely on the part of German politicians who 'would not be able to explain to German voters' why the tax reductions that the Christian Democrats had promised before coming into power were not materialising, 'while aid is being given to Greece'.[114]

Regardless of its tone, Greek reporting was opening the black box of German domestic politics with increasing frequency. As *Kathimerini* explained, Greeks 'observe carefully the multitude of foreign publications and statements that concern Greece', as 'the fortune of the country is not only on Greek hands, but also on foreign hands'. At the same time, Greek politicians must understand 'that their behaviour cannot exclusively target the internal audience'.[115] After all, agreements about loans to Greece had to be ratified by other national parliaments, and for this reason, it was important for the Greek governments to know not only their own red lines, but 'also the red lines of the others'.[116] In short, the public at large was invited to a broader kind of strategic negotiation analysis of the situation than it had ever been used to.

On the German side, Angela Merkel actively promoted the label of 'European domestic politics'—using it 'more and more often' to refer to 'an entirely new level of cooperation in Europe', or for 'European

politics gradually morphing into domestic politics'. In one of the numerous articles expanding on the idea, *Zeit* presented it as a *counterpoise* to the much-discussed 'renationalisation' of politics in Europe.[117] To be sure, the two sides—re-nationalisation of European politics and the Europeanisation of the domestic—spoke to a common sense that European politics was being re-grounded in national political spheres, both through the channels of electoral democracy or alternatively in the methods and targets of political activism and the like.

This new way of doing politics in Europe was said to manifest itself in various ways. National ministers and heads of government met their EU counterparts more frequently than their fellow national cabinet members; new policy areas were moving 'centre-stage in Europe that used to be distinctly national domains: pension age, labour law, wage policy, budgetary questions'; and crucially, national elections were now means by which countries were 'negotiating European issues', and had immediate implications for the lives of people in other member-states.[118]

A distinct quality of European politics as domestic politics was that the people, and the interconnected *demoi*, had to look for ways to make their voices heard over and above elections. This had become necessary as Merkel, in particular, 'determines large parts of European policy, but only has to be justify herself to her German voters. The others can only abuse her, not vote her out of office'.[119] As a result, strikes and demonstrations seemed to be the only ways to oppose externally imposed policies in Southern member-states. Some German commentators even raised the possibility of a 'European civil war'.[120]

The phrase 'European domestic politics' was also an attempt at putting "politics" and thus contestation back into an EU dominated by a German-designed technocratic logic. If the EU's supposedly rational decision-making had long been seen as removed from democratic will-formation, it was now de-politicised no more![121] To be sure, the opposing reading was powerful, whereby the crisis was turning the EU into an 'authoritarian, expertocratic Super-Europe', further away than ever from the politicisation and democratic scrutiny of public policy.[122] The EU still lacked a 'forum for deliberating a European common good disputatiously and with consequences', bemoaned the Germans, while national forums had yet to learn to articulate their concerns in ways relevant to other Europeans.[123]

3.3 Embodiment of Progress, Competent Governance and Modernisation?

At the end of the day, perhaps the greatest selling point for the EU across Europe has traditionally been its promise of progress. In this section, we hone in on three variants of this narrative of progress and ask how they have fared in both countries and beyond. More specifically, we focus on notions of the EU as an agent of competent governance, a source of empowerment against market imperatives, and a harbinger of the modernisation of national institutions.

Saviours Without a Plan

The crisis generated profound challenges to the old conception of the EU as a locus of competent governance by technically skilful and politically astute leaders, who cooperate in European platforms in order to restore a degree of political agency over global markets that would have been impossible at the national level. Indeed, the Eurozone crisis exposed the limits of the competence, commitment and agency of policymakers, experts and politicians alike. While the EU had long laid claim to incorporating Europeans' chance of regaining political agency over economics and the imperatives of globalisation, the contrary seemed much closer to the truth, a concern much closer to people's hearts.

Habermas et al.'s assertion that the necessary measures to save the Euro and Europe were self-evident was a recurrent narrative in the German debate and coverage, implying that the failings which had led to the crisis could have been and could still be avoided, if only political leaders were up to it.

If we start at the beginning of this storyline, the German media did not stop at debtor countries, and the blame game we explored extensively in the previous chapter. Wasn't the EU, too, responsible for letting the problem spill over from such a small country as Greece?[124] For many, the root of the problem was inherent in the institutional form of the currency union. References abounded to the significant 'construction mistakes' that had 'to a large extent produced the problems of the Euro', a currency not backed up by common fiscal and economic policies, or 'political' and 'fiscal union'.[125]

To some, the flawed structure of the Euro was cause enough for giving up on the project altogether. This formed the argumentative

foundation for all types of demands discussed in the previous section: to abandon the common currency entirely, to limit its remit to the member-states who fulfilled the criteria for an optimal currency area, or to simply force the countries in deepest budgetary trouble to exit. For others, however,

> if the currency is the problem, then it is also the solution. In that case, it is not national and cultural idiosyncrasies that endanger the currency community, but specific construction mistakes, which can be repaired. In that case, an efficient debt break [*Schuldenbremse*] would be more important than the federal [or unitary] state [*Einheitsstaat*].[126]

Yet others pointed the finger back home, and more specifically to the German chancellor's handling of the debt crisis. Much was made of Merkel's 'indecision', from 2010 onwards, with which she 'led Greece to the abyss'.[127] Always with an eye to domestic electoral politics, Merkel and her government were unhelpfully and cynically dragging their feet.[128] In this way, they had made the Euro rescue much more expensive than if had they gotten their act together immediately. A 'quick and courageous relief operation at the start of the banking crisis would have been the lesser evil', but the chancellor 'did not even try to explain [this] inland' because 'she knows that aid for Greece is unpopular with the Germans'.[129]

Very similar arguments were made in Greece, with commentators accusing the German and European elites of incompetence, indecision, short-termism, an inability to discern the full implications of their decisions. In short, a lack of vision all around. A journalist in *Kathimerini* criticised European leaders for 'sustaining the climate of uncertainty and the attacks of the markets with their critical statements' and argued that the European leaders 'resort to a herd behaviour of scolding Greece in order to hide the Eurozone's inability to act that results from its internal contradictions'[130]; 'it is high time for the politicians of both [Greece and Germany] to become serious', the journalist concluded.[131] Going a step further, an *Avgi* title story argued that 'behind all the mayhem' of the negotiations between the Greek government and the lenders in the first half of 2015 lay 'the disagreements among the lenders themselves. The IMF, the Commission, the ECB, and the pawns of Schäuble all had different priorities'. The author further exclaimed, 'it's not possible that much-needed reforms are constantly blocked by the petty interests of

German pressure groups or by the administrative rigidity of the IMF', adding sarcastically that among other consequences, these disagreements 'confuse the domestic pro-Memorandum bloc, which has difficulties understanding the line to take'.[132]

While some Greek commentators saw German ulterior interests behind the EU's apparent inability to come up with a sustainable solution to the crisis, German journalists offered a number of explanations for the German and European politicians' indecision. As we have seen above, one explanation had to do with the likely electoral costs of a quick and decisive German intervention. But beyond that, experts and politicians were portrayed as simply being at a loss as to what to do, often disagreeing among themselves, and their problem-solving capacity was questioned with unprecedented vehemence. The general feeling was that of an intractable challenge. This was captured, for example, in *Der Spiegel's* headline 'Saviour Without Plan',[133] or in *Die Zeit* asking: 'How can we get out of this? The Germans are grappling over the future of the euro. And no one admits how little they know'.[134] In addition, commentators quickly picked up on clashing interests between Germany and its EU partners. *Der Spiegel* drew an image of 'All Against One', of heads of government everywhere pressurising Merkel to 'save the Euro', but of the rescue plans being 'half-baked and risky'.[135] It even ran an in-depth article on the implications of the 'chronic crisis' on the 'psyche of the politicians'.[136] The crisis had exposed the soul of Europe's body politics.

In Germany, the phrase 'muddling through' achieved emblematic status, even if it meant all things to all people; in essence, while countries like Greece could be put under 'programme conditionality' within the existing treaty framework, there was bound to be a makeshift or ad hoc quality to EU action, forever delaying addressing the root of the problem.[137] And while German commentators tended to see their country as the main muddle-through culprit—against the stereotypical self-image of thoroughness—this was also presented as a newly acquired virtue. After all, Germany was given a lead role in this new-found art. Finance minister Schäuble defined muddling through as taking one small step at a time, as opposed to attempting a sweeping blow against the debt crisis, which would be impossible to achieve given diverging member-state preferences and domestic political resistance. Europe, he insisted, had always progressed by the principle of incomplete integration, 'and takes the next step in the knowledge that we do not yet have the perfect

solution'. The great steps towards strong institutional structures for the currency union, which he himself would favour,

> …we will not achieve. And hence one has to manage with different instruments, with smaller steps. […] But the main thing is, he says, that the direction is right; "when we cannot accomplish the best solution, we choose the second best".[138]

To be sure, Merkel's own attempts to frame the sluggish crisis intervention as deliberate strategy—on the grounds that a sustainable change in financial misgovernment was the only promising crisis approach—were generally not granted much credibility in spite of her continued personal popularity. 'A good European is not necessarily he who helps quickly', she declared as early as March 2010 in the Bundestag. Rather, a good European was he who had his sights on the stability of the Eurozone.[139]

Markets as the Lords of Politics

With all said and done, many commentators turned to the ultimate culprits: the banking sector and the financial markets. *Bild's* narratives involved Merkel and 'the politicians' heroically resisting the May 2010 rescue package, but in the end 'even Angela Merkel laying down arms'. 'Why?', it asked, 'what browbeats them so? [Merkel] knows: politics has been blackmailed by banks and financial markets. Once again'.[140] Indeed, nearly any government strategy could be defended in view of the alternative, the uncontrollable response to be expected on the part of the financial markets. Former chancellor Helmut Schmidt weighed in, accusing investment banks and rating agencies of having 'become the lords of world politics',[141] blamed for 'lining their pockets',[142] in the face of people's suffering and for actively making things worse, undermining every attempt at alleviating the crisis.[143] The financial culprits were 'pouring oil into the fire' while 'we are struggling to extinguish the fires' (Austrian Chancellor)[144] or betting on national insolvencies, forcing politicians into a 'dramatic race against speculators'.[145] These narratives fully resonated in Greece, with two commentators in *Avgi* asking rhetorically, with reference to the rating agencies, whether 'unreliable evaluators should be entitled to evaluate' the economies of entire countries without following transparent rules or being democratically accountable. 'This situation cannot continue', the commentators argued. 'The smallest and weakest

countries and their peoples are the easiest victims and fall prey to [the rating agencies'] actions'.[146]

With the rapidly spreading discourse on "the power of the markets",[147] Greeks and Germans could at least find themselves somewhat on the same side, the common enemies balancing the asymmetry of power between them. So did other cleavages become attenuated between small and large, weak and strong, northern and southern member-states who ultimately, were all subject to the whims of the markets and whose political classes shared in their sense of powerlessness. For Helmut Schmidt and others, this did not have to be the case. A vacuum of statesmanship in the rest of Europe—of the kind needed to create a banking watchdog and effective financial markets—explained 'why the investment bankers and the rating agencies who are paid by them could turn into the masters of world politics'.[148] The commentators in *Avgi* could not have agreed more: rating agencies should be subject to a transparent European regulatory framework, which would be set up and overseen by EU institutions.[149] Short of that, the 'absence of a European policy to face the crisis [...] encourages the markets to continue speculating against the diverging national economies of the common currency', consolidating rather than challenging the dominance of the markets over European affairs.[150] In other words, many on both sides shared the view that the real power struggle was not Germany vs Greece but states vs markets—and that markets would have been much harsher to Greece than its fellow member-states.

This discourse was part of a much wider critique of capitalism in the context of the global financial crisis which fed in particular the advocacy for a financial transactions tax. Paradoxically perhaps in the age of 'neoliberal EU', this chimed with an old discourse supporting the EU's claim to legitimacy: that European integration helped Europeans to (re)gain political agency over the imperatives of the markets.[151] Interestingly, one German variant of this discourse tended to eschew different economic-ideological approaches altogether, coupling instead demands for alternatives to austerity with the call for 'more integration'.[152] The variant calling for a re-nationalisation of monetary policy and more, to be sure, framed integration, quite on the contrary, as in essence 'constraining the political capacity to act, to the advantage of economic freedom',[153] and the Euro as eliminating an important possibility for intervening politically into the market.[154]

Europe as Moderniser

Nevertheless, many Greek commentators continued to believe in European institutions and their capacity not only to provide a bulwark against global financial markets, but more importantly to also contribute to Greece's ability to compete internationally on a par with advanced countries. Even in the midst of the devastating crisis, these commentators tenaciously refused to analyse Greece's EMU membership in simple cost-benefit terms, as being a core member of the European family continued to be inextricably tied with certain ideas of progress in far deeper ways than short- or medium-term economic indicators. For them, a Grexit would not only imply a trade-off between short-term economic dislocation and potential long-term gains, but it would brand Greece as a 'country that doesn't have the structures and institutions that befit a Eurozone member'. As *Kathimeri* put it rather succinctly:

> it is one thing to have a high debt and deficit, and a different matter to be treated by your European partners, the markets and the investors like a third-world country, which remains in the Eurozone by mistake.[155]

Such statements may appear hard to understand for a foreign audience, who might regard them as evidence of an obsessive attachment to EU institutions. Nevertheless, these statements become clearer when one considers the extent to which many in Greece still consider EU membership an anchor of political and economic modernity, including a warrant of democratic consolidation. As George Pagoulatos wrote in *Kathimerini,*

> Our history as an independent state was a history of hunger, poverty, wars and civil wars, dictatorships, ethnic divisions, emigration, bankruptcy, crises and uncontrolled inflation. The only interlude of real democracy, a European way of life, and stability during the last four decades is thanks to our attachment to the nucleus of Europe. Without this vital link, we will backslide to the dark corridors of our historical destiny, prey to the dangers and threats of our troubled neighbourhood.[156]

A comment even in *Avgi* echoed this sentiment, albeit apologetically:

> if there are hopes for survival, these are thanks to the post-1974 consolidation of Greek Democracy, with the leading events being our accession

> initially to the EU and subsequently to EMU (note: I know that I evoke the mockery of those who believe that Greece is an unhappy country, trapped in a European neo-liberalism that doesn't let it develop the multiple facets of its idiosyncrasy, but I remain incorrigible).[157]

Interestingly, under this narrative, EU and EMU membership are considered as a package. As with the EU in 1983, Greece's accession to EMU in 2001 was perceived as a signal of further modernisation of the country's political, economic and social structures. Such modernisation had been a long-standing aim of a small but vocal group of commentators in Greek public debate, whom we refer to here as 'the modernisers', and who had long advocated the reform and rationalisation of Greek economic and political institutions along Western European lines.[158] Only then could Greece bridge the gap between promise and performance, thereby tackling the famous Greek paradox.[159] This agenda became the mantra of the prime-ministership of PASOK leader Kostas Simitis between 1996 and 2004, thus occupying a position of rhetorical dominance for the first time in post-1974 Greece through its association with the electoral winners' mandate. Since accession to EMU was one of the central prongs of Simitis' policy programme, reversing would be tantamount to questioning the aims of the modernisation programme as a whole. In the words of Simitis,

> When I became Prime Minister, I had a specific strategic plan […] [I wanted Greece] to follow a direction of inclusion among the developed countries and especially the EU with continuity and consistency. […] The central aim of the national strategy had to be EMU accession. I believed that our simple participation in the EU would not ensure all the benefits that we could reap from our accession. […] The effort to upgrade the country would fail if we hid behind defensive conceptions of protectionism or isolationism.[160]

Of course, the narrative of modernisation, and with it one of the most potent rationales for Greece's continued membership in the Eurozone, did suffer a serious blow during the crisis, which appeared to dramatically reverse the kind of progress Simitis had in mind when applying for Eurozone membership—i.e. 'stabilisation, growth, and social justice; nominal convergence, real convergence, and social convergence'.[161] Far from paving the way towards more mature democratic institutions and

an environment allowing sustainable growth, 'healthy surpluses' and 'the extension of social policies for cohesion and solidarity',[162] European norms now appeared as inhumane, autarchic, embodying cutthroat liberalism and a lack of solidarity. In *Avgi's* judgment, 'the growth model of the last 15 years has really gone bankrupt'[163]; 'we have understood it: modernisation is here, united and strong, and it is modernising us more and more. […] The tsars of the economy of the "Troikan" miracle, who were taken out of the drawers of the modernising wing of PASOK, brought us where we are'.[164]

In spite of all that, a sizeable minority of commentators remained convinced that Europe could still bring Greece a much-needed impulse for modernisation. Indeed, reminiscent of Rosa Luxembourg's *revolutionary defeatism*, 'Armageddon might be a solution'[165] as the conditions attached to the Greek rescue packages could advance much-needed structural reforms in a way that had proved impossible during times of growth, when successive reform attempts stumbled on the arrayed forces of special interests, clientelism and corruption. In the words of *Kathimerini*'s editor:

> Is supervision really such a bad thing? Let's remember how many things happened in Greece during the time before the Olympic Games. Let's count how many public works finished in record time, in full contrast with the decade of the 1980s, which didn't leave behind a single big public works project. […] If we go back to that time, we will discover that the whole country, the whole state was under direct and asphyxiating supervision. […] This is basically why we succeeded, and it is almost certain that if they had left us alone, without any control since the day we undertook the Olympics, we wouldn't have been ready even in 2014. […] Now we are at an exceptionally difficult moment, and supervision can only be good for us. […] If this damned supervision compels us to create efficient institutions for combatting tax evasion, to open the closed professions, to be able to implement an investment in a few months rather than a few years, this will only be good.'[166]

For the Greek modernisers, the measures foreseen by the successive memoranda ought to be assessed precisely against the yardstick of how effectively they advanced structural reforms such as combatting tax evasion, making the welfare system fairer, making it easier to do business in Greece, and the likes. Indeed, the modernisers invested a lot of political capital in the success of the Troika-induced change, thus defined.

This narrative resonated forcefully in the German press and in German diplomatic circles—where it combined with the concurrent lamentation that the Greeks effectively lacked the will to brave the painful costs of reform.[167]

Of course, the danger of an externally imposed modernisation programme was that if it didn't command sufficient ownership in Greece, its logic could suffer major backlash, and society could come to 'repudiate anything related to the Memorandum'.[168] For pro-reform commentators, the second hope provided by the crisis was therefore that the prospect of Armageddon might lead people to realise that reform was necessary, thus creating a permissive space for reform.

A policy area that illustrates well this possibility is pension reform, which had come to symbolise the limits of Simitis' premiership. Indeed, the large-scale attempted reform of the pension system in 2001 by Tasos Gannitsis, who was then Minister of Labour and Social Security, was not only vehemently resisted, but had also led to the outright demonization of its architects, who were portrayed as 'dangerous extremists trying to terrorise the people to make them abandon social security'.[169] It is still rare today to hear voices recognising that these architects had been right to warn that the pension system was not viable. *Avgi* for instance reported approvingly that 'government sources and leading Syriza members' launched a 'harsh attack' against Simitis, saying that 'there is a difference between Simitis' efforts and ours', since 'the then Prime Minister wanted to deconstruct social security at a time of growth, whereas today's [Syriza-ANEL] government is supporting the pension system during a time of recession'.[170] The irony of praising the timing of a reform when it hurts more might have been lost here. Nevertheless, both *Avgi* and Prime Minister Tsipras have stated explicitly that 'the issues related to pension reform are issues that we would have to tackle regardless of the Troika',[171] since without any change, 'in four or five years there will simply be no pension system'.[172]

The competing discourses about Europe and progress surveyed in this chapter continue to be evoked as the Greco-German affair unfolds. Some will eventually emerge strengthened, others weakened. What is clear however is that for most people in Greece and Germany, the EU, even at times of crisis, is not a simple cold calculus of short-term costs and potential long-term benefits, but is intertwined with diverse deep-rooted understandings about their countries' institutions, political systems, international standing and ultimately, their national identity.

Notes

1. See Sternberg, C. S. (2013). The Struggle for EU Legitimacy: Public Contestation, 1950–2005. Basingstoke, Palgrave; Lacroix, J. and K. Nicolaïdis, K. (eds.) (2010), European Stories: Intellectual Debates on Europe in National Contexts, Oxford. Oxford University Press; della Sala, V. (2010a). 'Special Issue: Political Myth, Mythology and the European Union'. Journal of Common Market Studies 48(1): 1–190; Sternberg, C. (2016a). Culture and the EU's Struggle for Legitimacy. Re: Thinking Europe, Thoughts on Europe: Past, Present and Future. Matthieu Segers and Y. Albrecht. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press: 155–167.
2. See Sternberg 2013; and 2015 'What were the French telling us by voting down the 'EU constitution'? A case for interpretive research on referendum debates'. Comparative European Politics: 1–26.
3. *Spiegel* 26/2012.
4. *Spiegel* 48/2012.
5. *Avgi online* 10/12/13.
6. *Kathimerini online* 08/07/11.
7. *Proto Thema online* 30/3/15.
8. *Proto Thema online* 07/01/13.
9. *Avgi* 18/04/10, cover page.
10. *Avgi* 14/02/10, cover page.
11. *Avgi* 18/04/10, cover page.
12. *Avgi* 20/06/15, cover page.
13. *Avgi* 17/01/10, p. 2.
14. *Kathimerini* 21/02/10, p. 18, 'The German problem'.
15. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, p. 20, 'Germans and Greeks' (Nikos Konstantaras).
16. *Avgi* 09/05/10, p. 29, 'Euro, the vulnerable currency' (Ilias Ioakeimoglou).
17. *Avgi online* 01/07/15.
18. *The New York Times online* 03/07/15, 'Europe's Many Economic Disasters'.
19. *Guardian online* 29/06/15, 'Joseph Stiglitz: how I would vote in the Greek referendum'.
20. *The New York Times online* 03/07/15.
21. *Guardian online* 29/06/15.
22. *Avgi online* 26/05/15.
23. Bulmer, S. (2014). 'Germany and the Eurozone Crisis: Between Hegemony and Domestic Politics'. West European Politics 37(6): 1244–1263, p. 1246.

24. E.g. *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 16/06/2012.
25. *Bild* 10/05/2010.
26. *Bild* 21/08/2014, 'Take the Euro Away from the Greeks: Mrs Merkel, we, too, want a referendum!'
27. *Bild* 28/11/2012.
28. Informal conversation with a German diplomat in June 2017.
29. *Spiegel* 23/2012.
30. See e.g. *Bild* 02/06/2010.
31. *Spiegel* 38/2012 'Everybody wants our money' (Bavarian minister of finance Markus Söder, CSU).
32. *Bild* 02/05/2010 to Merkel.
33. *Ibid*.
34. E.g. *Bild* 02/05/2010 to Merkel, or 19/03/2015, 'Merkel Wants to End Argument with Tsipras'.
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CHAPTER 4

The Ethos of the Game: Recovering the Promise of Mutual Recognition

Abstract In this concluding chapter, the authors attempt to draw some lessons from the 'affair' while calling on each reader to draw their own. They ask, in particular, how we may learn to better live together in the EU and how an ethos of mutual recognition might be recovered from the wars of stereotypes and mutual ascription discussed in the book. They argue that we must start by becoming more aware of how we construct ourselves and others and how the two are intimately related. They also point to how, by engaging with each other's internal controversies, Greeks and Germans learned about themselves, too, and were led to question long-held prejudices. The question is left open as to whether this prolonged engagement through conflict will help us to develop bonds of trust and recover the promise mutual recognition, not only between Greeks and Germans but also among other Europeans.

Keywords Stereotyping · Othering · Trust · Mutual recognition · Ethos of european politics · Conflict

This book has been about the fraught and passionate relationship between Greeks and Germans during the years of crisis, when the two sides re-imagined each other for all to see on the great screen of history. These imaginings took many forms, from proper wars of images, complete with insults, counter-insults and gross simplifications, to open-minded engagements with the idiosyncrasies on the other side,

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to intertwined soul-searching on the complexity of the self, sometimes bordering on self-flagellation, to musings about possible future paths, whether common or not.

Reflecting on the stories we have told, we now turn to the future. How has this ongoing saga affected not only the *denouement* of the Greco-German affair but also, more generally, the way we live together in the EU? How should it do? This last chapter is about lessons learned and silver linings: when you have fought long and hard enough, can you make up? What does it take? What fountain of inspiration do you draw on? And, crucially, what happens to the extended family?

In keeping with our conceptual lens throughout this book, we end by asking what has happened to the recognition game that is the EU. Beyond the players and the rules, has the Greco-German affair changed the very ethos of the game, the reasons players believe they are engaged in this game in the first place, the assumptions they bring to the ways they grant or deny recognition to each other, the mindsets in which they do so? In short, we ask how the ethos of the EU game has affected and in turn has been affected by the affair, and whether an ethos of mutual recognition can be recovered in the end, an ethos comparable perhaps to that of fair play.

Our suggestion is that this ethos is nurtured by mutual engagement, the breeding ground for *seeing* both ourselves and each other in our complexities, differences and commonalities, and for *acknowledging* one another. If mutual recognition can transform unequal and conflictual relationships, it may be that we need to embrace conflict as its preferred conduit.[1] But not all conflictual modes are born equal.

Throughout the book, we have enjoyed the relatively comfortable stance of detached observers when in truth we might have been sympathetic, angry, amused, disappointed, shocked or admiring. While we definitely did not mute our voice along the way, this chapter is where we rip the veil of objectivity altogether and allow ourselves to come out of our analytical closet. For, we do care about how the game ends. Not only because we are all threesome combinations of German, Greek and other European upbringing, but because we care about Europe's current predicament: Are there better ways than others to journey out of this mess?

Hence, we close this investigation with a bias: to actively identify reasons to hope that mutual recognition may be recovered in the wake of the crisis, to hope that the affair will have created bonds not only of servitude but also of mutual knowledge and to hope that what strains

our bonds may also sometimes come to strengthen them. In many ways, ours may be labelled a Habermasian method. With the most optimistic of critical theorists, we believe that it is possible to alter power relations through thought and talk, by engaging in cosmopolitan dialogue between as many perspectives as possible.

We do not wish to provide a fail-proof recipe for fair play and recognition, a three-step recovery programme! Rather, we hope to propose lines of enquiry, food for thought, remarks that might inspire our readers in their own continued quest, and try to imagine what a better way might entail.

4.1 Mutual Recognition Starts with Subverting Stereotypes

Mutual recognition starts with acknowledging complexity—the complexity of the games, the many faces of its players, the many facets of its rules and the complex patterns of thought and action that link it all together. And this acknowledgement presupposes some knowledge of one another's multifaceted make-up, at least enough for each side to feel that their own perceptions are understood by the other side.[2] Our Greco-German affair underlines how such mutual knowledge is partly produced and perpetuated through stereotypes, which constitute our raw material for this acknowledgement game, as it were. Stereotypes may be social facts but so is their contestation, and the shared experience of protest against the kind of "unfair" generalisations and exaggerations they give rise to. In the process, ascribing "types" to others can be turned into playful stereophonic performances, where simplifying impulses are forced to coalesce under the mantel of our complex social fabric.

Stereotypes Snowballing

Stereotypes provide us with easy binaries: Greek wealth, *dolce vita* and beauty, as well as laziness, deception, and individualism on one side, and power-hungry, heartless German misers on the other, lacking in essential human empathy and solidarity. Each side finds the ascription by the other offensive, in spite or because of its grain of truth: this is not me! I am better than that! We called these patterns of thoughts denials of recognition—although these are benign denials as long as they do not translate into deeds—and emphasised that recognition always has to do with

difference. But in this case, by stressing that we "Europeans" have little in common after all, that our ways of life and our beliefs about appropriate behaviour are worlds apart, the ascription serves to say: our differences are such that they make us incompatible.

Greeks and Germans continue to pigeonhole each other to this day, and not only in tabloids or fringe newspapers. When Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem compares Southern European countries with a man who 'spent all his money on alcohol and women and is now asking for help', FAZ adds the comparison with 'spoiled brats' who are suffering the consequences of 'well-intended heads of family' having given them too many gifts at a young age.[3] No matter that the man is now out of the picture and it is his wife and children who are asked to pay the bill… Some of the typecasts we have discussed in this book have by now recurred so often that they have acquired epithet status like "blue-eyed" for the goddess Athena in Homeric poetry: "bankruptcy Greeks" or "Euro cheaters and swindlers", or "German amnesiac hearts of steel". The problem is, of course, that each side does see the point of the other side. It does not take tons of introspective lucidity for Greeks to understand how they can be seen as a society addicted to clientelism, or for German to understand how their apparent indifference to the plight of their neighbours can be ascribed to who they are "in their heart". And paradoxically, the closer the other side's simplifications and generalisations seem to some kernel of truth, the greater the apparent offence.

To make matters worse, stereotypes tend to be magnified in translation. Reported back to their object audience, they incite ever more hurtful responses, until in the end the boomeranging offences and counter-offences spiral out of control, involving an ever-increasing number of journalists and in some cases politicians from across the spectrum. Witness the controversy sparked by the ill-famed 2010 *Focus* cover which for the first time enrolled scores of journalists on both sides to evoke the themes analysed in the book.[4] Call this the snowballing effect.

Beyond mutual perceptions, the Greco-German war of images matters because it constrains the bargaining space available to politicians, often indeed at their behest.[5] If ascriptions transform legitimate into illegitimate differences, they help frame our interests and values as incompatible. If the German Chancellor's constituents consider the Greeks to be lying and blackmailing squanderers, how could she agree to a generous financial package, whatever the economic arguments in favour of one?

If the Greek Prime Minister's constituents believe Germany's insistence on humiliating conditions is governed by a deep-rooted desire to dominate and control Greece, how could the Prime Minister sign up to a new memorandum, even if it was in Greece's economic interest? Such questions, we believe, demonstrate the need we have felt to problematize, contextualise and uncover the dynamics we discussed in this book.

Stereotypes Dislodged

Fortunately, (transnational) life is more complicated. Coverage of the Euro crisis on both sides was not simply a binge of othering excesses, as even the most slanderous, offensive images and headlines were more often than not accompanied by more nuanced reporting. If we did find stereotypes galore, their reversals were plentiful too.

Often, the 'voices of reason' on the part of commentators bent on higher standards of professional ethics had a greater chance of being aired and heard when remonstrations over prior unfair representations hit a nerve. As distraught and increasingly impoverished Greeks expressed their indignation at being labelled as a nation of spendthrifts and tax dodgers, even *Bild* acknowledged that the Greeks had every reason to be 'really angry' with the Germans.[6] And they could see this anger directed not only at the German government's diktats, but also at them: here were ordinary citizens who were suffering not only materially, but also from a kind of symbolic violence that gratuitously added salt to the wounds.[7]

Paradoxically, and perhaps self-servingly, Germans managed to dislodge some *clichés* by reifying others: here we find it, again and again, the topos of the "two Greeces", a simple binary to inject complexity into the story of the other side![8] We cannot lump together good and bad, victims and perpetrators, responsible and irresponsible Greeks and ignore fundamental inequalities in pain and suffering. We need to open the black box: Greeks differ in their attitudes towards morality and public spiritedness. A wealth of German reporting was infused with sympathy for the hardship endured by "the other Greece", aching from pauperisation, high unemployment rates, lack of access to basic services and the likes. Solidarity was owed to the Greeks on the wrong side of the equation, perhaps a majority of the Greeks in fact—decent, upright and hard working "like us", and comprehensibly resentful for having to pay the price for the wrongdoings of their incompetent or immoral elites.

The neat division of Greek society into winners and losers played a vital role in the German press, grounding an indigenous critique of austerity and excessive conditionality.[9]

Likewise, there were those among the Greeks, who strove to reconstitute the German side in its inconsistencies and diversity, engaging with a range of German concerns, views and actions, rejecting some while accepting others as starting points for meaningful discussion. Referring empathetically to the long history of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), they provided counterpoints specifically to the Nazi imagery we discussed.[10] Others contested the typecast of the 'hearts of steel' by emphasising German shows of solidarity. For example, an important part of the Greek media hailed Merkel's visit to Athens in October 2012 as a 'strong message of support' and a promise of solidarity, balancing the protests and Nazi imageries so prominently noted in Germany.[11]

The knowledge that not all Germans lumped all Greeks together in some easy judgmental self-righteousness was a precondition for Greek continued engagement with Germany and "the Germans". In the same way, the perception by Germans that they were not all buried under a blanket of suspicion for having "learnt nothing" from their past was essential to keep them willing to continue to engage with, and to help, the Greeks. Acknowledging the complexity of the other side has clearly helped lay the grounds for polite and even empathetic interaction: what is at stake here is not just about me but about the predicaments, concerns and sensitivities of others. Perhaps most importantly, I have good reasons to think that this is how they reason too (well at least some of them).

Even so, ironically although perhaps unsurprisingly, each side's portrayal of its portrayal by the other side tended to be less nuanced than their own representations of the Other. In other words, if we distinguish between direct accommodation (the acknowledgement that we can't do justice to the Other under homogeneous formulaic categories) and indirect accommodation (the acknowledgement that the Other doesn't represent us under homogeneous formulaic categories), then both sides do much better on the former than the latter. For example, much of the German coverage of Merkel's 2012 trip focused on the Nazi imagery rather than the signs of appreciation.[12]

In other words, neither Greeks nor Germans fully appreciated that their opinion-making elites' respective messages were directed as much

at their own side—be it with a view to selling newspapers, or positioning oneself in domestic power games. If and when they do grasp this, they become more indulgent, less prickly. And in a virtuous circle, one side's indulgence tends to produce more self-criticism on the other. The yearning for recognition is a deep-rooted human need, but the granting of it can only be mutual, and it falters if we fail to understand the nuances of how others see us. Acknowledging that the kaleidoscope of interpretations and opinions about ourselves that we find in other countries shifts depending on who is speaking, when, and about what, is a condition for restoring the spirit of mutual recognition. This is why we regard the rich mutual depictions offered by Greek and German media during the crisis, however negative many of them were, as an untapped resource for recovering the promise of mutual recognition.

Stereotypes Subverted

As with human relations in general, our Greco-German affair has *also* been about redefining oneself through the eyes of others. Over the course of the Euro crisis, both Greek and German societies engaged in a protracted revision of their sense of collective purpose, their collective memory, economic world views, role in the world, or values, and they did so not least in reaction to the ways they were perceived, or perceived to be perceived.

Recovering the promises of mutual recognition may call for a process that runs from engagement with the other, to internalising their perceptions, to bringing more texture to one's own story than commentators from another country ever could—and back again.[13] We saw this muddled progression (including U-turns and sideway moves) unfold many a time; in how the Greeks contested but also engaged with the tropes of the profligate Greek spender or the 'age of the lobster pasta', or in how Germany revisited its ordo-liberal orthodoxy in the face of Greek realities, debated how 'reluctant' an hegemon should Germany be, and feared that Germans may have become 'ugly again'.[14] In all these instances, collective introspection worked in tandem with the reception of perceived external ascription.

In fact, even our very own stereotypes regarding the other can be turned into resources for a deeper understanding of one's own side, we argued.[15] How? Clearly, Greeks could not forever avoid reassessing their national collective memory, and the spectacle of Greek Nazi references

helped kick-start this re-evaluation.[16] On the other side, the German fascination with the Greek good life spoke to an underlying mixture of envy and recrimination, admiration and condemnation and an unease at being less charming, easy going and magnanimous than many would like to be.[17]

Othering provides a window into our own side's collective self-images, pressing concerns and insecurities. "Working through" the underlying dynamics is a kind of group therapy. Our representations of the Other often offer clues to our own demons, taboos and traumas and complexes and fears, which may or may not be repressed by the collective psyche. Behind labels such as "bankruptcy Greeks" hid the German demons of financial disaster and political unravelling,[18] Greek audiences in turn were captivated by Germany as a projection screen for the Greek fears of foreign occupation and domination, and the deep-seated dread of loosing agency at the hands of foreigners.

Our Greco-German affair, in sum, is in part a story of how collective soul-searching on one's own side occurs on the basis of acknowledging the complexities and productively subverting the stereotypes we use to pigeonhole, both the other and ourselves.

4.2 Mutual Recognition as Engagement

Can we hope then that the Greco-German affair is fundamentally a tale about genuine collective mutual engagement? What would it take for this to lead to the recovery of mutual recognition?

Irony and Identity Play

Knowing oneself and knowing one's other are two sides of the same coin.[19] Recognition starts with the self, with engaging with one's own society's complexity and fallibility and with the contingency of one's own self-perceptions and world views. Fair play starts with learning to live with fractured identities. We see the Greco-German affair as a critical juncture that encouraged Greek and German 'identity play' in Appiah's words, simply by forcing the two nations to engage with one another.[20]

For mutual engagement, however fraught, opens up spaces for the most powerful weapon against mental ossifications and ascriptions of all sorts: irony. By reflecting and enabling our capacity to recognise the contingency of our own and others' self-perceptions and world views, irony can shake up entrenched views and kill stereotypes.[21] It is on this basis of

self-reflectiveness and reciprocal engagement that a reinvigorated capacity for mutual recognition among individuals and peoples can thrive again.

Irony towards one's temptation for self-righteousness is the secret ingredient for profound engagement with another people's predicaments, contradictions, divisions and emotive responses, and lays the groundwork for knowing and acknowledging both their and our own collectives. The seeds of improved self- and other-awareness grow as we engage with Others, they grow out of conflict, demarcation, insults and resistance to how we see and treat the other side or vice versa, as much as out of empathetic interchanges and curious dialogue.[22]

Interweaving Webs of Stories

When opening the black box of the other side initially to ask how they relate to us, we come to learn about them in another way: What are they internally fighting about? How do their internal cleavages differ from ours on issues we have in common?[23] Over the course of our Greco-German affair, we saw national collective stories and debates intertwine into a web held together by reciprocal feedback effects, resonances, parallels, alignments, differences, and delimitations.

In this web of stories, divisions interestingly cut across national fault lines, with certain discourses espoused by groups in both Greece and Germany, mirroring as well as aping each other's arguments. Commitment to the rule of law and solidarity was strengthened on both sides by the other's support, against the Manichean attribution of these two moralities only to their respective self-declared champions.[24] In fact, nowhere did we find such intense preoccupation with upholding the rule of law as with Greek journalists reflecting on the roots of the crisis. Equally, the strongest appeals for solidarity as a 'moral obligation among us Europeans'[25] were to be found among certain German circles, and even in Merkel's wording of the EU's 'community of responsibility', whatever this may have meant.[26]

Indeed, the interweaving webs of Greek and German stories found their ways into both governments' negotiation strategies. Merkel's crisis management, in particular in the summer of 2015, can thus be read as an instance of "stigma management" or a desire to "save face" after the Greek negotiating team, embedded in the wider public debate we explored in this book, 'had deliberately discredited its approach […] as deviant to Europe's normative order'.[27]

In the gradual entwining of Greek and German internal controversies, similarities between them began to appear, starting with the clash between austerity-focused economic liberalism and its alternatives.[28] The interaction between the two public spheres and simply their inability to close their eyes to arguments put forth on the other side, enriched *both* debates, not least by tilting hardened discursive balances and softening long-standing gridlocks.

To be sure, many nuances and meanings that may be obvious in one national context were lost in translation—message sent is not always message received. The treatment of Germany's experience of social cutbacks during the preceding decade is a case in point: it gave many Germans a sense of entitlement to demand the same discipline from the recipients of aid, while it was usually seen in Greece as symptomatic of Germany's beggar thy neighbour approach to acquiring unfair advantage through misjudged and detrimental 'social dumping' policies.[29] The concrete impact of these two positions was clear for all to see, thus colouring debates in the broader European arena.

The European Arena for Other-Regardingness

Critically, both sides of the affair were painfully aware that their protracted dispute was not unfolding in a vacuum, but profoundly affected the normative cornerstones of our European construct. It is the Economic and Monetary Union which brought the questions of what is owed to others in such a community to the fore.[30] The old cleavages that have long defined the EU story—between winners and losers, victims and perpetrators, liberals and conservatives and so on—were both amplified and redefined with the crisis. Arguably, the Greco-German affair constituted a rare moment of reciprocal engagement with the other public's perspectives and internal disagreements on the issues at stake in the transforming EU. Conflict, in this case, contributed to strengthening an EU-wide discursive space about common problems and solutions, and about what holds us Europeans together.

What did it say about the European project that even apparent core tropes of EU integration, such as how we all deal with the memory of World War II, suffered from the paucity of shared background understandings?[31] Germans heard the Greeks as demanding yet more German guilt and acknowledgement of Greek victimhood, while Greeks sought some solace in recovering some of their lost dignity through

acknowledgements of past resistance and heroism. Germans were oblivious to what may have been obvious to virtually every Greek, while the latter needed reminding of the German's 'long and painful' process of 'self-criticism' and grappling with their past.[32] Such collective misapprehension is sobering to anyone who believes that the EU can best be understood as a "community of memory". Mutual recognition requires engaging with the historical crimes committed towards each other, while resisting the temptation to assign blame to future generations. This was not a small challenge for Greece and Germany, given how the difficult collective memories of the two countries' histories were intertwined with their current power status.

Can working through the historical memory of conflict turn the past from a source of division into a unifying force? Some Greek commentators invoked this history as a token of commonality against the Greek tendencies to claim to have been on the right side of history in resisting the Junta as much as foreign occupiers, which in turned chimed with systematic rejections in Germany of its past.[33] In the same spirit, German acknowledgements of having been the 'greatest debt sinner of the twentieth century'[34] were music to Greek ears.[35] Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, like others, compared the potential consequences of Grexit to the calamities that had afflicted the Weimar Republic, a prospect presumably all the more repulsive because it was familiar. Only German solidarity would be able to break the spell.[36]

Out of such musings, the EU emerged as a "community of responsibility", as well as a "community of fate".[37] Perceptions of being exposed to a shared danger of economic and political unravelling, we suggested, strengthened projections of commonality both between Greeks and Germans and with other Europeans, especially when this unravelling concerned the European project as a whole. Even in the German populist press, dividing lines between Greeks and Germans were dwarfed by the common fear of upheaval on European and global markets and of a euro 'nose-diving' as well as the shared tensions between winners and losers from the crisis.[38]

Moreover, in recent years and around the 2015 referendum in particular, we noted numerous direct cross-references and interconnections between the Greek and German controversies about the best course of action in terms of economic policy, debt management and reform.[39] What will it take though for all European peoples to overcome the sense that they are not solely at the receiving end of external decisions—a

sense which even exists in Germany today, let alone in Greece and the rest of Southern Europe? As German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel recently put it with reference to the European security policy, although 'Germany is a stable country that has some power and wants to assume its responsibilities', in fact 'every country regardless of size—all the countries are at the same level and none looks down on the other—is called upon to make a contribution'.[40] But can the story of the EU as mitigating power asymmetries between its very unequal member-states ever be credible again?

While the EU's structural flaws and political deficiencies obviously contributed to the dynamics at play, perhaps surprisingly the EU was not often seen as the solution. The two countries' governments and societies had no choice but to engage with each other. If, in the process, they came to better acknowledge their respective complexities, this occurred decidedly not because Greeks and Germans were enacting a post-national utopia about overcoming national thinking and divisions. If at all, it was under the brute force and urgency of the crisis that the two national publics confronted each other. Nevertheless, the fact that this couple had been forged in the mettle of European integration may perhaps have kept the aspiration to mutual recognition alive.

4.3 Mutual Recognition Recovered

If we have suggested reading the EU as a game, should we then muse about a possible endgame? Of course not. The EU has no such endgame, and it is the great mistake of messianic well-wishers to anchor it to teleology—the promised land of unity. Instead, the EU is about trying to continue to play the game of European politics short of war as long as possible, perpetually if possible. We hope that our shared journey through the many variants of the recognition game has demonstrated that the ethos of mutual recognition has a crucial role to play in this ambition.

To ask whether mutual recognition has been lost in the EU, as this book set out to do, and whether and how to do something about it, has been a way for us to ask how individual actors, be they citizens, politicians or experts, can recover some agency in a game which has for too long seemed all too constrained by big structural socio-economic factors. How individuals or groups think, how they speak and how they interact matters in the great EU game. The same story can be told about

other parts of the EU landscape, including the dynamics that will continue to accompany the Brexit negotiations. There, too, we find a network of relationships involving much mutual stereotyping, ascription and renewed curiosity.

If mutual recognition occurs on a spectrum of varying intensity, from deep engagement, to interested tolerance or polite respect, to mere tolerance, then how a relationship evolves on this spectrum is a matter of continuous negotiation. Rhetorical moves to deny recognition to one another can be thought of as a regression on the recognition spectrum. But we also hope to have documented how, even the most egregious instances of such regressions provided the rich soil for mutually referential renegotiations over collective identities, needs and desires.

Gaming Conflict

There *can* be no endgame to our recognition story first of all because the journey is not about engineering harmony, but instead about learning to master together the kind of agonistic politics that is bound to continue to define us. Conflict is not a flaw to be overcome, but a constitutive part of political life, a chance for constantly re-negotiating patterns of mutual recognition.[41] Perhaps Europeans have learned more about each other in the last few years of hostile interplay than in the prior half-century of "reconciliation".

Like play, contests and confrontations can have civilising functions, teaching us how to lose, be wrong, agree to disagree and constrain our interactions with rules of engagement, codes of behaviour and limits.[42] This in turn can be subject to learning or habituation, a gradual tweaking of channels, tones and styles of engagement that work better than others for this particular relationship.

We examined the Greco-German affair through dynamics of representation, othering, perception, and identity formation, which tell us something about the constitution and disruption of social order, in this case the order of European demoicracy.[43] Political theorists debate whether or not mutual recognition holds the promise for a peaceful management of international crises.[44] Our suggestion is more modest and still ambitious. Our affair's denials, demands and recoveries of recognition do not promise a path to harmonious social interaction, but critically grappling with them is one way of turning pure conflict into productive antagonism. In the end and perhaps paradoxically, all the vexations, offences

and reactive spirals which have characterised the Greco-German affair in the last few years can still end up contributing to sustaining the EU.

By moving from separate spheres of national discussion, to productive overlap between them, to informed curiosity about each other's affairs and finally to efforts at being heard in each other's forums, the Greeks and Germans may be slowly creating a shared discursive space where they can grapple with the twenty-first-century challenge of democratic interdependence. Merkel furthered this idea when she praised a debate in the European Parliament, where she was heavily criticised: 'The fact that we are able to argue so nicely here shows that Europe has already almost become domestic politics!'[45]

Binding Trust

If Europeans are truly to invest a shared political space, we hope this book makes clear that they will need at least some degree of mutual trust. As we argued in the introduction, mutual recognition does not require blind trust but can instead ground the kind of *binding* trust that underpins relationships sustainably rooted in mutual engagement and reciprocal knowledge. The extreme stakes involved in this crisis led the Greek and German publics to engage and interact with each other with an unusual degree of intensity, and their reciprocal representations resonated on the other side with exceptional force. Perhaps the end result is that Greeks and Germans are "getting to know each other all over again" as in the movies.

And perhaps this new-found knowledge in turn has had an effect on their respective rapport with Europe, as a result of constantly seeking to assess each other's contours in greater focus, depth and nuance—echoing the contours of the overlaid Other's image. In other words, by strengthening our feeling that our European Others are "just like us, only different", the Euro crisis may have provided new grounds for binding trust among European peoples.

Our story also says something about finding the right balance between difference and commonality, a process which, as we saw in the introduction, is a defining characteristic of mutual recognition. If originally recognition requires a sense of basic commonality, ultimately it is about accepting difference that cannot be talked away. Still, even representations of the other as different may paradoxically point to an underlying commonality, just as the sense of sharing in some common core

may encourage us to see and appreciate each other in our differences beyond it.

In all its othering excesses, our story is one of Germans and Greeks (or at least some of them) realising increasingly that they are also very much alike in important ways. When emotionally sober, *both* Greeks and Germans appeared as broadly decent, honest people suffering, like the rest of Europe, from various ills that they could not necessarily control—from public overspending to greedy elites or under-regulated financial institutions—plights that the other side could empathise with.

It is with this empathy that we can start to think about the kind of agency that is indeed under people's control. Empathy can lay the groundwork for solidarity by choice, and this can act as a glue to the "community of fate" between European demoi, who after all had wilfully tied their destinies together, for better or worse.[46] The community in question does not need to be a community of identity, but a community of projects, or a community based on a mutual commitment to managing conflicts according to certain rules and codes, bound together by the doing rather than the being.[47] But the doing together in itself had to rely on the quality of relationships being forged between groups and peoples capable of opening up to each others' reality.

Love, Actually

Over the course of our journey, we found a criss-crossing of humble, self-righteous, expectant or desperate demands for recognition followed by various ways of granting or failing to grant recognition. Is there some kind of categorical imperative to such granting of recognition? If Greeks and Germans care deeply about how they are portrayed by the other side, in the end this is because words and deeds cannot be separated in this story. Probably unconsciously, people on both sides of the affair hoped for a kind of reciprocal do-no-harm mindset. Perhaps since the perception of the potential for harm was so high—as reflected in shared fears of calamity—in German appreciations of the Greek 'power of the weak', or in the acute Greek awareness of being at the mercy of governance at a distance.[48] Many Greeks and Germans demanded to be seen in the full light of their predicament, with the other side acknowledging the inequality of resources, guilt, power and moral probity that defines the fabric and nuances of their societies. Indeed, *Bild* quoted singer Nana Mouskouri as saying on her visit in 2012 to Wolfgang Schäuble in the

ministry of finance: 'Your trust is helping us Greeks more than your money'.[49] Five years later, as "the nice German" visiting Athens in 2017, Foreign Minister Gabriel amplified the message, expressing his 'respect' for what the Greek population and Greek politics had done.[50]

But ultimately, who wants to be simply, reasonably and truthfully perceived? Isn't love that which we seek, actually? When *Kathimerini* published an image of German appreciation of Greek works of art under the title 'The Radiance of Byzantium is "illuminating" Bonn', weren't its editors saying: can we fall in love all over again? Can Heinrich Schliemann discover Troy all over again?[51] Spectacular misunderstandings and even violence can ensue from unrequited love, love betrayed. A senior German diplomat recalls that 'people around the table' where the decision to release the first rescue package was taken believed: 'if we rescue them, they will love us. They will love us for generations to come'.[52] Wishful thinking, maybe, but there we have it.

The road to reconciliation and recognition is travelled in small steps, starting with 'putting oneself into the other's shoes' even if they are the wrong size.[53] A German article advocating a debt haircut argued not only for moving beyond the by then entrenched blame game regarding the origins of and responsibility for escalation, but also for seeing things from the perspective of the Greeks for a change:

> Let's suppose the Greek account is the right one; should the Greek government bend to the German view of things against its persuasion? Should it break all election promises? Should it submit to conditions that can and must not be met from their point of view, which are destroying Greek society and are thus ushering in the break up of Europe into North and South?[54]

Perhaps the journey is not all that long from German outrage at Greek anti-austerity protesters donning SS uniforms 'hurting the feelings of millions of Germans', to Germans tuning in to the Greek hurt at witnessing their society unravel.[55]

In all these ways, the norms and practices of mutual recognition among the peoples of Europe have been redefined, developed and entrenched. It is still too early to say whether vicious denials of recognition or thoughtful reflection on what we have in common and what differentiates us will prevail among Greeks and Germans in the wake of the crisis. Equally, it is too early to tell whether the resources for a recovery

of mutual recognition, namely the many acknowledgements of the other side's worth and the development of increasingly similar discourses across national borders, will be fully understood and valued as such. However, if binding trust is predicated upon knowledge of the Other, if claims to solidarity and empathy are grounded on choice rather than obligation and if requesting recognition for the Self can lead to granting recognition to the Other, then there are many reasons to believe that mutual recognition between Greeks and Germans, which has been denied so harshly in the past, can be recovered and shared with other Europeans and even better, emulated by the next generation.

Notes

1. See our brief definition of mutual recognition in the beginning of Chapter 1, where we refer to Ricœur, P. (2005). The course of recognition. Cambridge, Harvard University Press; and Bartelson, J. (2013). 'Three concepts of recognition'. International Theory 5(01): 107–129 (108). On empathy, see Nicolaïdis, Kalypso, (2016), 'My Eutopia: Empathy in a Union of Others', in Mathieu Segers and Yoeri Albrecht (ed), Re: Thinking Europe, Thoughts on Europe: Past, Present and Future, Amsterdam University Press.
2. See Chapter 1.
3. *Faz.net* 26/03/2017, 'Alcohol and women—more right than ever!' (Corinna Budras).
4. Section 2.4.
5. See Chapter 1.
6. Section 2.1; *Bild* 21/06/2011.
7. *Bild* 21/06/2011.
8. Sections 2.1 and 2.2.
9. Sections 2.2, 2.5, 3.1.
10. Section 2.4.
11. *Ta Nea* 10/10/12, cover page, 'She came, she saw, she promised'; see Sections 2.2, 2.4 and 3.2.
12. Sections 2.4 and 2.2.
13. See Lacroix, J. and K. Nicolaïdis, K. (eds.) (2010), European Stories: Intellectual Debates on Europe in National Contexts, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5; *Spiegel* 50/2012 'Are we Germans ugly again?'
15. Section 2.3.
16. Section 2.4.
17. Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

18. Section 2.3.
19. See Chapter 1; Ricœur 2005; Bartelson 2013: 108.
20. Appiah 1998: 104–105.
21. See Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
22. See introduction to Chapter 2; on identity formation and self-recognition, resting not so much on contradistinction, but rather emulation and the incorporation of characteristics from a variety of scripts and models, see Lebow, R. N. (2012). *The politics and ethics of identity: in search of ourselves*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
23. Lacroix/Nicolaïdis 2010.
24. Section 1.2.
25. *Zeit* 27/12/12 (Helmut Schmidt).
26. Sections 2.2 and 3.2.
27. Boergerding, L. (2016). An End to 'Merkelism'? German Decision-Making in the Eurozone Crisis as 'Stigma Management'. *Department of Politics and International Relations*, University of Oxford. MPhil International Relations; see Adler-Nissen, R. (2014). 'Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society'. *International Organization* 68(01): 143–176.
28. Sections 3.2 and 3.3.
29. Section 2.1.
30. Section 3.2; Viehoff, Juri and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, (2015), 'Social Justice in the European Union: The Puzzles of Solidarity, Reciprocity and Choice' in Dimitry Kochenov, Grainne de Burca and Andrew Williams (eds) Europe's Justice Deficit Oxford: Hart Publishing.
31. Section 2.4.
32. *Kathimerini* 28/02/10, 'Populism, the Guilty and the Truth' (Paschos Mandravelis).
33. Section 2.4.
34. *Spiegel online* 21/06/2012 'Euro Crisis: "Germany is the Greatest Debt Sinner of the twentieth Century"'.
35. Section 2.2.
36. *Bild* 22/08/2012.
37. Section 3.2.
38. *Bild* 08/04/2010; see Section 2.3.
39. Section 3.1.
40. *The Greek Observer* 24/03/17, 'EU's future prospects the focus of Kotzias-Gabriel meeting in Athens', http://thegreekobserver.com/politics/article/5813/eus-future-prospects-focus-kotzias-gabriel-meeting-athens/ [accessed 26/07/17].

41. Sternberg, C. S. (2013). The Struggle for EU Legitimacy: Public Contestation, 1950–2005. Basingstoke, Palgrave, pp. 210–224.
42. Huizinga, J. (2000 [1949]). Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Abingdon, Routledge; pp. 46–75; Gadamer H.-G. (1989). Das Erbe Europas: Beiträge. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, p. 30; on the metaphor of a game for EU politics, see Sternberg 2013: 216–217.
43. Kessler, O. and B. Herborth (2013). 'Recognition and the constitution of social order'. International Theory 5(1): 155–160, p. 156; Bartelson 2013: 118; Ricœur 2005: 150–218.
44. See Lindemann, T. (2011). 'Peace Through Recognition: An Interactionist Interpretation of International Crises.' International Political Sociology 5(1): 68–86; Lebow, R. N. (2011). Why nations fight: past and future motives for war. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Wolf, R. (2011). 'Respect and disrespect in international politics: the significance of status recognition'. International Theory 3(1): 105–142; but see critical perspective in Bartelson 2013.
45. *Zeit* 27/12/2012.
46. See Nicolaïdis/Viehoff 2015.
47. Nicolaïdis, K. (2004). 'We, the Peoples of Europe…' Foreign Affairs 83(6): 97–110.
48. Sections 2.3 and 2.5.
49. *Bild* 18/08/2012.
50. *Spiegel* online 23/03/2017 'Gabriel Meets Tsipras: The Nice German in Athens'.
51. *Kathimerini* 14/03/10; see Section 2.3.
52. Informal conversation in June 2017.
53. E.g. *Bild* 10/10/2012 'Bild.de Reporter Met Protest-Leaders—This is How the Lunatic Nazi Greeks Tick'.
54. *Zeit* 12/02/2015 'Schäuble Should Think of the Greeks' (Gesine Schwan).
55. *Bild* 21/07/2011.

Timeline of key events September 2009–September 2015

- 27/09/09: German federal election. CDU/CSU form a coalition with FDP under the chancellorship of Angela Merkel.
- 04/10/09: Greek parliamentary election. PASOK wins the election with 43.9% of the vote. PASOK leader George Papandreou becomes Prime Minister.
- 16/10/09: PM Papandreou reveals that the Greek annual budget deficit for 2009 would be substantially bigger than the outgoing ND government had predicted, and accuses the outgoing government of having misreported data about the country's public finances.
- 02/05/10: The European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Greece announce an agreement over the terms of Greece's first economic adjustment programme.
- 05/05/10: Three people are killed when a bank is set on fire during a demonstration against austerity measures in Athens.
- 09/05/10: A state election takes place in North Rhine–Westphalia, Germany's most populous state. The CDU suffers a ten percentage-point loss compared to the previous election, following a campaign period in which the Greek bailout programme had featured prominently.

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- 25/05/11–30/07/11: "Indignants' Movement"—protesters camp at Syntagma Square, Athens.
- 05/07/11: Christine Lagarde becomes Managing Director of the IMF, replacing Dominique Strauss-Kahn.
- 21/07/11: The Council agrees that there should be a second economic adjustment programme for Greece, and supports Private Sector Involvement (PSI) to restructure the Greek debt.
- 01/11/11: Mario Draghi becomes ECB President, replacing Jean-Claude Trichet.
- 31/10/11–10/11/11: PM Papandreou announces the conduct of a referendum on the terms of the second bailout package for Greece. Following harsh criticism at home and abroad for his decision to conduct a referendum, Papandreou cancels the referendum and later resigns.
- 11/11/11: A new Greek coalition government is sworn in under the premiership of the former vice-president of the ECB, Lucas Papademos. The government is backed by PASOK, ND and LAOS.
- 14/03/12: The finance ministers of the Euro Area approve financing for Greece's second economic adjustment programme.
- 06/05/12: Greek parliamentary election. No party wins an absolute majority. ND emerges as the largest party with 18.9% of the vote, and Syriza as the second-largest party with 16.8% of the vote. In subsequent days, cross-party talks for the formation of a coalition government fail, and new elections are announced.
- 17/06/12: Greek parliamentary election. ND emerges as the largest party with 29.7% of the vote, and subsequently forms a coalition government with PASOK and DIMAR, under the premiership of ND leader Antonis Samaras. Syriza emerges as the second-largest party with 26.9% of the vote.
- 09/10/12: Chancellor Merkel visits Athens for the first time since the onset of the crisis.
- 22/09/13: German federal election. CDU/CSU win a comfortable victory with 41.5% of the vote. FDP fails to meet the 5% threshold for entering parliament. CDU/CSU form a grand coalition with the SPD.
- 25/05/14: European Parliament election. In Greece, Syriza emerges as the largest party, and ND emerges as the second-largest party. In Germany, CDU/CSU emerge as the largest party, and SPD emerges as the second-largest party.

- 01/11/14: Jean-Claude Juncker becomes President of the European Commission, replacing José Manuel Barroso.
- 29/12/14: The Samaras-led coalition government in Greece fails to secure the required two-thirds parliamentary majority for the election of a new President of the Republic; Samaras is compelled to call early parliamentary elections.
- 25/01/15: Greek parliamentary election. Syriza emerges as the largest party with 36.3% of the vote, and subsequently forms a coalition government with ANEL, under the premiership of Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras.
- 20/02/15: An agreement is reached between Greece and its creditors for a four-month extension of the second economic adjustment programme, which was set to expire on 28.2.15.
- 27/06/15: PM Tsipras announces the conduct of a referendum on the terms for the country's third bailout package that Greece's creditors had proposed on 25.6.15. In subsequent days, as the ECB's Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) programme to Greece is set to expire, the government implements capital controls.
- 05/07/15: A referendum is held on the terms for the country's third bailout package that Greece's creditors had proposed on 25.6.15. The voters reject the creditors' proposal with 61.3% of the vote.
- 19/08/15: Greece and the European Commission sign a memorandum of understanding for Greece's third economic adjustment programme.
- 20/09/15: Greek parliamentary election. Syriza emerges as the largest party with 35.5% of the vote and forms a coalition government with ANEL.

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